



New England Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

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Tips for the Cancer Survivor

- People who care want to help, but don't always know what to do. Give friends and extended family a concrete list with specific tasks they can do to help.
- It takes a village. Say yes to offers of support.
- Establish a phone chain or utilize e-mail to keep people informed. This is particularly helpful during acute times when energy is low.
- If possible, attend a support group. Research demonstrates that there is a strong therapeutic value to group support.
- Knowledge is power. Gather information on your particular diagnosis and treatment options. If you don't have the energy, recruit someone you trust.
- Choose your doctor carefully so that you are not second guessing treatment decisions down the line.
- Write out your questions in advance of your appointments. Preparation helps both you and your doctor. Consider taping your appointment.
- Don't go to appointments alone, even when you are expecting good news. If a partner/spouse is unavailable, take a friend. When it is good news, celebrate!
- Expect to wait. Bring things to keep yourself occupied and keep a flexible schedule.
- Try to maintain as much normalcy in your life as possible during the various stages of the treatment/illness.
- When in treatment slow down and take it one step at a time. Try to stay in the present time.
- Identify sources of stress and do your best to avoid or minimize them.
- Do the activities you enjoy whenever possible. (This is particularly important for getting through the tough times.)
- You may get inundated with advice and information from well meaning friends. Use what works for you and ignore the rest.
- Explore and develop self-care strategies that work for you: meditation, prayer, diet, exercise, taking naps, imagery, excursions into nature, journaling and other creative forms of expression, etc.
- It is important for the survivor to take care of him/herself and conserve energy. Moderate exercise can actually help increase energy levels which can change frequently during the course of treatment/illness. Listen to your body!
- It's true what they say- laughter is the best medicine. Try to incorporate humor into your life. It is good for the immune system!

A cancer diagnosis most often means a marathon, not a sprint.

Pace yourself.