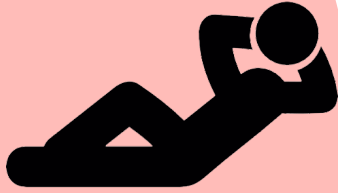


MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

It is important to understand that mental health care is as important as caring for physical health during and after cancer treatment. Feeling anxious, afraid, angry, or depressed is normal. After treatment ends, one of the most common concerns survivors have is that the cancer will come back.



Tips for Relaxing and Coping with Stress

- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals; exercise on a regular basis; and get plenty of sleep
- Take a break when feeling stressed - spend time outside and enjoy the fresh air
- Talk to others - share feelings and problems with a relative, friend, counselor, or health care provider
- Do not use drugs and alcohol
- Practice meditation
- Listen to music, pray, or create art to establish a sense of calm or peace
- Recognize when more help is needed - talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor

Emotional Support

The need for emotional support does not stop when treatment ends. There are many ways to receive emotional support that can improve quality of life and help manage the challenges a cancer survivor faces at any stage of survivorship.

Emotional support teams are the people, organizations and activities that can help survivors of cancer through encouragement and comfort during difficult times. They can include:

- family and other loved ones;
- friends and neighbors;
- cancer support groups;
- co-workers;
- health care team members;
- faith-based groups and clergy;
- counselors and therapists; and
- other survivors.

Healthy Sleep & Fatigue

As many as half of all cancer survivors have problems sleeping. This can be a result of many factors, including cancer treatments, pain, medication, stress, and anxiety. Some habits that may help improve sleep include:

- skipping naps;
- avoiding watching TV or working in the bedroom;
- passing on caffeinated products, alcohol or smoking before bedtime;
- going to sleep and waking at the same time each day;
- staying active during the day; and
- making the bed and bedroom more comfortable by adjusting the temperature, keeping the room quiet, and using pillows to get in a comfortable position.

Fatigue (extreme tiredness) usually decreases after cancer treatment ends, but cancer survivors may still feel some fatigue for months or years. Moderate physical activity 2 ½ hours a week, establishing a daily routine for activity and rest, and seeking counseling for cancer-related problems like stress and fear are all ways that can help to lessen fatigue in cancer survivors.

References & Resources

American Society of Clinical Oncology, Coping With Cancer - Managing Emotions

<https://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/managing-emotions>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Helping Cancer Patients and Survivors Stay Mentally and Emotionally Healthy

<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/survivors/caregivers/helping-cancer-survivors-stay-mentally-emotionally-healthy>

Livestrong, Emotional Support Teams for Survivors

<https://www.livestrong.org/we-can-help/healthy-living-after-treatment/emotional-support-teams-for-survivors>

National Cancer Institute, Fatigue (PDQ) - Patient Version

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/fatigue/fatigue-pdq>

National Cancer Institute, Sleep Disorders (PDQ) - Patient Version

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/sleep-disorders-pdq>

American Cancer Society

- 24/7 Support to Cancer Survivors: 1.800.227.2345
- List of Organizations Who Provide Cancer Support Services:

<https://www.cancer.org/about-us/local/missouri.html>

Talk to a health care provider about nearby cancer support groups and available resources.

Visit health.mo.gov/cancer for more important tips on surviving cancer.



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Information Provided in Partnership With the MDHSS Section for Community Health Services and Initiatives