



## After the Diagnosis: Strategies for Each Day

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- **Remember your individuality.** Don't dwell on statistics. Cancer affects each person differently. Cancer can affect even people who have the same cancer type differently. Your personal values and goals will also influence which treatments will be best for you.
- **Educate yourself.** You are in charge of your health. Learn as much as you can to feel comfortable about your diagnosis and treatment plan. The more you know, the more confident you may feel about your choices.
- **Focus on healing.** Sometimes people living with cancer feel like a victim. Try to let go of these feelings so you can begin to move on. Focus all of your anger, disappointment and frustration into fighting cancer, and enjoying life.
- **Be proactive.** Your doctor can tell you what changes you should anticipate during treatment. If hair loss is a possible side effect, find an image specialist to help you feel more comfortable with your appearance. Prepare yourself now so you will be able to cope better later.
- **Establish a support system.** Staying connected with others can be empowering in itself. A network of friends, family, community members and other people living with cancer can be an essential source of support and encouragement at this time.
- **Communicate your feelings.** Share your thoughts and feelings with friends, family and your care providers. You may feel frustrated if others withhold information from you, or if people expect you to be positive all the time. By expressing your feelings, you can all gain strength from each other.
- **Anticipate reactions from others.** Some people around you may withdraw or distance themselves from you for fear of saying the wrong thing. Others may have questions and concerns. Determine how you will deal with these situations so you are comfortable with the outcome.
- **Try to maintain your normal lifestyle.** Staying involved in work and leisure activities may help you feel more in control and less off-balance. You will still need to be open to adjusting your daily routine as necessary, but try to maintain your normal lifestyle as much as possible.
- **Accept help.** Enlisting the help of others may help take some of the burden off of you. It is also a way to maintain social ties and reduce a sense of isolation. Let friends and family help with errands, household chores, accompanying you to appointments, etc.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eating a healthy diet, getting enough rest and exercising, when recommended by your doctor, can be empowering. Caring for your overall health may give you more energy and help reduce the stress of cancer and its treatment.
- **Develop your own coping strategies.** What comforted you through difficult times before cancer may help ease your worries now. Talking to a close friend, counselor, or religious leader may help. You could also try new coping strategies (i.e., relaxation techniques, keeping a journal, participating in a new activity or hobby).
- **Join the fight against cancer.** Many cancer survivors feel more empowered when they get involved in the fight against cancer (i.e., become a Cancer Fighter). You may decide to volunteer for fundraising events with your local cancer society, participate in cancer walks, and/or become a cancer advocate by supporting a cause, idea, or policy.

*This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical guidance.  
Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to making decisions about your medical care.*