HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR COPING WITH CANCER DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Make plans to get together with friends, family or co-workers over the holidays. Trying to celebrate alone can be very difficult, so accept some invitations from others or join an organized group activity through local agencies or place of worship. Find the right balance between celebrating with family and friends and spending time on your own. Give yourself permission to pace your activities and to decline an invitation or two so that you have the energy to enjoy the gatherings that are most important to you.

Create a new holiday season tradition that makes the most of your energy. Change your usual holiday activities so you relieve yourself of some of the pressures of entertaining. Have a potluck, with family members each bringing a dish for the meal, have someone else host the meal or suggest eating out at a favorite restaurant.

Enjoy special moments. Try to focus on new traditions that have been established, rather than on how cancer has changed a holiday or special occasion.

Talk to your health care team about upcoming special events. They may be flexible about appointments in order to accommodate travel or other needs.

Be an innovative shopper or gift giver. Try online shopping this year. You can also make a gift of sharing your thoughts and feelings. Write a short note or make a phone call to let others know that you are thinking about them.

Express your feelings in ways that help you receive the support of the important people in your life. Tears can bring a sense of relief. Laughter can be relaxing. Sharing can be comforting. It is common to experience a mixture of anticipation, excitement and apprehension about the future. Let your feelings breathe, and talk them over with a loved one, friend or professional counselor.
Celebrate strengths you and your loved ones have developed. Many families who face the day-to-day challenges of cancer discover strengths and courage they didn’t know they had. Reflect on the strengths you have developed, and build on them during the holidays.

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 or call 800-813-HOPE (4673).

Facebook: facebook.com/CancerCare
Instagram: @CancerCareUS
Twitter: @CancerCare

Edited by Christine Calafiore, LMSW
This fact sheet is supported by a grant from Genentech and Bristol Meyers Squibb.