

Remember

... knowledge is power. We often fear those things we don't understand.

... never stop asking questions — you are entitled to answers that you can understand.

... ask your questions when you are ready for the answers.

... communication is the bridge to maintaining relationships with your family and friends — don't stop sharing.

... let others be a part of your life. Your friends are as uncertain as you are — help them and yourself by your willingness to let them in.

... you are still the same person even though you feel different from the effects of cancer and its treatments.

... sharing feelings is healthy — professional counseling can help you stay connected and develop the skills to help you cope.



Foundation *services*

The Ashley Foundation services include:

- Educational Information
- Scholarships
- Financial assistance* with the uninsured cost of counseling services (psychological and pastoral) for teens with cancer and their families.
- Giving Library that provides books, tapes, videos, and cd's addressing the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual challenges faced by teens coping with cancer, as well as their families, friends and communities.

Services are available free of charge to individuals living in the Foundation's service area. To learn more about our programs and services or how the Foundation could help meet your needs, contact The Ashley Foundation.

**Financial assistance is confidential.*



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What can I do if...

I Am Facing Cancer



Presented by **The Ashley Foundation** –
a non-profit organization dedicated to
assisting teens with cancer, their
families, friends, and communities



How can *I Help* Myself

You have been diagnosed with cancer — what's next?

- You will most likely have a lot of questions, concerns, and worries about your cancer.
- Wondering if you will die is a natural concern. But remember, while some teens do die from their disease, many, many more are survivors.

Empower yourself — take charge of your life.

- Talk with your doctor or other healthcare professional about how he or she will treat your cancer. Knowing what is ahead will help ease your concerns.
- Come prepared to your doctor visits by writing down questions as you think of them. Ask someone who accompanies you to help by taking notes about what the doctor says.
- Pace yourself so that you can do the things you like. If you find that you don't have the energy, attention or desire to do the things that you want to do, speak with your physician. There are many ways to minimize the effects of cancer and cancer treatments.
- Explore all of the different ways to help yourself cope. These may include acupuncture, meditation and relaxation, guided imagery, massage, just to name a few.

Share the things that are concerning you with others.

- Identify your sources of support. These may include family, friends, teachers, the clergy and many others.
- Some people find it helpful to talk about what is happening to them. A professional counselor can be very helpful. Find someone you trust and are comfortable with.
- Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings. Writing your experiences down is a great way to relieve stress. It becomes especially important to have ways to see how you are gradually progressing and improving.
- Tell your friends and family how they can help you. Many people want to help, but they don't know what to say or do and may be waiting for you to tell them what you need from them.
- Feelings of anger are normal and may lead to avoiding social situations which results in isolation and loneliness. It is important to realize that you need your friendships now more than ever.
- Becoming independent is probably very important to you. Now that you have cancer your parents may become overprotective; you may feel as though they are treating you like a child again. This is not uncommon and your parents may not know they are doing this or how to stop. Talk to your parents about how you are feeling.

Understanding Cancer

While there are no known causes of teenage cancer, it is not contagious.

Many teens respond very well to the established ways of treating cancer. Both chemotherapy and radiation can improve your chances of survival and resuming a normal life.

These same treatments, as well as cancer, may affect your body and emotions. These effects may include weakness and tiredness, weight loss or gain, hair loss, memory and attention span, anxiety and agitation, worry and depression. Most, if not all of these effects are temporary.

Cancer Resources

Understanding cancer will allow you to support yourself through this experience. Numerous resources are available — these are a few places to begin.

Foundation for the Children's Oncology Group
800 - 458 - 6223 · www.ConquerKidsCancer.org

American Cancer Society
800 - ACS - 2345 · www.cancer.org