

# Managing the Practical Concerns of Your Loved One's Diagnosis

**Cancer can be challenging in many ways. There are appointments to track and paperwork to manage. As a caregiver, much of this may be your responsibility. This fact sheet covers the following tips on how to manage these duties:**

- How to handle important information
- How to organize your care and duties



## Keep Important Information Close and Available

As you care for your loved one with cancer, try to keep what you need in easy-to-find places. This includes several types of information.

**Keep important papers together.** Keep your loved one's medical information in one safe place. This can be a folder or a three-ring binder. You should include everything from contact information for doctors, test results, prescription information and any documents you need, legal or otherwise.

**Become familiar with your loved one's insurance policy.** Try to learn your loved one's insurance coverage. Understand what services are covered and what the co-payments will be for the various treatments your loved one may need.

**Get to know your entitlements and work benefits.** A number of federal and state programs provide financial benefits to individuals and families. A social worker can help understand your rights. 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.

**Know where to get answers.** When caring for someone, new challenges can happen. Learn who the members of your loved one's health care team are. Know who to contact in case of emergency, changes in condition or new side effects of treatment.

**Ask an oncology social worker for help.** Oncology social workers at CancerCare can give emotional support and 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 for your needs.



## Organize Your Duties and Try to Plan Ahead

Try to take time to plan each day and week ahead. This can help you focus on the emotional side of caring for your loved one. It can also limit the stress of having to react to new developments.

**Use a calendar.** There are many ways to track appointments, including smart phones or a simple wall calendar. 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.

**Ask for practical help.** It might not be possible to do everything by yourself. You may even need help taking care of things in your own home. Friends and family members can help with grocery shopping, laundry, preparing meals and more.

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™ (<https://mycancercircle.net>). This allows caregivers to coordinate volunteer help from their phone, when using the app. My Cancer Circle also provides a private space where members can offer words of support and encouragement.

**Find resources in your community.** CancerCare's Helping Hand (<https://www.cancercare.org/helpinghand>) is an online database of financial and practical assistance available for people with cancer. It includes hundreds of national and regional organizations offering help to people with cancer and their caregivers.

**Ask for emotional help.** Do not be afraid of taking care of yourself. Keep up with your own appointments and take care of your own health. Consider joining a support group for caregivers who have a similar experience to yours. CancerCare provides 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 resource navigation, 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)**.

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*This fact sheet is supported by the Anna Fuller Fund, Bristol Myers Squibb and a grant from Genentech.*