

Tips for Family Help

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

Adapted from National Cancer Institute Cancer.gov <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping/adjusting-to-cancer/changes-for-family>

Cancer affects family and friends, not just the person with the disease. The people in your life may also feel worried, angry, or afraid. Family members may be very supportive, or they may start acting differently towards you. Some may feel guilty that they're not sick, or they may feel helpless, not knowing how to help you. When you find out you have cancer, daily routines may change for everyone. Schedules may be focused around treatment. Someone in your family may need to take time off from work to drive you to treatments. Or, perhaps you need help paying bills or cooking meals. You may need help with chores and errands. If your family is having trouble talking about cancer related issues and changes, ask for help from your health care who may be able to refer you to someone who can help families talk about cancer. See Resources below for additional help.

Changing Roles When someone has cancer, everyone in the family takes on new roles and responsibilities. A child may have to do more chores, or a spouse may have to help shop or do carpool. It can be hard to adjust.

Money Cancer can reduce the amount of money your family has to spend or save. If you're not able to work, someone else in your family may need to get a job. You and your family may need to learn more about health insurance and find out what will be covered and what you need to pay for.

Living Arrangements People with cancer sometimes need to change where they live or whom they live with. You may need to move in with someone else to get the care you need. Or, you may need to travel far from home for treatment. This can be stressful because you may feel that you're losing your independence, even

if it's just for a little while.

Daily Activities You may need help with duties such as paying bills, cooking meals, or coaching your children's teams. Asking others to do these things for you can be hard. But most people want to help and like to do so when you ask.

Do What You Can You probably can, and want to keep doing things on your own. It's important to let people know that you can still do some things for yourself. As much as you're able, keep up with your normal routine by making decisions, doing chores and errands, and taking part in things you enjoy.

Help from Other Family and Friends You can help your friends cope with the news by letting them assist you in some way. Make a list of things you think you might need help with, so they can pick something they're able to do for you. You can also find volunteers to help you through churches or community groups. Professional helpers can be hired to assist you with physical care and other needs. You could also ask your doctor about respite care, someone takes care of you in your home while your family member goes out for a while.

Show Gratitude for Your Caregivers Cancer and its treatment are hard on everyone, especially the people who take care of you. Sometimes loved ones become run down and get sick from the stress. Because of this, they need to have balance in their life—time to take care of personal chores and errands, rest, be with friends, or enjoy hobbies. Your caregivers will also need time to sort through their feelings about cancer. Let them know that you want them to have a break, and that it's okay for other people to take care of you for a while.

Local Organizations providing support for anyone impacted by cancer:

UnityPoint Health Cancer Support Services	Downtown Peoria	https://www.unitypoint.org/peoria/services-cancer.aspx	309-672-4224
OSF St. Francis Cancer Support Services	Downtown Peoria	https://www.osfhealthcare.org/saint-francis/services/cancer/cancer-support-services/	309-308-0200
Hult Center for Health Living	Central Peoria	https://www.hulthealthy.org/	309-692-6650

Websites for communicating, organizing help and support

- [My Cancer Circle](#)
- [MyLifeLine](#)
- [CaringBridge](#)
- [CaringBridge \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Take them a meal](#)
- [Meal train](#)
- [PostHope](#)
- [Lotsa Helping Hands](#)

Resources for Additional Information:

- [NIH, National Cancer Institute, Changes for the Family](#)
- [American Cancer Society, After Diagnosis: A Guide for Patients and Families](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Helping Children when a Family Member Has Cancer](#)
- [American Cancer Society, When Someone you Know Has Cancer](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Family Life](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Talking with Family and Friends](#)
- [NCCN, Patient and Caregiver Resources, Advocacy and Support Groups](#)
- [NCCN, Patient and Caregiver Resources, Cancer and Family](#)
- [Cancer Support Community, Family and Friends](#)

Información Española

- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Familiares a cargo de pacientes de cáncer: funciones y desafíos \(PDQ®\)—Versión para profesionales de salud](#)
- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Apoyo para quienes cuidan a pacientes con cáncer](#)