



CANCER*care*[®]
Inform[®]

If You've Just Been Diagnosed...

"You have cancer." While these are possibly the most devastating words we can hear from a doctor, many of us who receive a cancer diagnosis come to learn that there are options. There are treatments. Most of all, there is hope. CancerCare helps individuals at any stage of cancer, but many people tell us that we were instrumental in helping them figure out their first steps on their journey, when they were least focused and most overwhelmed.

When you or someone you love receives a cancer diagnosis, CancerCare recommends the following course of action:

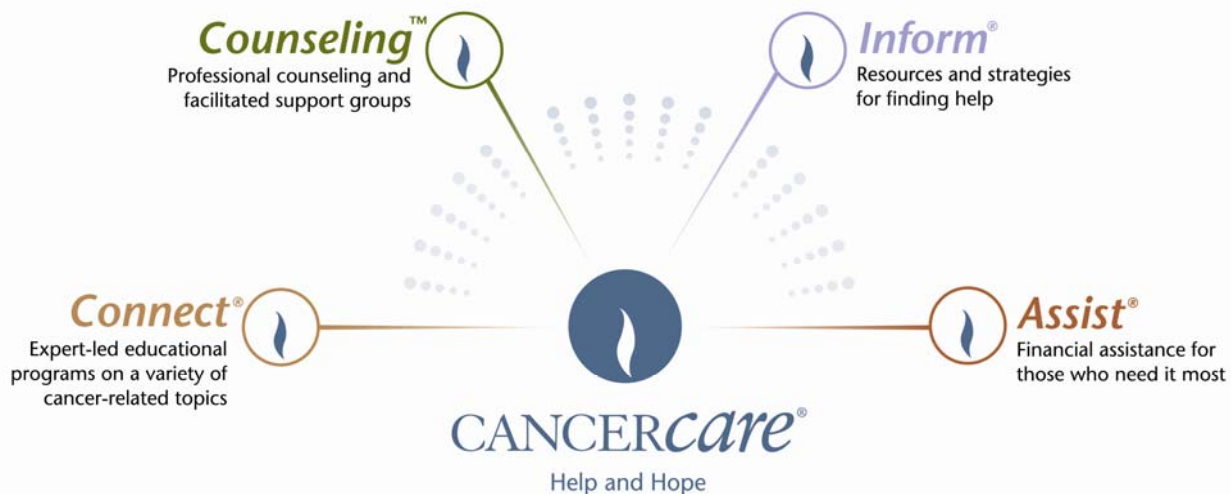
- **Form a good health care team.** The doctor who diagnosed your cancer will be one of many professionals who will become part of your team. Medical oncologists, nurses, social workers, and psychologists, as well as nurses' aides, home care professionals, nutritionists and the clergy, can all play significant and unique roles in your healing process. Your family and friends are a crucial part of your health care team.
- **Understand the roles played by each member of your health care team.** Your oncologist is the member of your team that organizes your treatment plan. He or she may work with an oncology nurse who helps you manage treatment side effects, gives more information about the treatment you will be receiving, and schedules your next diagnostic procedure.
- **Understand what your insurance will and will not cover.** Only when faced with a medical crisis do many people learn how their HMO, other health coverage or entitlements work, what services are covered, and what reimbursement procedures to follow. To anticipate any problems, use the toll-free number provided by your health insurance carrier. Find out whom you should call in your doctor's office or hospital when your insurance company has a question about a procedure or specific charge for medications or tests.
- **Be an advocate.** You must remember that as a cancer patient, you are a consumer of services, and are entitled to the best care possible. Ask questions about the care you are getting and who is providing it. Make lists of questions before speaking with your medical team. Write down their answers and read back what you wrote to check for accuracy. Tape record the sessions so you will not forget any of the information. Seek second opinions so that you feel well-informed and confident about your decisions.

Most importantly, take care of yourself. Though you may have others around you who are supportive, you must make sure that you take the best possible care of yourself. The better you care for yourself, the better able you will be to cope with your diagnosis. Consider joining a CancerCare support group for people with cancer or a program near to your home or treating hospital. Keeping a journal, expressing feelings and thoughts artistically, getting appropriate exercise, and joining a yoga or tai-Chi class are examples of activities other people diagnosed with cancer have found helpful.

CancerCare Can Help

CancerCare's staff of professional oncology social workers can help you cope with a diagnosis of cancer. Our social workers offer people with cancer and their loved ones individual counseling and support groups by telephone, online, or in person. CancerCare also offers education, practical help and referrals to other resources that can help you cope with a cancer diagnosis.

The CANCERcare® Constellation of Services



CancerCare's services are provided free of charge to anyone affected by cancer

1-800-813-HOPE (4673) • www.cancercares.org

