

Managing Emotions During Cancer Treatment

Cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, can take a toll on a person mentally, physically and emotionally.¹ Recognizing and managing your moods is an important step in self-care and your mental and emotional well-being.²

It's normal to experience a wide range of emotions during or after chemotherapy.³ In fact, you should expect them. Everybody is unique and experiences different emotions throughout their journey.⁴

Regularly discuss your feelings with your cancer care team and ask for help if needed.



An estimated one-third of people treated for cancer experience a common mental health disorder like anxiety after diagnosis.⁵

RECOGNIZE The first step is to recognize common feelings associated with treatments.^{3,4}

Loneliness

It's easy to feel isolated after treatment. Consider reaching out to support groups to speak with others who can relate to your concerns.



Anxiety and Depression

It's normal to feel anxious, tense, or sad. If these feelings are overwhelming, ask your care team for help and resources.



Stress

The physical, emotional, and social effects of cancer treatments can be overwhelming and stressful. Reducing stressors in your life can help make you feel calmer, less anxious, and better-suited to handle different situations.



Anger

You may lose your temper over your diagnosis, with your care team, or with an unsupportive relative. Talk to others about your anger. People have found that when they express strong feelings like anger or sadness, they're more able to let go of them.



Addressing Your Emotional Well-Being

MANAGE

This may surprise you, but psychological care is normal, essential, and an integral part of cancer care. Addressing your psychological well-being can help you relax, regain your sense of control, cope better during treatment, overcome anxiety and depression, and enjoy life.⁶



Tips for improving your emotional well-being³

- **Look for the positive** – Be hopeful and have faith.
- **Control what you can** – Set a schedule and make beneficial lifestyle changes.
- **Express your feelings** – Reach out and engage with family and friends, others affected by cancer, a spiritual leader, etc.
- **Make healthy lifestyle choices** – Pay attention to your needs for rest, nutrition, exercise, and private time.
- **Seek professional counseling** – Consider individual, couple, family and/or group therapy.
- **Find ways to relax** – Consider techniques such as meditation, relaxation exercises or stress management interventions.
- **Seek out things you enjoy** – Refocus your mind by doing what you like, such as hobbies or other creative outlets.
- **Be active** – Exercise, stretch, or get out of the house to do something to help take your mind off of worries.

Chemo brain⁷

You may experience “chemo brain” – mental clouding or fogginess – during and after cancer treatment. Signs of this often-temporary cognitive impairment include memory lapses, confusion, problems finding words and short attention spans.

Here are some useful ways to help you cope with chemo brain:

- Be organized and maintain a daily calendar.
- Complete demanding tasks at the time of the day when your energy levels are the highest.
- Exercise your brain by taking a class, doing word puzzles, or learning something new.
- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat healthy.
- Set up and follow routines.

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