

# MANAGING THE PRACTICAL CONCERNS OF YOUR LOVED ONE'S DIAGNOSIS

**A cancer diagnosis raises many practical concerns and challenges. There are appointments to track and bills to pay as well as paperwork to manage. As a caregiver, it likely falls on you to manage many of these tasks—in addition to keeping up with your usual responsibilities and filling in for some of the roles that used to be handled by your loved one.**

## TIPS FOR MANAGING THE PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO YOUR LOVED ONE'S CANCER

**Use a calendar.** There are many ways to keep track of appointments, including smart phones or a simple wall calendar. Either method is fine, but the important thing is to use it consistently. Record any appointments or events as soon as you know about them, and always check the calendar before you make plans.



**Get to know your entitlements and work benefits.** There are a number of federal and state programs that provide financial benefits to individuals and families, such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. A social worker can direct you to the governmental agencies that oversee these programs. Read CancerCare's fact sheet, "Cancer and the Workplace," to learn how the Americans with Disability Act and the Family Medical Leave Act can help.

**Familiarize yourself with your loved one's insurance policy.** Understand ahead of time what services are covered and what the co-payments will be for the various treatments your loved one may need.

**Keep important papers together in an accessible file.** Keep your loved one's medical information in one place, such as a three-ring binder. This makes it easy to find what you need quickly and convenient to carry everything with you to appointments. Organize the information in the way that works best for you. For example, you might have different dividers for prescription information, important phone numbers, lab tests or medical bills.

**Find resources in your community.** CancerCare's Online Helping Hand ([www.cancerca.org/helpinghand](http://www.cancerca.org/helpinghand)) is a searchable, online database of financial and practical assistance available for people with cancer. This comprehensive online tool features up-to-date contact information and descriptions for hundreds of national and regional organizations offering financial help to people with cancer. You can search by diagnosis, zip code and type of assistance.

**Speak with an oncology social worker.** Oncology social workers at CancerCare specialize in helping people cope with cancer. They can provide emotional support and help you develop a plan for dealing with practical challenges. They are also familiar with a wide range of resources for people with cancer and can provide you with referrals tailored to your needs.

**Ask for help from friends and family members.** The stress of caregiving can take a toll on the emotional and physical health of caregivers. Having friends and family members help with day-to-day tasks, such as grocery shopping, doing laundry, preparing meals or providing child care, can help prevent caregiver burnout. Invite people to become part of your caregiving network by asking them to do specific things. There are online tools to help you do this, such as My Cancer Circle™ ([www.mycancercircle.net](http://www.mycancercircle.net)). My Cancer Circle allows caregivers to coordinate volunteer activities such as cooking meals or transporting a loved one to appointments from their phone, when using the app. My Cancer Circle also provides a private space where members can offer words of support and encouragement.

**Join a support group for caregivers.** Other cancer caregivers can provide a wealth of information about how they have coped with similar challenges and resources or organizations they have found especially helpful. In addition, support groups provide a safe haven to express your feelings and share your experiences. CancerCare provide free support groups for people affected by cancer and their caregivers.

### **CancerCare® Can Help**

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include case management, counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by master's-prepared oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

To learn more, visit [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org) or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/CancerCare](https://facebook.com/CancerCare) | **Instagram:** @CancerCareUS | **Twitter:** @CancerCare

### **WAYS TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE CARE FOR THEIR PET DURING TREATMENT**

Though caring for a pet while undergoing cancer treatment can be challenging, keeping a pet in the home can be a source of comfort as your loved one goes through treatment. As a caregiver, there are practical ways you can help your loved one care for their pet(s):

- Pick up pet food or care supplies, which can be heavy.
- Clean up after their pet and make sure the pet's living space is clean.
- Spend time making sure the pet gets exercise or is groomed.
- Use tools like My Cancer Circle to organize support of daily pet needs.
- Make a plan for the pet in case your loved one is hospitalized or has extended time away from home.
- Find local resources that might help with practical needs such as dog walking, food, expenses and vet care.

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