



Coping with Cancer During the Holidays

In general, people view the holidays as a time to celebrate, rejoice, and renew connections with family and friends. However, the season can be a stressful time if you are coping with cancer. For example, you may have many complex feelings, both sad and joyous. CancerCare helps people with cancer and their loved ones all year long, and we recognize that the holiday season can be particularly difficult.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR COPING WITH CANCER DURING THE HOLIDAYS:

- ☞ **Plan 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 your local YMCA, YWCA, church or synagogue. Find the right balance between celebrating with family and friends and spending the time you may need 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 “pot luck,” with family members each bringing a dish for the meal, have someone else host the meal, or suggest eating out at a favorite restaurant.
- ☞ **Be an innovative shopper.** Use mail order catalogues, shop over the telephone, or 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.



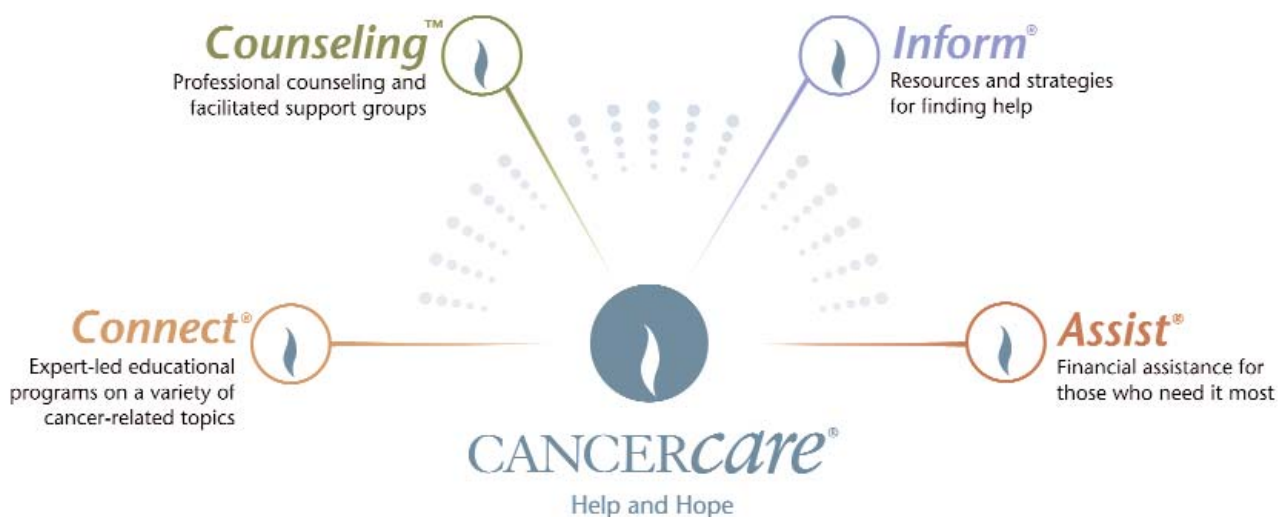
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It's important to embrace the joy and happiness of the holidays – enjoying favorite meals, giving and receiving gifts, reuniting with family and friends, and celebrating religious traditions. People with cancer and their loved ones can sometimes feel out of step from the rest of the world, and the holiday season can prompt new questions. How do I take care of the holiday rush and myself at the same time? How can I celebrate when I have so many other things on my mind? What will my life be like next year? Sharing these questions with people you love and who love you can help you feel more connected.

CANCERCARE CAN HELP

CancerCare's staff of professional oncology social workers can help you cope with cancer during the holidays and all year long. Our social workers offer people with cancer and their loved ones individual counseling and support groups by telephone, online, or in person. CancerCare also offers education, practical help and referrals to other resources that can help you manage concerns related to cancer.

The CANCERcare® Constellation of Services



CancerCare's services are provided free of charge to anyone affected by cancer

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