

Cancer Resources for the Innocent Bystander

or: Help! I don't know what to do!

This pathfinder is intended as an introduction to cancer topics for the non-patient.

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The facts are scary. According to statistics from the American Cancer Society, the probability of developing cancer is high (1 in 2 for adult men, 1 in 3 for adult women). So even if you never develop cancer, you (will) know someone who did. Since cancer – in some way – touches everyone, there is an overwhelming amount of information to wade through. This guide will give you a few places to start looking for answers.

General Information Sites

The American Cancer Society (ACS)

1-800-ACS-2345 or <<http://www.cancer.org>>

The website is a portal to a great deal of useful information.

-- Under the "We can Help" banner is a list of subjects, starting with "Choose cancer by type". Hover the mouse over the option that interests you and to the right appears sub-categories to select.

-- Lower on the homepage is an "In My Community" search box. Enter your zip code and you will get the contact information for your regional ACS office as well as local events and support groups.

Lance Armstrong Foundation – LIVESTRONG

<<http://www.livestrong.org>>

There are no topics specifically for the non-patient, but the many articles can provide valuable insight about the issues and fears that a cancer patient grapples with during treatment and afterwards.

National Cancer Institute (NCI) of the U.S. National Institutes of Health

<<http://www.cancer.gov>>

Well-organized government web-portal.

-- On the homepage, under "Cancer Topics" is the link "Coping with Cancer." Clicking on this link will direct you to a page that lists many articles about physical side effects, emotional issues, and near the bottom of the page is a section of links entitled "Information for Caregivers and Loved Ones" (described on other side).

WebMD.com

<<http://www.webmd.com>>

If you are just beginning your inquiries, this site is worth considering. Once you get used to the advertisements you can find a lot of introductory information about types of cancer, treatments, and medications. You do not need to register with the site to use it.

Dictionaries and Glossaries

American Cancer Society

Terms relating to chemotherapy

<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ETO/content/ETO_1_7X_Glossary_of_Terms_Relating_To_Chemotherapy.asp>

National Cancer Institute

Cancer Terms

<<http://www.cancer.gov/dictionary/>>

NCI Drug Dictionary

<< <http://www.cancer.gov/drugdictionary/>>>

National Cancer Institute's 'Information for Caregivers and Loved Ones'

The following are brochures or booklets available through NCI's website. They can be read on-line, downloaded as a PDF file, or you may order a copy.

When Someone You Love Is Being Treated for Cancer

Advice and tips for you. Addresses the special needs and issues of the caregiver.

Young People with Cancer: A Handbook for Parents

Information for the parent of a cancer patient.

When Your Parent Has Cancer: A Guide for Teens

Helping teens cope with the issues caused by a parent's cancer.

When Your Brother or Sister Has Cancer: A Guide for Teens

Helping the teen cope with cancer in a sibling.

Facing Forward: When Someone You Love Has Completed Cancer Treatment

One of the many "Facing Forward" booklets. After treatment is done, how to adjust?

When Someone You Love Has Advanced Cancer: Support for Caregivers

Information and advice for dealing with terminal cancer issues.

Other Advice and Information

If you live with the cancer patient, make sure that you have a support network too. There is no shame in asking for help. If you burn out, you cannot help your loved one.

Write down questions that come up between appointments. Bring the questions and a notebook to all appointments to record details of meetings with the medical providers. The Lance Armstrong LIVESTRONG website offers a "Survivorship Notebook" that can help store and organize important treatment information. You will only be charged the cost of shipping.

If you do not live with the cancer patient, keep the following in mind:

DO stay in touch – call or email regularly.

DON'T drop in for a visit – call ahead of time. Allow them to say no.

DO offer to relieve the primary caregivers: cooking, driving, keeping the patient company so they can take a break (even if it's just in the next room).

DON'T visit if you are sick. Even a minor cold can put a cancer patient in the hospital.

If you bring food, make sure the patient can appreciate your gift. A good source of information is:

Betty Crocker's Living with Cancer Cookbook: Easy Recipes and Tips through Treatment and Beyond

By Kris Ghosh, Linda Carson, and Elyse Cohen.

Published in 2001, it offers recipes and menus specifically tailored for the cancer patient's altered nutritional needs. It also explains what side-effects are common to the different treatments. Many libraries carry this title, and it is still available for purchase.

LOC: RC271.D52; Dewey: 641.5/631

An observation from the inside: We are far too accustomed to 'instant gratification,' doing something and seeing results right away. You are very unlikely to 'see' results. But please know that your efforts are not wasted. Even if your cancer patient does not have the physical resources to thank you, your actions support

them mentally – and that is often the harder battle to fight. Knowing that I had people wishing me well helped me a lot. It often helped me to get through each day.