

Coping with Your Cancer

Cancer changes your life in many ways. Your body is affected, but so are your daily routine and your relationships. This sheet offers ways to understand and handle some of these changes.



Create a support system

During your treatment and recovery, a support system can make your journey easier. Your supporters can help with tasks such as shopping, preparing meals, or picking up medicines. They can also comfort or encourage you when you are feeling down, or listen when you want to talk.

Your support system can include both individuals and cancer-related groups. You are likely to ask for support first from people close to you, such as your family and friends. You can also think about getting support from other sources, such as:

- Online groups and phone hotlines, such as those offered by the Cancer Support Community. To learn more, go to www.cancersupportcommunity.org
- In-person support groups near you, such as those offered by the American Cancer Society
- Support groups at your treatment center
- You can find more sources of support at www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/finding-support-and-information



Write down some sources of support you have:

Neighbors who have offered help



Managing feelings

Having cancer brings up many feelings, including fear, anger, and depression. These are natural. Here are some ways to try to avoid feeling bad all the time.

- Be kind to yourself. Being upset about having the “wrong” feelings won’t help.
- Talk with people in your support system, if that feels right. If you don’t want to worry your loved ones, or if your feelings seem overwhelming, think about counseling.
- Writing in a journal, drawing, or painting can be good ways to express your feelings.
- Let your care team know if you think you are depressed. Depression is different from short-term sadness. It is a medical condition that is common for people with cancer.
- Try stress management techniques, such as breathing exercises, yoga, or meditation. These can make you feel relaxed or lift a dark mood.



Use the space below to write down some ways of expressing your feelings or handling stress.



Staying healthy

When you have cancer, it’s important to take care of your health as much as you can, even if you can’t do everything you used to. Here are some tips:

- Make sure the rest of your body is cared for while your cancer is treated. This is very important for your heart, lungs, and kidneys.
- Ask your cancer care team whether you should have a flu shot. Check with them before you have any vaccinations.
- Your body may not react well to foods you used to eat, but you still need to get enough calories and good nutrition. Eating well helps keep your strength up and can help you feel better. Your cancer care team can help you adjust your diet.
- Exercising during and after cancer treatment can help you feel less tired and more calm. It can also help you protect your bones and keep the physical abilities you have. Do as much or as little as you feel comfortable with.