

MANAGING STRESS

AND STAYING POSITIVE

Cancer can be difficult both physically and emotionally. Taking positive steps will help to keep your body strong. Combining this with a positive attitude will help you to be better equipped to manage cancer treatments.

TIPS TO STAY POSITIVE

- Make sure you do the things that make you happy, like spending time with your family and friends.
- Know that you're not alone, that your friends and family all want to help. Don't isolate yourself; stay involved with others.
- Support groups and religious organizations can be a source of strength for some people. Talking to a member of the clergy may help you.
- If you are experiencing symptoms of depression (see chart to the right), talk to your doctor immediately. He or she may recommend counseling.
- Participate in regular daily activities. Go to the movies, read, listen to music — keep yourself busy.
- Exercise, even a little, if you can. Aerobic exercise and general physical activity will help keep both your body and mind active and focused on something other than your treatments.
- Try some simple relaxation techniques (refer to the other side of this sheet).



SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex?
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability

Talk to your doctor if you experience any of these symptoms. Your healthcare professional will determine what treatment, if any, is appropriate for you.

DID YOU KNOW?

UP TO HALF OF ALL CANCER PATIENTS MAY EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION.

MANAGING STRESS

It is understandable for you to be feeling stress, and now is the time when you need to eliminate as much stress as you can. Here are some tips and relaxation techniques that can help you deal with how you are feeling and get the support that you need.

TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS

- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and tobacco. These substances add stress to your body and increase your heart rate.
- Surround yourself with people and places you love.
- Seek spirituality, if you so choose.
- Seek the information you need when faced with a new situation.
- Learn to maintain your composure and remain calm.
- Keep a positive outlook and self-image.
- Keep your mind as active as your body.
- Find support groups. Talk to others who have experienced similar treatments.
- Try some relaxation techniques like focused breathing, music therapy, and imagery.

MUSIC THERAPY

Music can soothe anxiety, reduce tension, give you a general sense of well-being, and help you relax.

- Express yourself while listening to music. If music inspires you to get up and do something or your mind begins to wander, allow yourself to respond.
- Bring music, a headset, and a portable CD player or MP3 player with you to your tests and treatments. Picture the type and style of music that you enjoy listening to the most. It will make the time pass faster.

IMAGERY/ VISUALIZATION

Imagining calming pictures in your mind can help you decrease anxiety, fall asleep, manage physical symptoms, or prepare yourself for treatments.

- Don't be afraid to try imagery, even if you have difficulty creating mental pictures.
- The more senses and details you can include in your images, the more lifelike and effective they will be.
- Let your imagination freely create a scene. Imagine pleasing sounds and smells, and feel the coolness and texture of the objects you envision.



FOCUSED BREATHING

Deep, rhythmic breathing can relax the body and focus the mind, helping to relieve anxiety, depressed feelings, pain and fatigue.

- Sit or lie down in the position that is most comfortable for you. Inhale slowly and deeply, breathing through your nose and keeping your mouth closed.
- Imagine your breath filling up your lower abdomen, then your stomach, then your chest. Then slowly release all the air, pausing briefly before beginning again.
- You do not need to control your breathing. Just observe it as it becomes steadier and deeper and more relaxed.

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Information provided by the American Dietetic Association
and the American Institute for Cancer Research

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