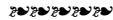


HOW TO REACH US

If you have any suggestions for topics, articles or just need to talk to us, please feel free to contact us. You can reach **LET'S TALK..... NEWSLETTER** at Forum Health's Cancer CareCenters by calling (330) 740-4152 or (800) 222-4603.



There is no failure except in no longer trying.
-Elbert Hubbard

FEELINGS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOU

Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, CPDS, OCN, CHES

Living with cancer is challenging. Keeping a positive attitude can help you feel better mentally and physically.

\Maintain hope.

A diagnosis of cancer can seem devastating. It can be frightening and difficult to cope with. There are lots of things you can do yourself to manage cancer. A strong will to recover can help you get through rough periods.

\Be alert to signs of depression.

It's normal to feel sad about your cancer and any related problems. But if these feelings become overwhelming, it's important to get help. Signs of depression include:

- \Deep or intense feelings of sadness
- \Loss of interest in activities
- \Anxiety or restlessness
- \Physical signs, such as sleep or eating problems, loss of energy, headaches and other complaints

These can be signs of other problems, so be sure to talk to your doctor about them if the signs are severe or lasting.

\Be kind to yourself.

Treat yourself to something you enjoy (new clothes, or an outing with friends). Surround yourself with love and laughter.

\Boost your self-esteem.

Cancer and its treatments can affect your appearance and your feelings about yourself.

If you're facing changes in your appearance or body functioning, it may help to:

- \Get information about how your body will change. This may help ease fears.
- \Take time to grieve your loss. Don't try to deny or ignore any changes. As you learn to accept your loss, you can begin to adjust to any body changes.
- \Think of your body as a whole. A change in one part of your body does not mean you're less attractive or a different person inside.
- \Look your best. Taking an interest in your hair, clothes, etc., can help you feel better about yourself.

\Turn to your sources of help.

Talking with family, friends and others can help you maintain a healthy outlook on life. Talk with your healthcare team or consider seeking professional counseling if you feel overwhelmed.

ALOPECIA

Written by: Pam Stephenson, RN, MSN, CS, OCN, CHPN

Because hair cells grow very fast, they are easily damaged by chemotherapy and radiation therapy. This hair loss, also known as alopecia (al-o-pe-cia), is usually temporary. Even though we tend to think of hair loss as affecting the hair of the scalp, it can actually affect hair on any part of the body. Not all chemotherapy drugs will cause hair loss. Your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist can tell you if hair loss is a likely side effect of your treatment. Let's look closer at the differences between hair loss from chemotherapy versus radiation therapy.

Chemotherapy

Hair loss due to chemotherapy will usually begin about two weeks after the first dose of chemotherapy. Hair loss may appear "patchy" at first and may progress to

full hair loss, within one to two months. Three to five months after the chemotherapy is completed, your hair will begin to grow back. It is not unusual for the new growth of hair to be of a different texture or color. It is exciting to see what the hair is like when it returns.

Radiation Therapy

Only hair that is in the treatment field during radiation therapy is affected. Therefore, radiation delivered directly to the head will cause hair loss there. People getting radiation to the lung or breast, for example, will not lose the hair on their head. Hair loss will usually begin approximately two or three weeks after treatments start. This hair loss is usually temporary and you should notice re-growth several weeks after treatments are finished. Only if it is necessary to receive high doses of radiation will hair not grow back. Your doctor or nurse should be able to tell you if hair re-growth is expected.

Tips for Hair Care

There are several things that you can do to make your hair loss easier to deal with:

- ☞ If you know that hair loss will likely occur with your treatments, shop for a wig or turban early. Shopping for a wig while you still have your natural hair will make it easier for you to choose a more natural looking style. It is also doubtful that you will feel like shopping for a head covering once your hair is gone. Keep in mind that many insurance plans will partially cover the cost of a wig. Check with your insurance company about a “wig prosthesis” plan.
- ☞ You may find that hats, turbans, and scarves are more comfortable while you are at home or in more casual surroundings. The cotton from these fabrics allows your scalp to breathe easier and is less irritating.
- ☞ Use mild “baby” shampoos and hair products.
- ☞ Do not perm or color your hair once chemotherapy starts.
- ☞ Use only soft hairbrushes.
- ☞ Do not use curling irons, hot rollers, or the high (hot) setting on your hairdryer.

Although hair loss does not carry the physical problems that other cancer treatment side effects have, the emotional weight that it carries can be heavy. It may be helpful to visit a support group where others who have lived with alopecia may offer suggestions about how to best deal with it; or

to just understand how it feels. Hair loss is one of the most obvious signs of cancer treatment, and many feel that their hair loss makes public the fact that “I am on chemotherapy.” It is OK to feel frustrated and discouraged about this problem. But remember if something is bothering you – talk about it!

ALTERNATIVE, COMPLEMENTARY, INTEGRATIVE THERAPY.....WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, CPDS, OCN, CHES

You may hear terms such as alternative, questionable, unorthodox, unconventional, new age, integrative, holistic, natural or herbal used to describe therapies. Different people use these words to mean different things. Standard or conventional treatment refers to mainstream medical treatments that have been tested following a strict set of guidelines and found to be safe and effective. Alternative therapy refers to treatments that have not been proven to be effective in treating a particular disease and are taken instead of conventional treatment. Examples of these include hydrogen peroxide, hydrazine sulfate, essiac tea, shark cartilage, and cancell.

Complementary therapy refers to supportive methods that are used along with conventional treatments. Examples include relaxation training, acupuncture, biofeedback, and positive affirmation. Complementary methods do not cure disease; rather they help control symptoms and improve well being. Integrative therapy refers to the combination of mainstream and complementary methods.

Some herbal extracts (like echinacea, ginkgo, or valerian root) can actually be very potent or even dangerous, especially in combination with other medications. So be sure to talk to your doctor about any therapy you are considering. There are many complementary methods you can safely use along with standard treatment to relieve symptoms or side effects, ease pain, and to help you enjoy life more. Complementary methods that some people have found helpful when used along with medical treatment include aromatherapy, art therapy, bio feedback, massage, meditation, music therapy, prayer, t'ai chi, and yoga. Be wary of any method that

claims it can cure cancer. Remember, to talk to your doctor about any therapy you might be thinking about!

Evaluating Nutrition Quackery

Written by Pam Evans RD, LD, CDE

Many uninformed or even dishonest individuals are rushing to fill the gap between what science knows and what cancer survivors want to know. Makers of pills, powders and other products may attempt to profit by survivors' desire for information by touting unverified health claims. With the advent of the Internet, rumors about diet and cancer can spread around the world in minutes. Although many unproven methods of cancer treatment are relatively harmless, some are quite toxic and expensive. When conventional treatment options (mainstream medical treatments that have been tested following a strict set of guidelines and found to be safe and effective) seem to be less than effective, it is a natural reaction to start considering other options. However, be very careful about where your information and your products come from.

Here are several "clues" useful for the detection of questionable products or information:

Develop a healthy doubt about products that use the following words in labels or ads:

ancient	all natural
miraculous	pure
exclusive	organic
secret	detoxification
cure	cleansing
breakthrough	balancing body
oxygenation	chemistry
enzyme deficiency	freedom of choice
	vitamin therapy

Look for claims that are too good to be true. If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

Remember that the broader the claim, the less believable it is (ex: if it cures lots of ailments).

Beware of products that do not have an ingredient list.

Beware of products that you can get only through the mail or through "special" distributors.

Beware of products that put down the health profession or stress opposition or disapproval by the health profession.

Ask for references. Be doubtful of testimonials and "research" by experts who are not fully identified.

If you decide to seek alternative treatment, ask for the advice of your healthcare provider to help you make an informed decision. Healthcare providers work hard to keep up with new developments. Their years of training and experience come in handy in making out what is reliable information and what may not be.

Maintaining healthy doubt is perhaps the most useful thing to do. Use your common sense. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

PATIENT AND FAMILY QUOTES

Compiled by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, CPDS, OCN, CHES

My Mom always said, "there's comfort in company." I have learned that through my life's journey. That cliché holds true in cancer and it's treatment. It is comforting to know that someone else has felt or experienced the same as you have. It helps to hear these things and feel as though they are expected or "normal". The following are quotes from people living with cancer or healthcare professionals openly sharing information and tips they found most helpful in getting through their treatments as comfortably as possible.

"Once my doctors told me I had cancer, my mind traveled at warp speed. One second, I'd think about my job....the next my wife....the next our children....the next my mom and dad, brothers, sister, and other relatives...the next life in general...the next death. When traveling at warp speed, the content of my thoughts followed no particular pattern. Tracking my experiences in a calendar or journal helped me gain some control and cope with it."

-Cancer Survivor

"Think of getting information like eating 10 dinners...you would never eat 10 dinners in one day. You would spread the dinners out. It's the same as with the information...break it into small parts so you can digest what's important to you."

-Cancer Survivor

“ As you go through treatment you’ll want to learn what role everyone on your healthcare team plays.....otherwise it can seem confusing. You may want to identify one member of your team that you feel comfortable with and really trust...someone who can be your ‘director of care’...someone who can help answer questions and explain the next steps.”

-Healthcare Team Member

“Throughout my cancer treatments, my doctors, family and friends were really supportive...but they could never really understand what I was going through. Sometimes I felt so alone and isolated. Joining a support group gave me a chance to express my feelings...I could finally connect with others who knew exactly what I was going through.”

-Cancer Survivor

ALL STRESSED UP AND NO PLACE TO GO?

Written by Mary C. Morris, LSW, Adult Oncology Social Worker

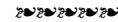
Research has recently shown that 60 to 90% of physician office visits are related to stress. Stress is defined as a perception of threat or danger that requires a behavioral change. When we can’t calmly make and deal with the change, we open ourselves up to many physical symptoms. As Americans, we are used to a fast-paced life style, unbalanced diets, and setting high expectations. When confronted with the possibility of illness for ourselves, or a friend, or loved one, we are at a loss with how to deal with the stresses it brings.

How do we change our lifestyle and manage to still feel in control? The answer is simply to try one step at a time. The first step is to try and “stay in the moment”. This is difficult to do when other family and friends are involved in the process of prevention and care and everyone is having different “moments”. However, it is important not to have too many items on our plate. It is also important not to project too many “what nexts” during the “what nows”.

Next, we should learn to “let go”. Perhaps we are burdened by household tasks, muddled relationships, and unfinished business. If it isn’t something that need be immediately considered put

it aside, and deal with it when you feel better equipped to do so.

Try something new, or bring out an old activity that gave you a pleasant interlude in the past. Always remember that exercise, proper rest, and a balanced diet will also contribute significantly to your well being.



Where the road bends abruptly, take short steps.

-Ernest Bramah

WHY ME?

Written by Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, CPDS, OCN, CHES

Often one of the first questions someone asks after they have been diagnosed is “What did I do?” or “Why me?” Since doctors cannot say for sure what causes cancer, many people have their own ideas about why they have the disease. Some people believe they are being punished for something they did or failed to do in the past. Some people think that if they had done something differently, they could have prevented the disease. Most people wonder if they caused the cancer themselves.

All of these thoughts or beliefs are common, but cancer is not a punishment for past actions. It is much harder to cope with the disease if you blame yourself for getting it. The important thing is to focus on taking care of yourself now! A positive attitude and concentration on healing your body is the task you need to throw yourself into. Remember that the present (time) is a gift!

