

As a young adult with cancer, you may face challenges that not all cancer patients face while feeling out of step with your peers. This fact sheet will discuss:

- **Staying informed and organized**
- **School, work and insurance**
- **Your self-image, relationships and fertility**
- **Emotional concerns you may have**



Be Informed and Organized

Become informed. Make sure you understand your diagnosis and treatment. Be sure to ask your doctors any questions you have about current and future plans for your care.

Prepare for appointments. Write down your questions before appointments. Bring a friend or loved one to help, or you can also record appointments for future reference.

Understand your health and activity levels. Cancer can affect your physical strength, your appetite and stamina. Your health care team can help you prepare for these changes.



School, Work and Insurance

Look into flexible schedules. Consider short-term disability or taking leave from school during your treatment, if possible. Your health care team may also help find a treatment schedule that meets your individual needs.

Know your rights. You are not automatically disqualified from employment, insurance or health care due to cancer. Contact your health care team or call CancerCare for advice about work, access to insurance and information about legal aid.



Self-Image, Intimacy and Fertility

Changes to your body. Losing weight or losing your hair can be side effects of cancer treatment, affecting your sense of self. Wear clothes that fit your current size or consider wearing a wig or comfortable hats. Feelings about your body are valid and real.

Physical intimacy. Cancer can impact how you view dating and relationships. Read educational materials about sexuality and cancer and continue to pay attention to your needs. Ask your doctor or nurse to refer you to good information.

Preserving your fertility. The ability to conceive a child can be impacted by some forms of cancer and treatment. Using a sperm bank or harvesting your eggs may be options to preserve your fertility. Speak to a specialist, and your health care team can help.



Your Emotions and Finding Support

Care for yourself. Consider what gave you joy prior to your diagnosis and find ways of doing those things during your new routine, from listening to music or practicing yoga to hanging out with friends.

Seek professional support. Counseling is available to discuss the powerful emotions related to cancer. Support groups are places to meet others going through the same experiences.

Many of these services are now easily accessible over the phone and online. CancerCare provides free counseling with licensed oncology social workers who can help connect you to other resources in your community.

Reach out to loved ones. Friends and family can help with anything from hearing your concerns to helping with errands and chores. Remember that you are in control of your needs. If you do not need help immediately, you can say, “Not right now, but I will ask as soon as I do.” They may not always understand your diagnosis or treatment: keep them informed as much as you need. Your treatment decisions are yours to make.

CancerCare® Can Help

For over 80 years, CancerCare has empowered millions of people affected by cancer through free counseling, support groups, educational resources, advocacy and 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 us at www.cancercare.org.

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

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