



CANCERcare®

800-813-HOPE (4673)
info@cancercares.org
www.cancercares.org

fact sheet

MANAGING PRACTICAL CONCERNS RAISED BY METASTATIC BREAST CANCER

If you have been diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, or are caregiving for a loved one, you may feel overwhelmed with questions, concerns and responsibilities. As you manage medical treatments and cope with difficult emotions, it is important to know what sources of assistance are available and what you can do on your own to cope with metastatic breast cancer.

MANAGING PRACTICAL CONCERNS

Take an active role in your health care. Your health care team, which usually includes a nurse, doctor and a social worker, can help you learn what treatment options are right for you. Maintain open and honest communication with them to discuss any challenges or concerns that you are facing. Remember that you are a consumer of health care and should feel empowered by your role. The professional oncology social workers at CancerCare can also direct you to reliable resources that offer up-to-date information on metastatic breast cancer.

Get financial help. Nonprofit organizations such as CancerCare (www.cancercares.org) and the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org) provide financial help for practical costs such as transportation to and from treatment. The Partnership for Prescription Assistance (www.pparx.org) may provide help with insurance reimbursement and referrals to co-pay relief programs.

There are also federal and state programs that provide financial benefits to individuals and families. Government assistance programs providing financial help include Social Security (www.ssa.gov) and

the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (www.cms.hhs.gov).

CancerCare's fact sheet, "Sources of Financial Assistance," provides more information about seeking financial help. Another resource is CancerCare's A Helping Hand (www.cancercares.org/helpinghand). This 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.

Seek assistance from resources in your community. There are national and local resources available to assist you with the practical concerns of a cancer diagnosis. These resources may be able to help you with financial assistance, housing/lodging, home health care and transportation to and from treatment.

For example, local and county governments may offer low-cost transportation. Government agencies can give you information on Social Security, state disability, Medicaid, income maintenance and food stamps. The United Way (www.unitedway.org), U.S. Administration on Aging

(over)

(www.eldercare.gov) and the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org) can guide you to resources in your local community as well. Read CancerCare's fact sheet, "Finding Resources in Your Community," to learn more about getting help from your community.

MANAGING COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

Your body's reaction to treatment depends on a number of things such as length of treatment, dosage prescribed and your personal health history. Although side effects can be uncomfortable or even painful, there are many ways your health care team can provide you with relief. Listed below are some common side effects that you may experience with metastatic breast cancer and tips on ways to cope.

Bone loss. Breast cancer can destroy the bone and cause painful symptoms. There are a variety of prescription drugs available that are helpful in treating bone metastases and preventing bones from breaking. Talk to your doctor to learn more.

Chemobrain. Being unable to focus, having trouble finding words or forgetting things can be related to a condition called "chemobrain." If you notice any problems with your memory, attention span and concentration, talk with your health care team. To help manage chemobrain, consider making lists, keeping a record of all appointments and enlisting the help of a friend or relative to jog your memory of important things. Read CancerCare's fact sheet, "Coping with Chemobrain: Keeping Your Memory Sharp," for more information.

Mouth sores. Rinsing with salt and baking soda rinses several times day can help alleviate mouth sores. Patients can try a mix of ½ tsp. salt, ½ tsp. baking soda and 8 oz. water as a rinse. Magic mouthwashes are also available for purchase. Read CancerCare's fact sheet, "Coping With Mouth Sores During Treatment," for more information.

Peripheral neuropathy. Medications can help patients who feel pain and numbness in their hands and feet as a result of their cancer treatment. Treatments for neuropathy include oral drugs and topical creams. Patients may also consider speaking with an occupational therapist to learn tips and techniques that could help improve their quality of life. Read CancerCare's fact sheet, "Coping With Nerve Damage (Neuropathy)," for more information.

GET SUPPORT

It is helpful to keep in mind that there are many sources of support for people living with breast cancer. Oncology social workers understand the complex issues that can arise with a breast cancer diagnosis. CancerCare's professional oncology social workers can help, free of charge. To speak with a professional oncology social worker, call 800-813-HOPE (4673).

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 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 professional oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

To learn more, visit www.cancercare.org or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

Facebook: facebook.com/cancercare

Twitter: @cancercare

This fact sheet has been made possible by Cascadian Therapeutics.



CANCERcare®

National Office • 275 Seventh Avenue • New York, NY 10001

© 2017 CancerCare®