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## **Self-Care Tips for Cancer Patients**

The importance of self-care for cancer patients is gaining attention, and for [good reason](#), according to the Canadian Breast Cancer Network. An informed patient is an empowered patient, one who can play a valuable role in the therapeutic process. This post from [Breast Cancer Action](#) will suggest ways to take better care of yourself during your battle against cancer.

### **Understanding the Challenges Before You**

Cancer patients typically face three primary challenges in administering self-care. These are:

1. Dealing with emotions such as depression.
2. Finding suitable support resources.
3. Coping with the effects of cancer and the methods used to treat it.

Let's look at each of these topics in more detail.

### **Recognizing When Depression Becomes a Problem**

Everyone feels down every now and then. But these feelings take on a different dimension when they become persistent and/or interfere with the quality of your life. CAMH notes that [common symptoms](#) of clinical depression include:

- Loss of interest in activities that once brought you joy.
- A sense that life is pointless.
- Continuing problems with insomnia.
- Hostility toward friends or family members.
- Fatigue unrelated to your cancer diagnosis or other physical conditions.

Here are some ways to deal with ongoing depression:

- Seek counseling from a trained therapist.
- Consider joining a support group for cancer patients.
- Ask your healthcare professional about antidepressant medications.
- Avoid putting up a false front. Denying the issues you're facing will only prolong their effects, causing harm to you and to those who care about you.
- Bring in [more positivity](#) to your home by decluttering and performing a house cleanse to remove negative energy.

### **Finding the Resources You Need**

You already have a group of skilled doctors working to help you. Nonetheless, accessing educational or other resources to maximize your self-care efforts is a good idea. Here are some tips for finding the assistance you need:

- Consult an [oncology social worker](#). These professionals are trained to help you learn about and assess your options. They also can provide valuable emotional and psychological support.
- If you're a spiritual person, then consider contacting a leader of your faith community. Many private organizations provide specialized services for cancer patients.
- Look for online sources presented by established medical and academic sources. Many universities, clinics, and healthcare professionals use the Internet to provide cancer patients and their loved ones with valuable information.
- Consult a nutritionist. Many cancer patients deal with appetite loss, and a nutritionist can help put together a plan to make sure you're getting the nutrients you need.
- Keep communication open. No doubt you'll be spending a lot of time on your phone, whether it's talking with the number of people and organizations noted above or using your smartphone to navigate your online resources. Be sure you always have a charger [at the ready](#), as the worst scenario is not having your phone powered up and operating when you need it most.

### **Coping with Chemotherapy**

Modern medicine has access to a wide range of cancer treatments. Chemotherapy is one option your doctor may recommend. Knowing what to expect during these treatments is important for your well-being. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Chemotherapy affects everyone differently. Your body's reaction to the medication may resemble that of others you know or differ in significant ways. Remember this fact as you undergo your treatment regimen; it can spare you from pre-judgments.
- Consider eating a small meal prior to your treatment. This can help you [to feel better](#) during the process.
- Take extra care to practice good hygiene during the post-treatment period, due to possible compromises in your immune system. Ask your doctor for more information.

## Managing the Physical Pain

Pain comes with many forms of cancer. Managing its effects is important for improving your quality of life during treatment. However, many pain medications carry [significant risks](#) of addiction or other problems. This is especially true of opioids. Here are some tips for using your pain medicines wisely:

1. Follow your doctor's or pharmacist's directions to the letter. Self-adjustment of medications is dangerous.
2. Advise your healthcare professional of any problems you may have with your medicines, including signs of addiction or dependence.
3. [Avoid mixing](#) pain medicine with alcohol or over-the-counter treatments for cold or flu symptoms.

The tips in this post can help you take on cancer and to become a more effective member of your health care team. Use them with these goals in mind.

[Breast Cancer Action](#) provides emotional and physical support for your well being in a positive, easy and informative way. Reach out for more information! 613.736.5921