

Tips for Cancer Patients

You are an individual

So often a cancer diagnosis or treatment plan is given to you with percentages and averages. Remember, you are an individual and your cancer journey is your own. You will respond to your treatment in your own way.

There is great anti-nausea medicine

Cancer treatment has changed and so has the ability to manage side effects. Unfortunately, for dramatic affect, movies and media still lead us to believe that cancer treatment will make you extremely ill and exhausted. That is not necessarily the case.

There is fantastic anti-nausea medicine available. Not feeling nauseous will go a long way in helping you to maintain your spirits and have a positive outlook. There are also non-pharmaceutical methods for combating side effects such as pain, nausea, exhaustion, sleeplessness, and neuropathy. Sea-sickness bands, acupressure or acupuncture, massage, meditation, and yoga can all be helpful. The Elixir Fund can provide you with more information about these complementary therapies and help you access them in your local community. You may [contact us](#) for more information.

Treatment notebook

A treatment notebook is a wonderful resource. In it you can keep copies of your lab work, a list of your medications and dosages, a copy of your health history. You will most likely see a variety of doctors and each time you will have to fill out your health history. Having a copy will make it easier for you to fill it out or will allow a friend or family member to fill it out if you are not feeling well. This may also prove helpful for insurance purposes.

Have a place for business cards. Feel free to ask any physician that you meet with for his or her business card. This will not only help you to keep track your various doctors, but it will also make it easier for you to contact your doctor if you have any questions.

Have blank paper in your notebook where you can write down questions when they occur to you. Again, this will make it easier for you when you do speak with your doctor. You will not have to stress trying to remember your questions.

A blanket or comforter

Whether you are doing your treatment in the hospital or on an outpatient basis, it is nice to have a cozy blanket that is all your own. Chemotherapy drips may take hours and depending upon the hospital or treatment room, you may get cold.

Individual or lap blankets are easy to pack but still large enough to wrap up in, and provide great comfort.

DVD/CD player

A portable DVD or CD player with your favorite movies or music is a great option. Again, while sitting during a multi-hour drip, having your choice of movies is a great way to help pass the time.

Laughter is wonderful medicine so we suggest that you stock up on funny movies.

Comfortable clothes and shoes or socks

If you are doing your treatment in the hospital, you do not necessarily have to wear a hospital gown. Bring clothes that you like to wear. This will go a long way in keeping you from feeling sick. It is helpful if they are roomy to make it easier for changing IVs, etc.

It is great if you can keep moving while you are in the hospital as well. Take a few laps around the hospital, or go outside and get some fresh air. This is a great way to reconnect with the world around you.

Decorations

If you have to be in the hospital for an extended period of time (even just a few days) bring pictures, posters, or drawings with you. Feel free to decorate with anything that will help to brighten your room and make you feel more positive about your surroundings. Hang pictures of your family and friends, or put up pictures of a favorite destination, or one you have not yet visited. The pictures will give you something to think about outside of the hospital and help you to look towards the future, beyond treatment.