



# Health Awareness

## Seven Tips To Cope With Cancer Treatment Ⓣ

(NAPSA)—The uncertainties surrounding the cancer treatment process can leave many feeling anxious or even overwhelmed. The patient Web site of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), [www.PLWC.org](http://www.PLWC.org), recommends several steps people living with cancer can take to cope with their disease and maximize the quality of their lives during treatment.

### 1. Don't Go It Alone

It is important to understand your disease. During the initial visit, absorbing the news of a cancer diagnosis and its unfamiliar medical language may be difficult. You may want to take a family member or friend, who will not only be supportive but can also act as your ears and memory. A tape recorder can also make for a great substitute. Keep in mind, however, that the companionship of a loved one can also help ease the stress of visits with your doctor.

### 2. Don't Be Afraid To Ask Questions

Studies show that people with cancer who are fully informed about their disease and treatment options usually tend to fare better and experience fewer side effects than those who simply follow doctors' orders. Being informed gives you some control over your disease. Don't be shy about telling your doctor if you are having trouble understanding an explanation, description or unfamiliar medical term. Your

doctor should make time to answer your questions, explain your disease and ensure you fully understand your available treatment options.

### 3. Confront Your Anxieties

Nearly 30 percent of people with cancer experience feelings of anxiety. It can be helpful for patients to talk with their doctor about what aspects of the treatment process they find frightening. According to Jamie Von Roenn, M.D., Chair of the ASCO Task Force on Pain and Symptom Management, the truth is often better than you might imagine. Asking your questions lets your health care provider know that you have concerns and the issues can then be addressed.

### 4. Get Online

Turn to reliable resources to learn about your specific cancer type and the treatment options available. People Living With Cancer ([www.PLWC.org](http://www.PLWC.org)), the patient Web site of ASCO, the world's leading professional society of doctors who treat people with cancer, features a wealth of doctor-approved cancer information on coping strategies, clinical trials and more than 80 types of cancer. The Web site also has links to other helpful cancer information resources on the Internet.

### 5. Address Side Effects Early On

There are more than 30 side effects associated with cancer

treatment. The most common include constipation, fatigue, hair loss, nausea and pain. Preventing side effects before they begin and treating symptoms early are the best ways to reduce discomfort. Talk with your doctor to develop a plan to manage the side effects associated with your specific cancer type and treatment. You will find that there are a wide variety of effective solutions available to you from medications to lifestyle and behavior changes.

### 6. Get Organized

Getting organized also allows you to take the time necessary to make important decisions. Many people find that being organized helps them gain better control over all the information they receive during their treatment. Having one place for all your care information, including insurance statements, prescriptions, appointment notes and test results can prevent frustration.

### 7. Don't Neglect Your Finances

Try to decide ahead of time how to adjust your budget to deal with any loss of income resulting from less time at work or expenses that are not covered by insurance. Consider making special arrangements with creditors. Enlist the help of a friend or family member to keep track of your regular monthly bills. Consider using a bill-paying service to ensure the peace of mind that your bills are being paid on time.