

Coping With Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

A diagnosis of non-small cell lung cancer can be overwhelming. The time ahead will be very important to you. This fact sheet gives advice on how to:

- Understand your diagnosis and treatment plan
- Communicate with your health care team
- Build a network of resources and support
- Care for yourself emotionally



What Is Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer and How Is It Treated?

Lung cancer occurs when the cells in the lung begin to change and grow uncontrollably, forming a tumor (also called a lesion or a nodule), which can be either cancerous or benign. Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) accounts for most lung cancer cases. It tends to be slower to progress than small cell lung cancer (SCLC) and has three main types, according to the kind of cell that it originated in. These are adenocarcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and large cell carcinoma.

The type of NSCLC that you have is an important factor in determining which treatments may work best for you. Treatment approaches include surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, immunotherapy and targeted therapy. Your health care team can recommend reliable publications and websites to learn more. Knowing what to expect can help you feel more in control.



How Can I Stay Informed About My Cancer?

- **Communicate with your health care team.** Your doctors and nurses are the central part of your team. It also can include pharmacists, oncology social workers, counselors, patient navigators and more. They all help you make decisions about your care.
- **Keep your health care appointments.** Prepare your questions before your appointments and write down or record the answers to help you remember them. Think about bringing a friend or loved one for support.
- **Contact health care organizations.** CancerCare's A Helping Hand is a listing of state and national organizations with advice and resources. This can be found online at www.cancercare.org/helpinghand.
- **Be aware of health care disparities.** Lung cancer is sometimes discovered later for certain groups, such as Black patients and the uninsured. This may affect the stage of cancer and resources needed for treatment.



What Are Some Resources That Can Help?

You do not need to cope with cancer on your own. There are local and national support services available to assist you.



Financial Assistance. Many organizations provide help with medical billing, insurance coverage and reimbursement issues. There are also financial assistance organizations for people who cannot afford the cost of their medications. Good places to start are the websites of the Cancer Financial Assistance Coalition (www.cancerfac.org) and the Medicine Assistance Tool (medicineassistancetool.org).



Benefits and Entitlements. Local and national government agencies can give you information on Social Security, Medicaid, disability issues, SNAP benefits and more. Check your local phone directory for listings or visit www.usa.gov/benefits.



Housing/Lodging. Lodging for families who need to travel for treatment may be found at The Hope Lodge of the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org/support-programs-and-services/patient-lodging) and the National Association of Hospital Hospitality Houses (www.nahhh.org). Joe's House offers an online database with lodging information across the U.S. (www.joeshouse.org).



How Do I Help Myself Emotionally?

Cancer may not just affect yourself, but everyone around you. It is important to take care of your feelings. You may find emotional support from friends, family and loved ones. There are also many organizations, such as CancerCare, that provide support services to help people affected by cancer.

CancerCare provides one-on-one counseling and support groups to connect you with others in a safe and supportive environment. We can also help find other resources to help you in many ways.

CancerCare® Can Help

For over 80 years, CancerCare has empowered millions of people affected by cancer through free counseling, resource navigation, support groups, educational resources, advocacy and direct financial assistance. Our oncology social workers improve the lives of people diagnosed with cancer, caregivers, survivors and the bereaved, by addressing their emotional, practical and financial challenges.

To learn more, visit www.cancercare.org or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

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