

## Tips for those Living Alone

Internet version of this handout with active resource links at: <http://cancer-help.me/living-alone>

**At some point in your cancer experience, you may need help.** Knowing how your cancer diagnosis, and/or your treatment, may affect your abilities to care for yourself is very important. Ask your care provider if you do not have a clear understanding of how you may be affected.

If you do or think you will need help, ask for support from the people around you. Initiating a request for practical help or emotional support can be difficult for people who are used to living independently. This is the time, however, to open up and let people know how you're feeling and what you need help with.

- Ask your friends and family to help and be a part of your caregiving network. Ask each of them how they can best support you. Different people can provide different types of care. It is sometimes helpful to let people know specifically what kind of help you need.
  - Can they provide something concrete, like child care or dog-walking, or are they the people you call when you simply need a listening ear?
  - Can they bring a meal you would prefer/can tolerate, drive you to your treatment appointment, do lawn work, house care, transporting children, etc?
- Find new sources of support by expanding your circle of people. For example, who among your neighbors can you call for a chat or help with the yard work? Do you belong to a church, temple, mosque, or other type of spiritual community? Co-worker or your children's school community?
- Sometimes it's easier to leave the organizing of your care network to someone else if possible. No matter if you do it or another, your community will appreciate knowing exactly what – and how – you need to be supported. There are online tools to help do this, see below for resources.
- Consider joining a support group in-person, by phone, or online. People often find that support groups offer a sense of camaraderie and encouragement, inspire new ways of coping, help them feel less isolated and can be a good source of information and additional resources.
- If you do not have a healthcare proxy, someone appointed legally in writing to make healthcare decisions on your behalf if you become incapable of making and executing decisions, ask someone in your circle to become yours. This should be someone who clearly understands your health care wishes and whom you trust to carry them out in the event that you cannot.
- Ask your friends, family, neighbors, or coworkers if you can list them as emergency contacts, and then post their names and contact information on a visible place inside your home (refrigerator, back of your door, etc.). You might also want to give one or more of your contacts a key to your home.
- Talk to a hospital social worker or patient navigator about planning for short or long-term care if needed.

Adapted from: [https://www.cancer-care.org/publications/265coping\\_with\\_cancer\\_when\\_you\\_re\\_on\\_your\\_own\\_how\\_to\\_get\\_the\\_support\\_you\\_need](https://www.cancer-care.org/publications/265coping_with_cancer_when_you_re_on_your_own_how_to_get_the_support_you_need)

## Websites for communicating, organizing help and support

- **My Cancer Circle** <http://mycancercircle.lotsahelpinghands.com/caregiving/home/>
- **CaringBridge** <https://www.caringbridge.org/>
- **Take them a meal** <https://www.takethemameal.com/>
- **PostHope** <https://posthope.org/>
- **MyLifeLine** <https://www.mylifeline.org/>

## Resources for Additional Information:

- [Cancer Care, Coping With Cancer When You're On Your Own: How to Get the Support You Need](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Finding Support Programs and Services in Your Area](#)
- [Little Brothers, Friends of the Elderly®](#)
- [Cancer Support Community](#)
- [Care.com](#)
- [The Catholic Charities, Get Help](#)
- [Ill Dept of Human Services, Home Services Program](#)
- [Imerman Angels](#)

**Información Española**  
➤ [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del  
Cáncer, Superación de sus  
sentimientos](#)

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