



no
one
walks
alone

All you need to know in your fight against cancer.

Brought to you by



**SINGAPORE
CANCER
SOCIETY**

Supported by



FOREWORD



Congratulations to Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)!

You have played an important role, walking alongside cancer patients and their families, supporting them financially and emotionally. Those under your care know that they do not walk alone.

We are seeing more cancer cases in Singapore, as our population ages. Yet a cancer diagnosis is not necessarily a death sentence. Many forms of the disease are highly treatable, particularly in the early stages. And even if a cancer is not curable, proper medical treatment can often extend survival and improve quality of life.

I urge everyone to join in the fight against cancer. Get yourself screened regularly. If you are battling cancer, press on – know that you do not have to deal with your illness alone.

In 55 years, SCS has grown to be the largest voluntary welfare organisation that caters to cancer patients and their families from all walks of life. Thank you to the leaders, the volunteers and the donors. I look forward to SCS playing an even bigger role in future, in minimising the impact of cancer in Singapore.

Lee Hsien Loong
Prime Minister
Republic of Singapore



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ABOUT THIS KIT

This cancer care kit provides easy-to-read medical, financial and psychosocial information to support newly diagnosed patients and their families in making informed decisions during their cancer journey.

A cancer diagnosis can be a frightening and confusing experience. Most people may grapple with different emotions such as anger, anxiety and disbelief. No two people are alike in their emotions and their way of handling it.

In addition, there is often fear of the unknown and uncertainty of what is going to happen. We hope this kit can address some of these fears and anxiety.

This kit is bought to you by Singapore Cancer Society, supported by National Cancer Centre Singapore, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore and Tan Tock Seng Hospital.



ABOUT

Singapore Cancer Society

At Singapore Cancer Society (SCS), we believe life is worth living and fighting for. No one needs to battle cancer alone. Together with its partners, volunteers, donors and the community, SCS helps people in the fight against cancer through education, screening, patient services, financial and psychosocial assistance.

The Society reaches out to Singaporeans in the heartlands, schools and workplaces to minimise the impact of cancer, not just by working to reduce the incidence of cancer but by bringing a sense of normalcy back into the lives of cancer patients and their family members.



**SINGAPORE
CANCER
SOCIETY**



MESSAGE

Cancer can bring about extraordinary challenges to patients and their families. With the rising number of cancer incidence in Singapore, anyone in your life can be affected by the disease.

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) continually strives to minimise cancer and maximise lives through our many programmes to improve the quality of life for those afflicted by cancer.

As a self-funded voluntary welfare organisation, SCS embraces a holistic approach in fighting cancer through intensifying cancer prevention and adopting upstream prevention efforts. SCS provides patient care services to needy cancer patients through its welfare, hospice home care, cancer treatment subsidy, and rehabilitation support programmes. The Society also provides free cancer screening services and promotes cancer awareness and prevention through its public education and community outreach programmes. This has resulted in SCS helping to save even more lives through early detection and bringing greater comfort and hope to cancer patients.

With rising cancer incidence, even more can be done with stronger support from the community. SCS has developed this cancer care kit to support you and your family through this journey. It contains easy to read medical information on cancer diagnosis, treatment, and its side effects, as well as ways to cope with the disease.

You will find beneficial information which include financial support services that can help alleviate the financial burden of cancer. For those who have emerged victorious from the cancer battle, the kit offers insights into what life might be like after your cancer treatment.

Through the inspirational anecdotes on cancer survivors, patients and their caregivers, the kit also serves as hope and encouragement to people whose lives have been touched by cancer.

We hope this kit will guide you and provide support as you navigate the cancer journey. No one needs to fight cancer alone and SCS is here with you.

Thank you and we wish you good health.

Wee Leong How

Chairman
Singapore Cancer Society

Albert Ching

Chief Executive Officer
Singapore Cancer Society





WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT CANCER?

“

The key elements to winning the cancer battle are **Time**, **Love** and **Power**. Every cancer patient needs **Time** to accept and adjust, **Love** to strengthen and **Empowerment** to understand. Live life anew with cancer - it gives you a second chance to appreciate life and people around you.

”

Dr Angela Pang

Associate Consultant, Medical Oncology, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore



WHAT IS CANCER?

The term cancer refers to a group of diseases. Although there are over 100 different types of cancer, all cancers are characterised by abnormal cell growth. If left untreated, the disease can lead to death.

1. How cancer starts

Your body is made up of trillions of living cells. Within each cell are genes that control and direct the cell's functions.

Normal cells continuously grow and divide. Over time, they die and are replaced by new ones.

In most people, this natural cell turnover occurs in an orderly and organised manner. However, sometimes this process goes awry. Unlike normal healthy cells, cancer cells do not die. Instead, they continue to grow and divide in an uncontrollable manner. These excess rogue cells may form a mass of tissue called a tumour.

2. Making sense of tumours

Tumours can be benign or malignant.

Tumours that stay in one location and do not spread to other parts of the body are considered to be benign. These are not cancerous and are rarely life-threatening although they can sometimes cause problems, especially when they grow too big.

On the other hand, malignant tumours can destroy and invade other normal tissues in your body, making you very sick.

However, not all types of cancer form tumours. For instance, tumours are uncommon in leukaemia. These are cancers that typically start in the bone marrow and enter the bloodstream.

3. When cancer spreads

Cancer cells can spread when they migrate to other parts of the body through the blood and lymph systems, forming new tumours. This process is called metastasis.

Even when cancer spreads, it is always named based on where it first started. For instance, cancer that begins in the breast is called breast cancer. If it spreads to other parts of the body, like the liver or bone, it is called metastatic breast cancer.

With so many different cancers, it is important for you to know which type of cancer you have so that you can receive the right treatment.



WHAT CAUSES CANCER?



DO YOU KNOW?

One in three people in Singapore dies from cancer. You can lower your cancer risk by leading a healthy lifestyle and avoiding certain risk factors.

You may be tempted to blame a single culprit, such as genes, excessive smoking or alcohol use, for causing cancer. In reality, there isn't one exact cause of cancer.

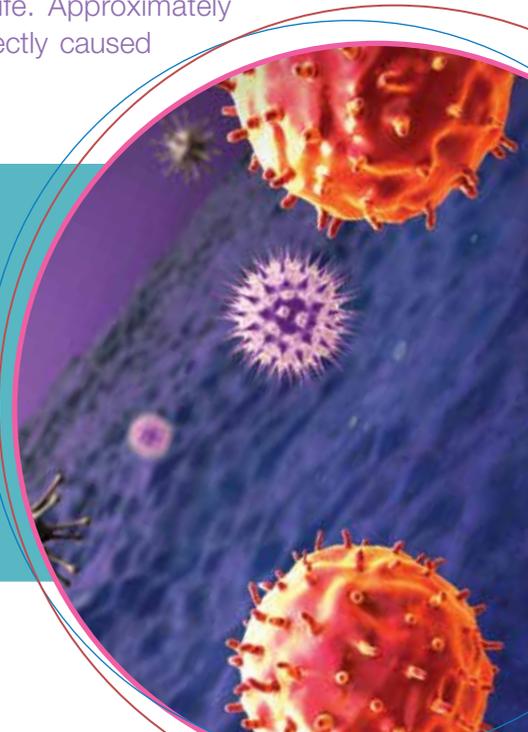
Like many diseases, cancer can occur due to a combination of different reasons. Here are some known causes of cancer.

1. Your Genetic Makeup

If a particular type of cancer is common in your family, you could be born with genetic mutations that put you at a higher risk of developing certain cancers. Some cancers like breast and colorectal cancer tend to be hereditary. Keep in mind that having an inherited genetic mutation does not mean you will definitely get cancer later in life. Approximately 5 to 10 per cent of all cancers are directly caused by inherited genetic mutations.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you have a strong family history of cancer, discuss it with your doctor. Genetic testing may be useful to check if you have inherited genetic mutations that may increase your cancer risk. However, these tests are not recommended for everyone. Your doctor will be able to advise you.



2. Smoking

Do you know that tobacco smoke contains at least 69 various carcinogens? Smoking increases your risk of getting certain cancers such as lung and oral cancer, as well as cancers of the stomach, kidney and bladder. Any form of tobacco smoking is harmful to your health. Studies have found that even smoking just one cigarette a day can lead to health problems.

Second-hand smoke is just as damaging to your health. When you light up, about 90 per cent of cigarette smoke is released into the air and becomes second-hand smoke. Even if you do not smoke, breathing in another person's smoke can increase your risk of lung cancer.

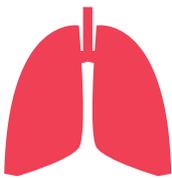


WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Stub out. If you find that quitting all at once is too daunting, consider gradually cutting down on the number of cigarettes you smoke daily. Get professional help to quit smoking, or rope in your family and friends to support you. Log on to the Quit4life website at www.hpb.gov.sg/smokefree for further info and help.



If someone in your family or workplace smokes, encourage him or her to quit smoking. Ask him or her to avoid smoking in your presence.



Cigarette smoke not only harms you, but also **increases your loved ones' risk of lung cancer.**

3. Sun and UV Exposure

Most people associate a sun-kissed complexion with good health. However, frequent direct exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays, either by being out in the sun or from artificial sources like a tanning bed, can damage your skin and increase your risk of getting skin cancer.

A sunburn is your skin's response to excessive UV light. If you are fair-skinned, you are at a higher risk of skin cancer than someone with darker skin. This is because paler skin has less melanin, a pigment that protects the skin from damaging UV rays.

Singapore is one of the countries around the world with the highest UV exposure. According to the National Environment Agency, it is common for UV radiation in Singapore to reach very high to extreme levels between 11am and 3pm, on a day with little cloud cover.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Prevent sunburns and avoid too much sun exposure. Stay in the shade if possible. When out in the sun, use a sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 on exposed parts of your body. Wear a wide-brimmed hat and wear sunglasses with UV protection. If you are exposed to artificial sources of UV rays at work, always follow the safety regulations.

4. Radiation Exposure

Every day, we are exposed to radiation, including natural forms from the earth and sun. Radiation can also come from medical imaging procedures used for X-rays and CT scans. Too much exposure to radiation can potentially cause cells in the body to undergo changes. This may increase your likelihood of developing cancer.

Sometimes, an X-ray or CT scan is needed to help your doctor diagnose your medical condition. Radiation exposure from different sources can accumulate over time, but a one-off test is unlikely to increase your risk of cancer.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

During these imaging tests, you can protect yourself from unnecessary radiation exposure by following safety measures such as using a lead apron. Talk to your doctor about your concerns.

5. Previous Cancer Treatments

Advances in cancer treatments like chemotherapy and radiotherapy have helped many people with cancer live longer. But they may also possibly increase your risk of another cancer in the future.

However this is quite rare. Remember that it is important to first treat the cancer you have. For some cancers, radiotherapy and chemotherapy may be the best treatment option.

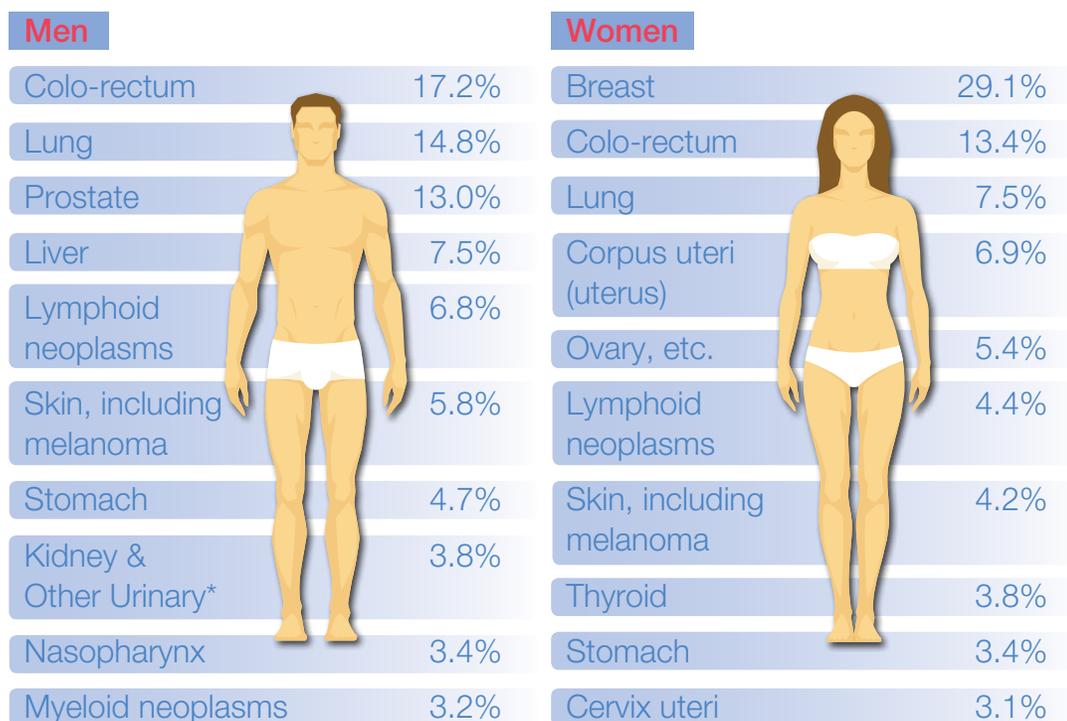
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Talk to your doctor about your concerns. If you have completed cancer treatment, follow-up care is important.



COMMON TYPES OF CANCER IN SINGAPORE

In Singapore, about 33 people are diagnosed with cancer every day. The good news is, with early detection and treatment, you can prevent this disease.



* Other urinary refers to renal pelvis, ureter, urethra etc.

Source: Singapore Cancer Registry, Annual Registry Report 2015, Incidence of Cancers for the Period 2011-2015

KNOW THE CANCER TERMS

Colo-rectum cancer	cancer that starts in the large intestine (colon or rectum)
Breast cancer	cancer that starts in the breast tissues. It is the most common form of women's cancer in Singapore
Lung cancer	cancer that starts in the lung tissues, usually in the cells lining the air passages
Liver cancer	cancer that starts in the tissues of the liver is known as primary liver cancer. Secondary liver cancer refers to cancer that has spread from other parts of the body to the liver
Prostate cancer	cancer that starts in the tissues of the prostate, which is a gland found in men. It is located below the bladder and in front of the rectum
Skin cancer	cancer that starts in the outer layers of the skin. Cancer can also form in a mole (skin melanoma)
Stomach cancer	cancer that starts in the lining of the stomach. It is also known as gastric cancer
Nasopharynx cancer	cancer that starts in the upper part of the throat and behind the nose
Kidney and other urinary cancers	cancer that starts in tissues of the kidneys, or other urinary structures like renal pelvis and urethra
Uterine cancer	cancer that starts in the inner lining of the uterus (endometrium) or outer muscle tissue lining (myometrium) of the uterus
Ovarian cancer	cancer that starts in the ovaries, which are reproductive glands found in women
Cervical cancer	cancer that starts in cervix, which is located in the neck of the womb
Thyroid cancer	cancer that starts in the thyroid gland, the butterfly-shaped gland in the front part of the neck
Lymphoid neoplasms	cancer that starts from the lymph nodes
Myeloid neoplasms	cancer that starts from the blood cells

CANCER MYTHS DEBUNKED

Myths and misconceptions about cancer can cause you to worry unnecessarily about your health. The wrong information may even affect the way you prevent or decide to treat your illness. Here, we address these common cancer myths.



MYTH 1 Cancer is a death sentence.

FACT



About a third of all cancers can be cured, if they are detected and treated early. That is why regular health checkups and screenings are important.

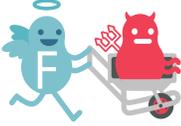
Today, about 9 in 10 people with certain cancers, like breast, prostate and thyroid cancers, survive at least five years after their cancer is diagnosed. New cancer treatments also mean that more people with advanced cancers can live longer.





MYTH 2 Cancer is contagious.

FACT



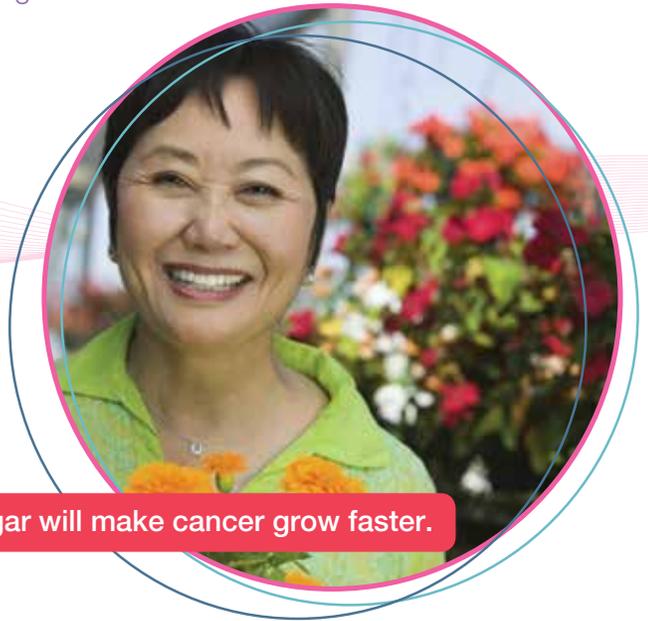
You cannot catch cancer from someone who has it. Spending time with a loved one who has cancer will not cause you to get it too. Rarely, a person who has had an organ or tissue transplantation might develop cancer, from a donor who had cancer previously.

Although cancer itself does not spread from person to person, certain viruses can increase your risk of getting cancer.

Examples of these viruses include:

Human papillomavirus (HPV): This is a sexually-transmitted infection that can increase your risk of getting cervical cancer.

Hepatitis B or C: Spread through sexual intercourse or infected needles. Hepatitis B or C infection increases your risk of getting liver cancer.



MYTH 3 Eating sugar will make cancer grow faster.

FACT



Research has shown that cancer cells absorb more sugar than normal cells. But there is no scientific evidence to suggest that eating sugar or sweet foods will worsen cancer. However, a diet high in sugar can cause you to gain excess weight and increase your risk of diabetes. People who are obese or have diabetes have a higher risk of developing certain cancers.



MYTH 4 Bad thoughts and a negative attitude will cause me to develop or die from cancer.

FACT



There is no scientific evidence to show that you can increase your risk of getting cancer or die from it because of a negative attitude, or vice versa. If you have been diagnosed with cancer, you are likely to experience many different emotions. You may feel sad, angry, frightened or discouraged. When the going gets tough, a positive attitude may help you cope better with your cancer diagnosis or side effects of treatment.



MYTH 5 Surgery or a tumour biopsy will cause cancer to spread.

FACT



It may be possible, but the chances are extremely low. Your surgeon follows a strict set of procedures and takes steps to prevent this from happening when he or she is performing a biopsy or surgery to remove tumours.



MYTH 6 If someone in my family has cancer, I am likely to get it too.

FACT



You may not necessarily get cancer although a strong family history of the disease puts you at a higher risk of developing it. Only about five to ten percent of cancers are caused by genetic mutations inherited from your parents. Even when that happens, it does not mean you will definitely get cancer later in life. For cancer to develop, other factors like ageing, smoking and radiation come into play too.



MYTH 7 I am safe from cancer because no one in my family has had it.

FACT



About two in five people will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime. Cancer is caused by genetic mutations that occur within the cells. You may have inherited the gene mutation from your parents.

However, gene mutations can also occur from factors such as exposure to smoking, radiation, other cancer-causing substances and even viruses. Other risk factors like obesity and diabetes can also increase your risk of developing cancer.



MYTH 8 I can get cancer from dyeing my hair.

FACT



At the moment, there is no conclusive proof that using hair dye increases cancer risk. Some studies show that people who are regularly exposed to hair dye, like hairdressers and stylists, may have a higher risk of developing cancer. However, it is not known how much hair dye use might increase this risk.



MYTH 9 Cancer treatments will bankrupt me.

FACT

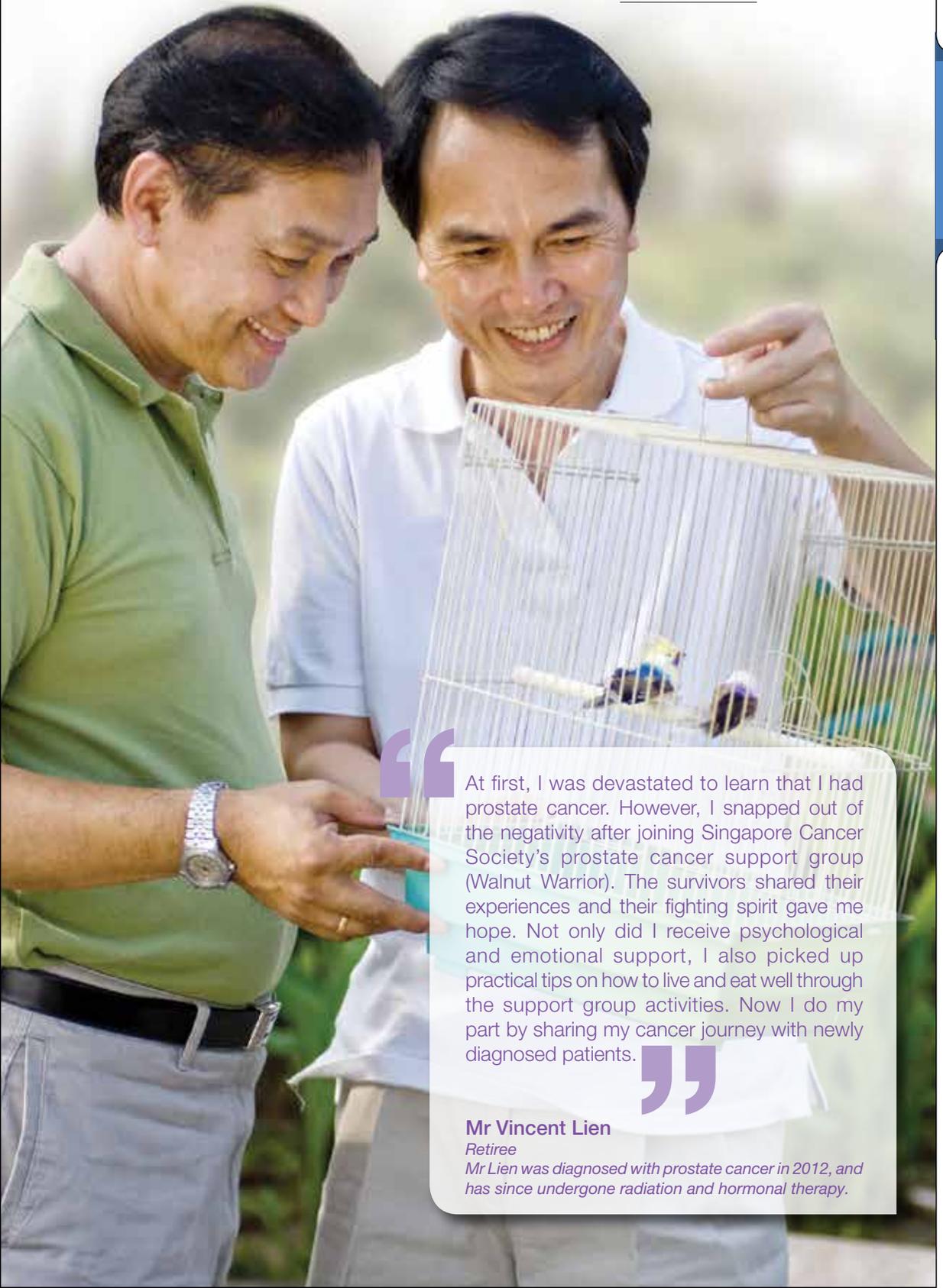


Besides coping with the reality of a cancer diagnosis, you may also worry about treatment costs. Fortunately, financial aid and resources are available to help you tide through this difficult period.

For more information on SCS financial help, refer to *Cancer and My Finances*.



CANCER AND ME



“ At first, I was devastated to learn that I had prostate cancer. However, I snapped out of the negativity after joining Singapore Cancer Society’s prostate cancer support group (Walnut Warrior). The survivors shared their experiences and their fighting spirit gave me hope. Not only did I receive psychological and emotional support, I also picked up practical tips on how to live and eat well through the support group activities. Now I do my part by sharing my cancer journey with newly diagnosed patients. ”

Mr Vincent Lien

Retiree

Mr Lien was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2012, and has since undergone radiation and hormonal therapy.

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER MY DIAGNOSIS?

The doctor has just told you that you have cancer. As you wrestle with a range of emotions including shock, dread, fear and denial, you may wonder: What should I do now?

Consider the following tips to help you cope with your cancer diagnosis.

1. Get your facts right

Organise your thoughts by writing down your questions before your doctor's appointment. If you wish to find out more about cancer from the internet, be sure to countercheck information with your doctor as not all content online is reliable.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Some questions you may want to ask your doctor include:

- What type of cancer do I have and where is it located?
- Has my cancer spread?
- What further tests do I need?
- What are my treatment options?
- What is my prognosis (this refers to the chance of recovery)?



2. Find a doctor

Get a referral from your primary care doctor or experienced family members, friends or colleagues. You may also wish to seek a second opinion from another doctor to get more information.

3. Find out about the available medical treatments for your cancer

Your doctor may advise a combination of treatment methods for the best outcome. Clinical trials may also be available as one of your treatment options.

4. Get organised

Find an efficient way to track information such as medical appointments, laboratory tests results, treatment side effects, insurance information and finances. Create a simple filing system using folders and spreadsheets to record important information.

5. Find support to cope with challenges

Remember, you are not alone. Instead of isolating yourself, seek support from family, friends, healthcare professionals or the community to help you through this challenging time.

Here are some coping tactics:

♥ Emotional support ♥

- **Talk about it** – Join a support group, rope in support from family and friends, talk to your cancer care team or seek professional counselling.
- **Find ways to ease stress and tension** - You can keep a journal of your treatment journey or engage in other enjoyable activities including painting, listening to music, reading or meditation.



♥ Practical support ♥

- **Plan ahead** – Ask your doctor what to expect during your treatment: Will I be able to continue with my normal routine and responsibilities? How much medical leave from work is expected? The information will help you to plan ahead.
- **Learn to accept help** – This is the time for you to accept hands-on help from friends and family. Help can come in the form of a simple gesture such as doing the school run or babysitting the kids when you go for your medical appointments.

♥ Financial support ♥

- **Work out a budget** – Ask your doctor and cancer care team about the estimated cost of cancer treatment, as well as other unexpected expenses for transportation, scans or medical accessories and devices. Knowing what to expect early can help you work out your finances more effectively.
- **Seek financial advice** – Healthcare providers, case managers or social workers can offer advice on financial options. Seek help when in doubt. More information on the financial aspect of cancer can be found in *Cancer and My Finances*.



WHO ARE INVOLVED IN MY TREATMENT?

Diagnosing and treating cancer often involves a team of various healthcare professionals who will ensure that you get the best possible care. Get to know the people who may be on your cancer care team.

This is a rough guide. Depending on your type of cancer and treatment, the healthcare professionals on your cancer care team may differ.

1. Doctors

Doctors who treat people with cancer are known as oncologists. During your cancer treatment, you may meet the following types of oncologists:

- **Medical Oncologist** – specialises in diagnosing and treating cancer with chemotherapy and other drugs
- **Surgeons** – specialises in using surgery to treat cancer
- **Radiation Oncologist** – specialises in using radiation to treat cancer



2. Nursing Team

This is the person whom your doctors are likely to work closely with during your treatment. Your nurse plays many roles - from implementing the treatment and care plan your doctor has for you, administering medications, monitoring side effects to coordinating your care process.

3. Social Worker

If you need help finding community resources and support services, a social worker can offer guidance. He or she can also provide counselling and emotional support.

4. Dietician

This allied healthcare professional will help you make better dietary choices so that you feel better during your cancer treatment. You can also get tips on how to increase your appetite and combat symptoms like nausea and heartburn from your dietician.



5. Rehabilitation Specialists

These allied healthcare professionals, including physical, occupational, speech or recreational therapists, help you to recover physically after cancer.

6. Palliative Care Specialists

They refer to doctors, nurses, pain specialists and other healthcare professionals who help you manage distressing symptoms of cancer such as pain, nausea or fatigue, to improve your quality of life. A palliative care specialist can help you at any stage of cancer, from the time you are diagnosed to the end of life.

7. Spiritual Care Professionals

In times of illness, loss and grief, you may require more than just physical care to help you cope. A spiritual care professional provides spiritual care and support to help you discover meaning and purpose as part of the healing process regardless of race, culture, belief system or gender.



WHAT ARE MY TREATMENT OPTIONS?

In this section, you will learn about common cancer treatments and how they work.

Remember, there is no one-size-fits-all treatment plan for cancer. Your treatment options will depend on the type of cancer you have as well as other factors such as if the cancer has spread, your preference, age and general health. Discuss with your doctor to find out which treatment options are suitable for you.

1. Surgery

Most people with cancer will undergo some form of surgery. The doctor may recommend surgery to diagnose cancer, check if the disease has spread or remove the cancerous tissue.

In early-stage cancer which has not spread, surgery is usually carried out to remove the tumour. It may also be used in advanced cancers which have spread and invaded nearby organs and tissues. In these cases, only part of the tumour may be removed so as not to damage critical organs or tissues nearby. The remaining cancer is then treated with other treatment methods like radiation therapy and chemotherapy.

Sometimes, surgery is used to prevent or lower the risk of cancer from occurring in the future. For example, a person with an inherited breast cancer gene may opt for preventive surgery to remove her breasts even before cancer is found.

DO YOU KNOW?

Recent advances in minimally-invasive surgical techniques mean that recovery time is shorter and more tolerable. Check with your doctor.



2. Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is the use of potent drugs to destroy cancer cells. Today, more than 100 chemotherapy drugs are available.

Most of them are administered through injections into a vein or muscle. The drugs are sometimes taken orally as a pill or liquid, placed into the spine, chest, abdomen or rubbed on the skin. Once these drugs enter your bloodstream, they damage cells that rapidly divide and grow. Cancer cells are more vulnerable to chemotherapy drugs than normal cells because of their abnormally active growth.

DO YOU KNOW?

Chemotherapy drugs may damage normal healthy cells, causing temporary side effects like hair loss, tiredness, nausea and vomiting. Medications and other coping methods are available to help relieve such temporary side effects.



3. Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays to destroy cancer cells, slow down or shrink cancer growth. Unlike chemotherapy which affects the entire body, radiation therapy is a local treatment that affects only the part of the body being treated.

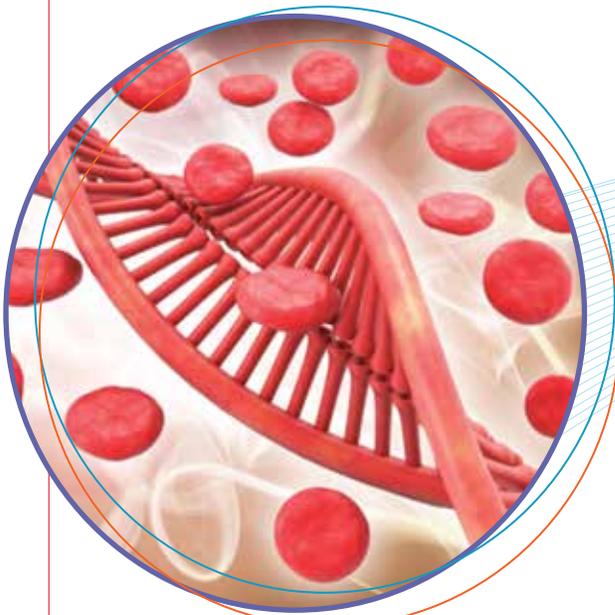
During your treatment process, high doses of radiation may affect some normal cells near the tumour. You may experience side effects such as skin changes like rashes or redness, loss of appetite or tiredness. The discomfort is temporary and usually goes away gradually once you complete treatment.

DO YOU KNOW?

There are lifetime dose limits of radiation. During treatment, your doctor will be able to assess how much radiation you can get without causing irreversible damage. Talk to your doctor about your concerns.

4. Other Cancer Therapies

- **Targeted therapy** – Unlike conventional chemotherapy, this newer generation of cancer drugs work by targeting specific mutations in cancer cells. Some drugs work by interrupting pathways that are involved in the growth of cancer. In the process of destroying cancer cells, they are less likely to affect normal cells.
- **Laser Therapy** – In laser therapy, a high-intensity beam of light is focused and directed at a specific area. Lasers can be used to burn away tumours or growths, as well as relieve symptoms such as bleeding. It is commonly used in the treatment of cancers that are found on the surface of the body, such as basal cell skin cancer, or when the cancer is in the early stages.
- **Stem Cell Transplant** – A stem cell transplant, also known as a bone marrow transplant, is sometimes recommended for people with certain cancers such as leukaemia, multiple myeloma and some types of lymphoma. The procedure involves replacing the damaged bone marrow (the spongy tissue inside the large bones) with healthy stem cells.



- **Immunotherapy** – Also known as biological therapy, immunotherapy makes use of the body's natural immune system to fight the cancer.
- **Photodynamic Therapy** – This treatment method involves using drugs called light-sensitive agents, along with light, to kill cancer cells. Activated only by certain types of light, the light-sensitive agent is injected into the blood stream through a vein or placed on the skin. Once the drug is absorbed by the cancer cells, light is directed at the area to destroy them.
- **Blood Product Donation and Transfusion** – People with certain cancers may experience internal bleeding, low blood count and require blood transfusions to help them temporarily replace blood. Blood transfusions are also given to people who have undergone cancer treatments that may lead to blood loss or low blood count.



HOW CAN I COPE WITH THE SIDE EFFECTS?



Ask your
doctor
for advice

When you feel better, you may find it easier to cope with your cancer treatment. **Ask your cancer care team for advice on ways to manage any side effects.** It is also important for you to alert your doctor should you notice any new symptoms or changes in symptoms.

During cancer treatment, you may experience a variety of side effects. Manage them with these tips.

1. Nausea and vomiting



Anti-nausea and anti-vomiting medications may help. Nausea and vomiting are rarely life-threatening. However repeated and prolonged bouts of vomiting can lead to dehydration, which can become a serious problem, if you do not do anything about it. Seek medical attention promptly if you have trouble keeping fluids down and cannot take the medications you need.

2. Fatigue



Change your lifestyle and diet. For instance, you may feel better if you reduce your workload, stick to a nutritious diet, get enough sleep, rest and light exercise (ask your doctor if exercise is safe for you). Distraction tactics like reading a book, listening to music or meditation can also help.

3. Pain



In most cases, cancer pain can be successfully controlled through medications. The best way to control cancer-related pain is to prevent it from developing or becoming worse. Take your pain medications as prescribed. You may also be given additional doses in the event of breakthrough pain, which refers to pain that suddenly intensifies despite treatment.

Seek medical attention promptly if you find the pain worsening or becoming unbearable. It could be an indication of a more serious condition. Your doctor may refer you to a pain management specialist.

4. Fertility and sexuality issues



If you are not done with family planning, talk to your doctor about your concerns before you start treatment. Some cancer treatments can affect your ability to have children. Your doctor can suggest ways to protect your fertility.

Ask your doctor if it is safe for you to continue with sexual intercourse and the safety measures that you should take. You should also have an open talk about the topic with your partner. In most cases, there is usually no medical reason to stop sexual intercourse during cancer treatment.

5. Appetite Loss



Managing symptoms like nausea, vomiting, pain and fatigue may help to improve your appetite. Try eating several small meals packed with nutrient-dense foods throughout the day, drink less fluids at mealtimes (this can make you feel less full) and having your meals in a pleasant environment.

A dietician can also offer advice on how to plan your meals and recommend nutritional supplements if necessary.



6. Hair Loss



Share your feelings with a trusted family member, friend or counsellor. Consider having a shorter hairstyle before treatment starts so that the transition is less dramatic. You can also opt for hats, wigs or scarves to cover up hair loss. To learn more about practical ways to manage with the physical changes, join the Look Good and Feel Better Programme. For more details, call **6499 9132**.



7. Mouth Dryness



Medications to help boost saliva production and prevent oral infections are available - check with your doctor. Maintaining good oral hygiene is also important. Rinse your mouth every few hours, especially after meals, with a solution made of salt and baking soda to prevent infections. Mix one teaspoon of salt and one teaspoon of baking soda in one cup of warm water. Sip water frequently and avoid drinks, like coffee and alcohol, that can cause dehydration.

8. Constipation



Drink more fluids and do some light exercises if possible. Not being physically active can increase your risk of having constipation. Include more high-fibre foods such as whole grains, fruit, vegetables, raisins and prunes in your diet. However, a high-fibre diet may not be suitable if you have had bowel surgery or a tumour that narrows your bowel. Ask your doctor for advice.

No matter how uncomfortable you feel, never use laxatives or stool softeners without getting clearance from your doctor.



HOW CAN I COPE WITH MY EMOTIONS?

Regardless of age, living with cancer is a life-changing experience. It may feel difficult at first, but it is possible to find peace and joy in your life once more. Here are some tips to help you cope emotionally.

1. Be in charge

Take charge of your illness by learning about the type of cancer you have, its treatment options, what to expect during and after treatment and how to cope. You will feel less fearful if you know what to expect in the near future.

2. Keep track of your feelings

Writing a journal or recording your emotions through photography, drawing, painting and music can offer comfort.

3. Talk about your feelings

Instead of bottling up your feelings, share your emotions with family and friends. If you find it hard to talk to people close to you, seek alternative support. You can talk to your doctor or nurse about your feelings. They will be able to refer you to other sources of help such as a counsellor, social worker, psychologist or other healthcare professionals.



4. Join a support group

Meeting other patients and caregivers who are experiencing a similar situation can help you feel less isolated in your cancer journey. SCS provides support group programmes for cancer patients, survivors and caregivers.

5. Seek spiritual support

Getting in touch with your spirituality can help you find strength and peace in times of illness and difficult circumstances.

Spiritual exercises, religious practices, reflection and meditation have been noted to be helpful for many people with cancer. Some healthcare facilities provide spiritual care support. Check with your healthcare team to see if they can refer you to a spiritual care professional.



6. Give yourself private time and space

Amidst your busy treatment schedule, take time to do something you enjoy every day like listening to music, reading your favourite book, going for a slow walk in the park or engaging in some light exercise. Be sure to check with your doctor before starting any exercise programme.



CANCER AND MY FAMILY

“

I was studying in Boston when I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. My family came all the way to my side of the world to make sure I felt at home during my operation and cancer treatment. My mother cooked and my sisters took turns to take time off work to visit while my dad spared no expenses to make sure we were all together as a family during the whole ordeal. He was always a huge pillar of strength and reason, even during the most difficult times.

”

Daphne Khoo
Singer & Songwriter

“

Our faith gave us the peace and ability to overcome the challenges. Daphne's illness brought the family closer together and we now learn not to take life for granted. Every day is a bonus and we intend to live it well.

”

Madam Denise Ang
Manager



HOW DOES CANCER AFFECT MY FAMILY?

Cancer does not only affect the person with the disease. It also affects his or her family in many ways. These are some ways in which cancer may affect your family and ways to deal with the challenges.

1. Communication

While some families share their feelings and worries easily, others may find it hard to talk about cancer. Maintaining open and honest communication with your loved ones is important as you navigate the cancer journey.



- Take the initiative to let your family members know how you feel. Let them know too, if you are not ready to talk about certain aspects of your illness.
- If you have trouble talking about cancer with your family, consider getting help from your family friend, doctor, nurse, counsellor or even a religious leader to work through communications issues.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Your role and responsibilities in your household may change.



- Learn to accept help. Besides accepting help from people close to you, consider hiring paid help to lighten your burden. Accepting and receiving help is not a sign of weakness. It is a reminder of the love and care our loved ones have for us in times of need.
- Having a clear plan and letting your family members know what to expect will help prevent miscommunication and unnecessary tension.

3. Money Matters

Cancer treatments can take a huge toll on the family finances. Depending on how extensive your health insurance coverage is, you may need to cover some additional costs on your own. Costs can also increase if treatment does not go as planned, is extended or if the cancer returns.



- Sit down with your family to work out your finances.
- Check with your insurance company to find out what costs are covered in your health insurance plan.
- Ask the hospital financial counsellor to help you work out the estimated treatment charges. If necessary, he or she may help refer you to financial aid programmes.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS

Not everyone deals with cancer in the same way. Communication is important in fostering strong relationships with your loved ones. Here are some tips on how you can better communicate with various family members during this challenging period.

1. Spouses / Life Partners

- **Honesty is the best policy** – Maintaining two-way communication is important. Expressing your needs clearly can help avoid misunderstanding and conflict.
- **Tell your spouse / life partner about your feelings** – You may not like discussing negative emotions, but hiding how you feel will prevent your spouse from offering that extra support and reassurance you need on your cancer journey.
- **Get professional help, when necessary** – Cancer can affect sexual intimacy. You may feel anxious or embarrassed to talk about it. Seek help from a counsellor, therapist or your doctor.



2. Children

When talking to your children about cancer, cover the following basics:

- The type of cancer
- Where the cancer is in the body
- What will happen with treatment
- How their lives are expected to be changed by cancer and its treatment



Should you keep your illness a secret from your children?

Children can sense your worries and become more frightened if they are not given information. In addition, trust may be broken if they hear about your cancer diagnosis from another person. It is better that they learn about the situation from you.

♥ Young children aged up to 12 years old ♥

- ✓ **Use age-appropriate words** – For example, say “medicine” instead of “chemotherapy”. For older children, you could explain cancer using a simple analogy of a battle between “good cells” and “bad cells”, and how having treatment can help you beat the bad cells that are making you ill. You can also use children’s books to explain what cancer is to your child.
- ✓ **Avoid telling only the older children** – This may place a huge emotional burden on them.
- ✓ **Prepare younger children before your treatment** – Changes in your physical appearance during treatment may frighten younger children. Minimise anxiety by telling them beforehand.
- ✓ **Regularly reassure your children of your love for them** – Tell them that your discomfort or sadness is caused by your illness, and not because of them.
- ✓ **Encourage your children to share their feelings** – Be around to offer a listening ear and get your spouse/life partner and other adult family members to do the same too.



♥ Teenagers aged 13 to 19 years old ♥

- ✓ **Answer their questions honestly** – At this age, teenagers are likely to have a better understanding of what cancer is and have more questions.
- ✓ **Do not overload your teenager with responsibilities** – While your teenager may be happy to help out, expecting too much from him or her can cause additional stress.
- ✓ **Check in regularly on your teenager** – Watch for changes in behaviour such as changes in academic performance, withdrawal from regular activities and friends, mood changes, drug or alcohol use. These signs could signal that your teenager may need additional support to cope.



3. Parents

- ✓ ***Get help from other family members*** – If you are in charge of your aged parents' medical appointments or day-to-day living, you may now need to seek help with their care.
- ✓ ***Consider these points when telling your aged parents about your cancer diagnosis***
 - a. What is their state of health?
 - b. Can they cope with the news?
 - c. Can I enlist help from a family member or friend when I break the news to them?



4. Caregivers

- ✓ **Build a solid tag team** – Your caregivers need help and support to avoid caregiver burnout too. Have a few caregivers on standby so you do not have to depend only on one person. Encourage your caregivers to rest.
- ✓ **Keep your caregivers informed** – Provide your caregivers with up-to-date information about your cancer treatment and care, emergency numbers, medications and paperwork.
- ✓ **Remember to say “thank you”** – A simple gesture of appreciation can go a long way.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Keep your spirits up. A good dose of humour, hugs and strong support from loved ones will go a long way in managing the challenges of cancer.

GETTING HELP FOR DEPRESSION

Depression occurs in about 1 out of every 4 people with cancer. If you have depression, you may find it harder to go about your daily activities and follow treatment plans. Seek medical help instead of suffering silently.

Learn to recognise the red flags of depression. Call the doctor if you notice five or more of the following symptoms lasting for two weeks or longer, or are severe enough to affect normal daily activities.

- Sadness or a feeling of emptiness almost every day for most of the day
- Loss of interest in activities
- Eating problems (loss of appetite or overeating) including weight loss or gain*
- Changes in sleep patterns (inability to sleep, early waking or oversleeping)*
- Fatigue or decreased energy almost every day*
- Other people notice that the person is restless or has “slowed down”
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and helplessness
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or attempts at suicide
- Wide mood swings from depression to periods of agitation and high energy

**Note that physical problems such as fatigue, poor appetite and sleep changes may be side effects of cancer treatment. Talk to your doctor.*



GETTING SUPPORT FROM SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY

The Singapore Cancer Society provides rehabilitation support services to help cancer survivors take their first step toward recovery. The support groups and programmes for cancer patients, survivors and caregivers are:

Support Group	Description	Frequency
Bishana	For female cancer patients and survivors diagnosed with any type of cancer.	3 rd Friday of the month 6.30pm – 8.30pm
SemiColons	For colorectal cancer patients and survivors. The programme aims to help newly operated ostomates adjust physically and psychologically to new quality lifestyle. Ostomates are people who have had an ostomy, which refers to surgery to create an opening in the body for discharge of body wastes.	4 th Saturday of the month 2.00pm – 5.00pm
New Voice Club	To help laryngeal cancer patients and survivors cope with challenges brought about by its cancer and treatment. The New Voice Club also provides rehabilitation support by helping members learn how to speak again, with or without speech devices.	Every Tuesday 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Reach to Recovery	To help breast cancer patients and survivors cope with challenges brought about by breast cancer and its treatment.	4 th Saturday of the month 10.00am – 12.00pm
Walnut Warriors	To help prostate cancer patients and survivors cope with challenges brought about by prostate cancer and its treatment.	2 nd Saturday of the month 2.00pm – 5.00pm

SCS carries out a variety of free enrichment programmes: health and nutrition, fitness and lifestyle, music and dance appreciation, art & craft classes for support group members on a daily basis on structured schedules. Through these social recreational activities, cancer patients and survivors get to learn new skills together and bond with one another.

SCS also has a team of trained social workers or therapists that will be able to provide counselling and psycho-emotional support when require. If you wish to know more about cancer support groups or speak to someone from the psychosocial services team, please call **1800-727-3333**.

Programme	Description	Enquiries
SCS Patient Ambassador Programme	This programme provides basic psycho-social support to cancer patients with queries on process of treatment, side-effects and post-treatment. Patients will be supported by a fellow cancer survivor (also called a Patient Ambassador) via phone calls and/or face-to-face meet up.	For enquiries, please call 1800-727-3333
Look Good Feel Better Programme	This programme was developed specifically for women undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment. It is dedicated to improve the women's self-esteem through a 3 hour workshop covering skincare, makeup and hair fashion. The workshop is of no cost to cancer patients and survivors. Applicable to first timer only.	For enquiries, please call 1800-727-3333 or email to supportgroup@singaporecancer society.org.sg

CANCER AND MY FINANCES

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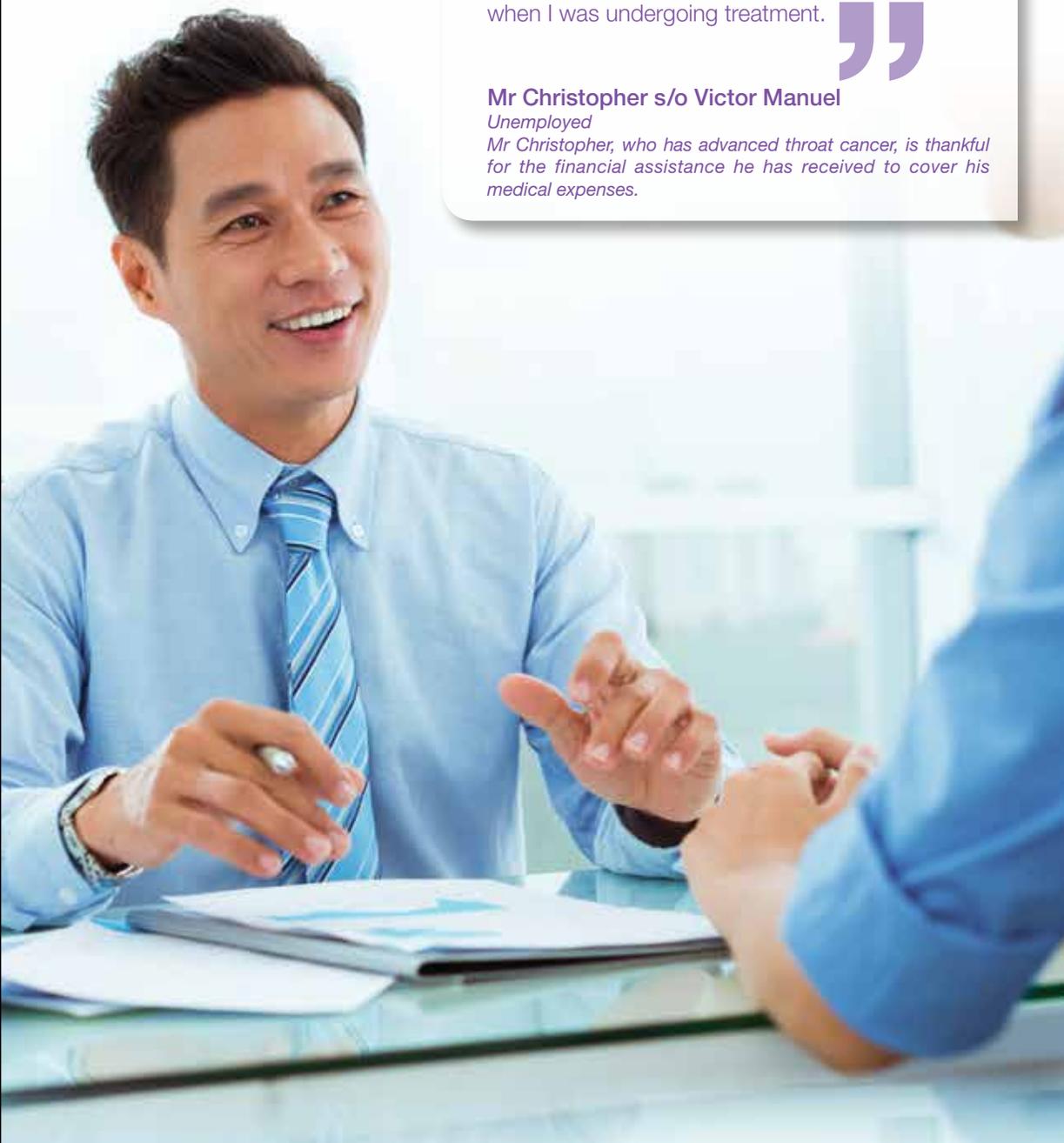
I struggled financially ever since I was diagnosed with Stage 4 throat cancer and had to stop work to undergo intensive radiation therapy. Fortunately, my treatment bill was covered by Medifund and my Medisave savings. The Singapore Cancer Society's Welfare Aid Fund, Cancer Treatment Fund and Hospital Transport Scheme also offered financial help when I was undergoing treatment.

”

Mr Christopher s/o Victor Manuel

Unemployed

Mr Christopher, who has advanced throat cancer, is thankful for the financial assistance he has received to cover his medical expenses.



HOW CAN I FINANCE MY CANCER TREATMENT?

Treatment cost is one of the many pressing concerns after a cancer diagnosis. Besides worrying about your health, you may also be concerned about your financial status. Do I have adequate health insurance coverage to cover the cost of treatment? What are the hidden costs? Will my family be able to cope financially if I have to stop work? These are some questions that may run through your mind.

Before you start treatment, it is helpful to think about the various costs that could add up during your treatment and recovery process. This will help you track your finances, giving you time to look for financial support and help if necessary. Some common costs for cancer-related care include outpatient cost, medication, transportation charges and family expenses, etc.

Read on to find out more about the existing financial options that are available for people with cancer.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Seek advice from your healthcare providers, case managers or social workers. They will be able to offer a bigger picture of the estimated costs of treatment and help you organise your finances. If necessary, they will also help to determine the type of financial assistance you are eligible for.



1. Health Insurance

Your health insurance coverage plays a role in how much additional costs you will have to pay from your own pocket. If you have a health insurance plan, be sure to check with the insurance company before you start treatment to find out which medical costs are covered.

Understanding how your insurance policy works and its restrictions can be challenging. That is why it is important to sit down with your insurance agent to find out exactly what your plan covers and what you will need to make the necessary claims.



2. Government Schemes and Subsidies

All Singaporeans are covered by heavy government subsidies of up to 80 per cent of the total bill in acute public hospital wards. Other levels of healthcare protection are provided by the following government schemes.

- ✓ **Medisave** – This compulsory medical savings scheme helps working Singaporeans put aside a portion of their monthly income for future medical expenses.

You can use the savings from your Medisave account to pay for your personal or immediate family members' hospitalisation, day surgery and certain outpatient expenses. You can also use your Medisave for selected cancer related investigations.

Visit www.moh.gov.sg for the latest updates on Medisave withdrawal limits.

- ✓ **MediShield** – MediShield is a medical insurance scheme designed to help meet large hospitalisation bills which cannot be adequately covered by Medisave. It covers hospitalisation expenses and certain approved outpatient treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy for cancer.

MediShield is operated by the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board.

Visit www.cpf.gov.sg to learn about the withdrawal limits.



✓ **Medifund** – This is a medical safety net set up by the Government to help needy Singaporeans who cannot afford their subsidised medical bills, even with Medisave and MediShield coverage. If you or your family has difficulties paying your medical bills, you can approach medical social workers at Medifund-approved institutions for assistance.

Visit www.moh.gov.sg to learn more.

✓ **Medication Assistance Fund** – Under this scheme, eligible Singaporean patients receive subsidies to pay for costly drugs that are not covered in the Standard Drug List but have been assessed to be clinically necessary. Note that some drugs are subsidised only for specific medical conditions and the availability of the drugs varies at each public healthcare institution.

To find out if you are eligible for this scheme, check with your healthcare team. Visit www.moh.gov.sg to learn more.



HOW SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY CAN HELP

The Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) believes that no one should walk the cancer journey alone because of financial difficulties. As such, SCS has helped needy patients in Singapore through the following financial and welfare schemes.

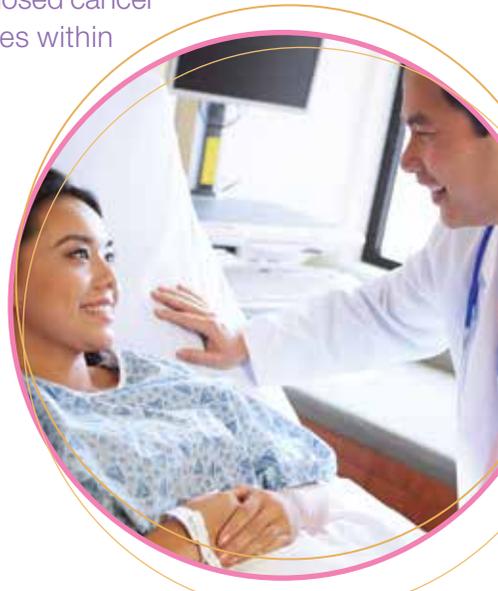


The Singapore Cancer Society is a voluntary welfare organisation. Its programmes and services are funded by public donations. To enquire about SCS financial and welfare schemes, please call **1800 727 3333** or email **welfare@singaporecancersociety.org.sg**.

1. SCS Cancer Care Fund

As you learn to cope with your cancer diagnosis, you may also worry about your financial status. Unexpected, out-of-pocket expenses for transportation costs and other daily expenses can take a toll on your finances and add on to your worries.

The SCS Cancer Care Fund is a one-time financial assistance scheme to alleviate the financial burden of newly-diagnosed cancer patients from low or middle income families within the first 6 months of diagnosis.



2. SCS Cancer Treatment Fund

Set up in 2005, the SCS Cancer Treatment Fund offers financial help to needy cancer patients by subsidising part of the costs of chemotherapy drugs and (Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy) IMRT. The SCS Cancer Treatment Fund assist needy cancer patients from all restructured hospitals in Singapore.

While the fund is not able to meet all the needs of every cancer patient in financial difficulty, it has addressed the concerns of many patients struggling to pay their medical bills. Please check with a medical social worker from a restructured hospital or SCS to find out if you are eligible for financial assistance. The application and approval process for cancer treatment cases is subject to an eligibility criteria and financial assessment, which is reviewed by the Welfare Aid committee and the Medical committee.

3. SCS Welfare Aid Fund

Since 1967, SCS has been providing financial assistance and free transportation to needy cancer patients. This financial scheme provides temporary financial assistance and/or medical supplies such as milk feeds and colostomy bags to patients from low income families.

Check with a medical social worker from a hospital, hospice or social service office to find out if you are eligible for financial assistance. The application and approval process for welfare aid cases is subjected to an eligibility criteria and financial assessment, which is reviewed by the Welfare Aid Committee.

4. SCS Hospital Transportation Scheme

SCS free transportation scheme helps needy patients who need to travel from their homes to the restructured hospitals for their treatments. Currently, this service is provided via our passenger vans and volunteer drivers.

Selection for the service is based on the recommendation of each hospital's medical social workers and it is subject to availability. Please contact your medical social worker or SCS should you require this service.

5. SCS Help the Children and Youth Programme

SCS Help the Children and Youth Programme (HCYP) reaches out to children and youths who have experienced the impact of cancer, either directly as a patient or indirectly as a loved one of a patient. The cancer journey can be especially challenging - financially, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually - for children and youths as they struggle to find meaning and purpose in their circumstances. Through meaningful activities, the young person is empowered with the tools necessary to go through life and cope with the impact of cancer.

The programme comprises of the following 5 components:

- Education Financial Assistance Scheme
- Tuition Programme
- SCS Youth Club
- Family Engagement
- Achievement Awards

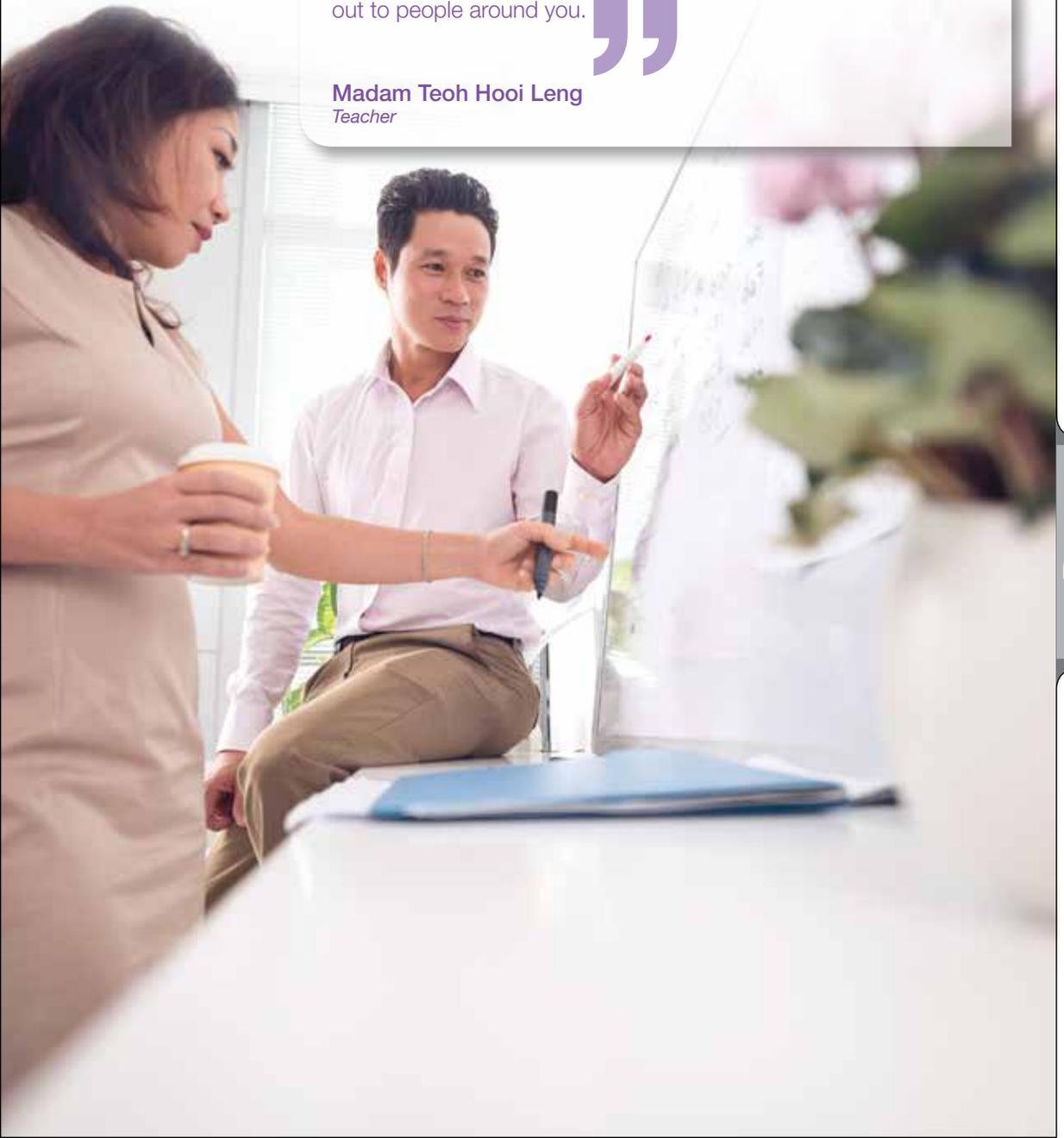
CANCER AND MY WORK ENVIRONMENT

“

From the beginning to the end, there was nothing for me to hide from my boss and colleagues. When I returned to work after regaining my strength, my colleagues helped ease me back to my usual work duties gradually. I believe that open communication is very important in maintaining good relationships during the cancer journey. Remember that you are not alone in this journey. Reach out to people around you.

”

Madam Teoh Hooi Leng
Teacher



HOW WILL CANCER AFFECT MY WORK LIFE?

While some people have no problems carrying on with work, others struggle to cope. These are some ways in which cancer may impact your working life.

1. It can affect you physically

Coping with cancer can be physically demanding. Common side effects from treatment like pain, fatigue, vomiting and shortness of breath can affect your work productivity, memory and concentration. You may also be more prone to infections, if you are on certain chemotherapy drugs.

2. It can affect you emotionally

During your battle against cancer, you may experience a range of negative emotions which can take a toll on your work life. Most people experience some degree of depression and anxiety during their cancer journey.

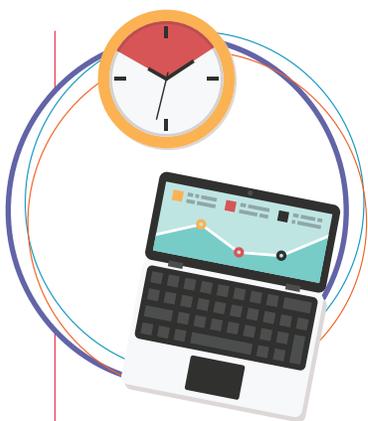
3. It can cause practical issues at work

Chances are, you may have to take time off from work for your treatment or check-ups. Practical problems may crop up if your employer is not supportive or face difficulty offloading your work responsibilities.



MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT WORK

Whether you choose to stop or carry on working during your treatment depends on many factors. Here are some questions to think over regarding your work arrangements.



1. How much work will I need to cut back on temporarily?
2. How will my cancer treatment affect the way I work, and how much rest should I get during this period?
3. Who can help me?
4. What is my current financial status, and will I need extra financial assistance during this period?
5. If I do not work, where can I get the extra financial help?
6. How safe is it for me and for others, if I continue working during treatment?



TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYER



1. Should I tell my employer that I have cancer?

While you do not need to go into specific details of your cancer, you should let your employer know if your illness could become a safety hazard to yourself or others in your workplace.

By opening up about your illness, it allows you to discuss adjustments and support you may need in the workplace.



2. Do I have the right to not let my colleagues know?

Your employer will need your permission to share information about your illness.



3. How much should I disclose to my employer?

You do not have to share details. Instead you can focus on how cancer may impact your work performance or pose certain safety risks. You should also let your employer know if you do not want to share the information with your colleagues.



4. How can my employer support me?

Check with your employer or HR department about how much paid and unpaid leave you are entitled to. Under Singapore's Employment Act, you are entitled to both paid outpatient and hospitalisation sick leave if you have worked for at least three months with your employer. Your sick leave should be certified by a company or government doctor.

Be sure to give your employer ample notice when you need to take time off, so that he can make other work arrangements.





5. What can I do if my employer treats me unfairly?

Employers operating in Singapore are expected to follow the Tripartite Guidelines, which include guidelines on employment discrimination.

If you think you have been unfairly treated, contact the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) for advice.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- The uncertainty of cancer treatment and its side effects can make it hard for you to plan work duties beforehand. Be sure to ask your doctor how treatment will affect you and if you can continue working.
- Have an open discussion with your employer to plan the next course of action. For instance, a lighter work load or working from home may be possible with some planning. Even small arrangements like being able to take short breaks to rest during work hours can be helpful.
- Get organised. Keep a work log of meetings, duties, leave taken and appointments. File important documents like work contracts and medical leave certificates in separate folders.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Talk to your colleagues. You may prefer to not tell your colleagues about your cancer diagnosis. However people with cancer do find solace in their co-workers' encouragement and practical support. Consider telling people whom you think are likely to be supportive. If you feel uncomfortable telling them directly, you may ask your supervisor or manager to do so.



CHANGING JOBS

For some people, returning to the same job after cancer treatment may not be possible. Here are some questions to think over before your job switch.

1. What skills can I transfer over to my new job position?
2. Will I need extra training?
3. What adjustments are needed in my new job?
4. How can I make the adjustment?



Although cancer treatment may take a toll on your health, it does not make you less qualified for a job. Check with your doctor on the possible restriction you may need to function in a new job.

TALKING TO YOUR POTENTIAL EMPLOYER



1. What should I tell my potential employer?

While you do not need to go into specific details of your cancer, you need to let your prospective employer know about your illness for insurance purposes as indicated by Ministry of Manpower.



2. What should I do if I face discrimination?

You should not be refused employment on the basis of a previous cancer diagnosis or treatment.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you think you have been treated unfairly, you can contact the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) for advice.

MY LIFE AFTER CANCER

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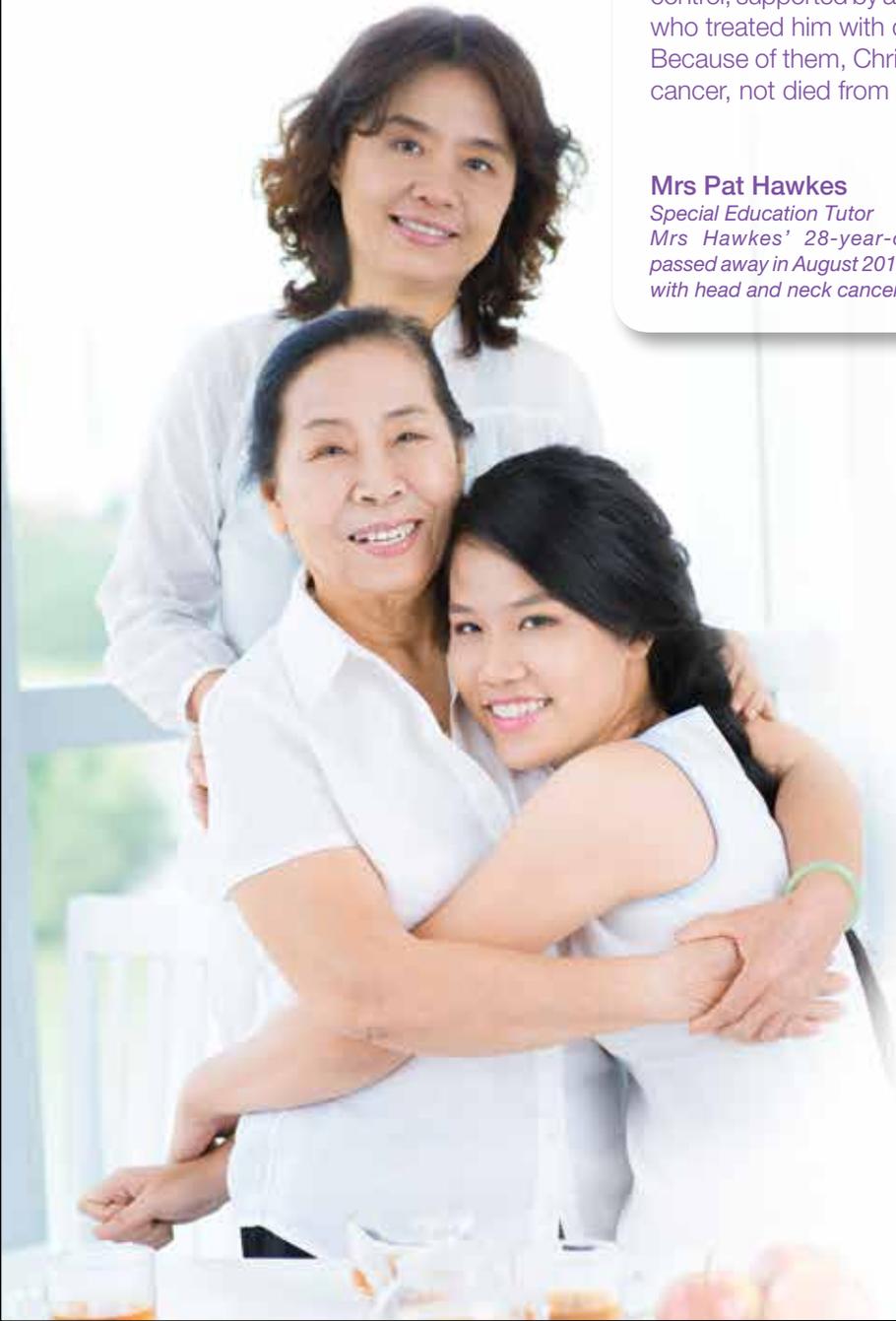
Living with cancer is not always doom and gloom. There was so much laughter during my son's cancer journey. Up until the end of his life, Chris was always in control, supported by a home hospice team who treated him with dignity and respect. Because of them, Chris lived a full life with cancer, not died from it.

”

Mrs Pat Hawkes

Special Education Tutor

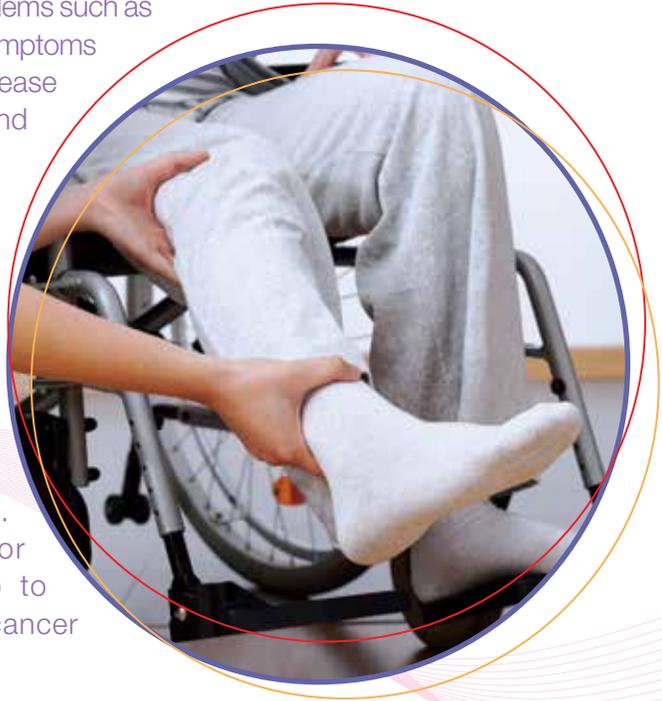
Mrs Hawkes' 28-year-old son Christopher passed away in August 2014 after a four-year battle with head and neck cancer.



REHABILITATION AFTER CANCER

You have finally completed your cancer treatment and are ready to live life anew. However, cancer and its treatment often cause physical and practical problems such as fatigue and muscle weakness. These symptoms can make it challenging for you to ease back to your new 'state of normalcy' and reintegrate into the society.

Professional rehabilitation can help you recover physically and emotionally. This can be especially helpful to survivors who wish to return to work after cancer. Early cancer rehabilitation is beneficial to all patients as it not only helps to build up strength and stamina, but also addresses psychosocial issues. Talk to your healthcare team or Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) to learn more about the available cancer rehabilitation services.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Consider professional rehabilitation if you are:

- ✓ feeling weaker now than when you were initially diagnosed
- ✓ having problems with talking or swallowing
- ✓ experiencing pain
- ✓ feeling more lethargic now than before the diagnosis
- ✓ experiencing muscular or orthopaedic problems
- ✓ having difficulty doing the activities you used to do
- ✓ uncertain about how much and what type of exercise you need
- ✓ having problems concentrating or remembering things
- ✓ facing emotional, psychological, vocational, spiritual and even social challenges

Cancer Rehabilitation Programme

In 2016, Singapore Cancer Society officially opened its Cancer Rehabilitation Centre located at level 8 JEM office tower. This is Singapore's first community-based cancer rehabilitation centre, providing convenient access to integrated, person-centred and holistic rehabilitative care tailored to the specific needs of cancer patients and survivors. This community-based rehabilitation centre largely serves non-acute cases which do not require frequent hospital follow-up. Our rehabilitation team works with patients and caregivers to determine rehabilitation goals and craft personalised programmes.



The Benefits of Cancer Rehabilitation

- Focuses on the needs of clients in their cancer journey
- Reduces challenges in the client's rehabilitation journey
- Monitors client's progress and needs to help attain a new state of normalcy
- Provides caregivers a platform to address their needs and reduce stress
- Gives clients opportunities to learn, interact, and support one another

A Holistic, Integrated, and Inter-Disciplinary Approach

Each patient's physical and cognitive needs are closely interlinked and must be treated and addressed holistically. The SCS Cancer Rehabilitation Programme provides:

- Physical therapy to address fatigue, strengthening, and pain issues
- Comprehensive nutritional support with classes and consultation
- Counselling to address emotional, psychological and spiritual challenges
- Support group engagement to provide assistance and motivation
- Work-life reintegration through the Return-To-Work programme and skills training/re-training
- Professional support for family members and caregivers

PLANNING AHEAD – MEDICAL & LEGAL

Regardless of your age or current health status, making concrete healthcare and legal plans can offer peace of mind for both yourself and your loved ones. Read on to find out more about the available advance medical and legal planning options.

1. Advance Care Planning

Consider this scenario: You are so ill that you are unable to speak for yourself. Who will plan and voice out your care preferences to the medical team?

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is a series of voluntary discussions that allow you to document and share your future healthcare decisions with your healthcare team and family members. Plan ahead with ACP so that your loved ones and caregivers will be sure of your wishes in the event that you are unable to make healthcare decisions for yourself.

To learn more about ACP, visit Living Matters at www.livingmatters.sg or Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) at aic.sg

Get started on your ACP with these simple steps:

- ✓ Make an appointment with a trained ACP facilitator. You can ask your healthcare provider to refer you to one.
- ✓ Discuss with the ACP facilitator and your loved ones what your idea of living well is.
- ✓ Choose a substitute (or proxy) decision-maker to be your voice when you are unable to speak for yourself. Note that your proxy decision-maker must be at least 21 years old. You may choose a relative, good friend or anyone whom you think will act in your best interests when you are no longer able to do so.
- ✓ Document your preferences with your ACP facilitator's help.
- ✓ Review your ACP document when your medical condition or life circumstances change.

DO YOU KNOW?

You do not need a lawyer for Advance Care Planning (ACP). A trained ACP facilitator can walk you through the steps. You can also change your mind after the discussion.

2. Advance Medical Directive

An Advance Medical Directive (AMD) is a legal document that you sign in advance to inform your doctor that you do not wish to use any extraordinary life-sustaining treatment to prolong your life, in the event of terminal illness or unconsciousness.

To learn more about AMD, visit www.moh.gov.sg

You need to fulfil the following criteria if you wish to make an AMD:

- ✓ You must be above the age of 21 and of sound mind.
- ✓ Three doctors (including your hospital doctor) must all certify that you are terminally ill. Two of the doctors must be specialists.

If there is a disagreement between the doctors, the doctor-in-charge can review it. If there is still no agreement, the Ministry of Health will appoint three additional specialists to review your case. If all the three appointed specialists still cannot certify that you are terminally ill, the AMD cannot take effect.

- ✓ You need to complete and sign the AMD form in the presence of two witnesses – your doctor and someone who is above the age of 21. Both witnesses cannot stand to gain anything from your passing.

DO YOU KNOW?

You can cancel your AMD at any time by completing a form or writing a letter to the Registrar of AMDs. You will need one witness.



3. Lasting Power of Attorney

Through the Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), you can appoint someone you trust to make decisions and act on your behalf should you lose the mental ability to make these decisions yourself in the future. Loss of mental capacity may happen as a result of a stroke, mental illness or accident.

You can appoint more than one person to be your donee. Your donee must be at least 21 years old and must not be bankrupt if you are appointing him / her for property and affairs matters.

To learn more about making an LPA, visit www.publicguardian.gov.sg

Your donee(s) can help you to act in the following areas:

- ✓ Your personal welfare
- ✓ Your property and affairs
- ✓ Both your personal welfare as well as property and affairs

You need to fulfil the following criteria if you wish to make an LPA:

- ✓ You must be at least 21 years of age.
- ✓ You must possess mental capacity to make your own LPA.
- ✓ You must not be bankrupt if you are appointing a property and affairs donee.
- ✓ You must register your LPA with the Office of Public Guardian for it to be legally valid.



DO YOU KNOW?

The LPA should only be used when you are certified to be incapable of managing your own affairs. Should you regain your mental capacity again, your donee should step aside to allow you to manage your own affairs.

4. Planning A Will

A Will ensures that your loved ones are provided for according to your wishes after your death. The contents of this legal document describe your estate (which refers to all of your money, savings and assets) and how it will be distributed among your beneficiaries after your death.

Instructions on other issues such as the care of minor children and special needs children, as well as formation of trusts may also be covered in your Will.

Wills made in Singapore are governed by the Wills Act. Although you do not need a lawyer to make a Will, many people seek legal advice to avoid issues that can cause their homemade Will to be invalid.

Consider visiting a free legal clinic to find out more. For a list of free legal clinics in Singapore, visit legalclinics.sg

To learn more about making a Will, visit www.lawsociety.org.sg



DO YOU KNOW?

If you pass away without a Will, your estate will be distributed based on the Interstate Succession Act. As such, your estate may not be distributed to people whom you wish to provide for after your death.

PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

At some point during your treatment, your doctor may feel that you may benefit from hospice care. Also known as palliative care, this concept of care focuses on improving quality of life by relieving pain and other distressing symptoms. It also offers practical and psychosocial support to family members and caregivers.

Palliative care myth debunked:

Receiving hospice or palliative care does not necessarily mean you are given a death sentence. There are patients who go on to live full lives after their conditions stabilise. If you feel that palliative care can help you, ask your doctor for advice.

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) Hospice Care

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) Hospice Care, the first hospice home care service in Singapore, was established in 1987. Since then, the team has provided home hospice care to support the needs of the Singapore community.

The SCS Hospice team provides the following services:

✓ *Clinical assessment and treatment during home visits*

The team teaches patients and their caregivers how to manage symptoms like pain and breathlessness.

✓ *Home rehabilitation*

Therapists go through physical exercises to maintain patients' strength and function, as well as provide home modification advice and caregiver training.

✓ *Psychosocial services*

The team offers financial assistance, psychosocial, emotional and spiritual support to patients and caregivers. Bereavement support is also provided to family members and caregivers in the months following the death of a patient.

✓ *Loan of equipment*

SCS loans equipment such as oxygen concentrators and syringe drivers, as well as rehabilitative equipment such as wheelchairs, commodes, and walking aids to patients.

SCS accepts patients through hospital or clinic referrals. For more information, call **6421 5832** or email hospice@singaporecancersociety.org.sg

Hospice care is about “caring and loving”. It emphasises the importance of quality of life. The focus is on providing relief of pain and other distressing symptoms, as well as ensuring emotional, spiritual and practical support for the patient and the family.

– Singapore Hospice Council



CANCER CAREGIVERS

“

While caring for my family members [with cancer], there were very stressful moments where hurtful exchanges with one another have strained our relationships... It was tough juggling between caring not just for the sick but the young, as my daughter was still in primary school... It is important for caregivers to accept and acknowledge what is before you and take up the challenge... Talking to and learning from others, especially those who went through similar struggles, is helpful so that you don't feel alone and you can get advice from them. At the same time, getting practical help from others such as hiring a domestic helper, or getting caregiving support from other family members, helps to better manage the caregiving load...

”

Ms Margaret Yong

Caregiver

Ms Yong has been a caregiver to many family members diagnosed with cancer. She was a caregiver to her father, mother, husband and sister.



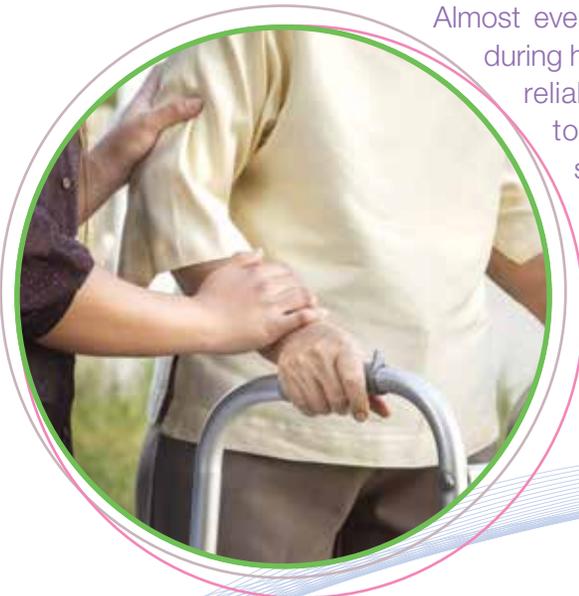
CANCER CAREGIVERS

A massive storm hits – cancer. So now you found yourself taking on the role of becoming a caregiver to someone with cancer...some questions may pop into your head such as:

- “ **Where do I start?**
How can I prepare myself?
How can I best support my loved one?
What do I say to my loved one?
How can I cope? ”

Seeing a loved one struggle with a life-threatening illness is not easy, especially when we have to rise up as a caregiver.

Becoming a caregiver for someone with cancer can be a profound demonstration of love. It is common to feel challenged by the responsibilities that come with the caregiving role, especially when you may not be prepared or be ready for it. However, it may be among the most important roles in a person's life.



Almost everyone will be a caregiver at some time during his or her life. Being able to provide good, reliable and consistent caregiving support to your loved one with cancer can have significant impact on his/her wellbeing.

While it can be challenging and demanding, it may also be rewarding or fulfilling.



PREPARING TO BECOME A CAREGIVER

“ It caught me by surprise when my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. Suddenly I found myself having to juggle so many extra responsibilities. I felt helpless seeing her in pain... ”

Peter

43 years old, caregiver

This section contains resources to support you in your caregiving role, with tips and information to deal with some of the challenges and demands faced by caregivers.

1. Who is a caregiver and what does a caregiver do?

A caregiver is anyone who provides care and assistance to someone else.

Caregivers may provide support to a spouse, parent, sibling, family member or friend. Caregivers provide physical, emotional, social, spiritual, financial or practical support to a loved one with cancer.

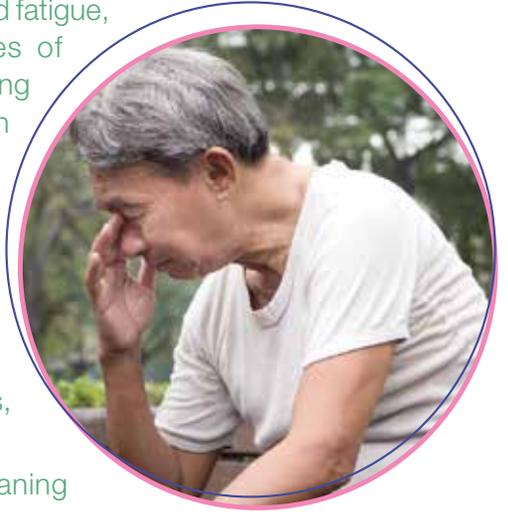


2. How can cancer affect your loved one?

Perhaps the best place to start is by trying to understand what your loved one may be going through in facing a life-threatening illness.

It is important for caregivers to be aware of how cancer can affect their loved one, so that you can understand his/her needs and provide him/her with appropriate support to meet those needs. *For more details on side effects, please refer to “How can I cope with the side effects?”, p. 22-24*

- **Physical impact:** e.g. Cancer-related fatigue, decreased functioning in activities of daily living (ADL), chemobrain (thinking and memory problems that can happen after cancer treatment).
- **Psychological/Emotional impact:** e.g. Low mood, mood swings, fear, depression, anxiety, self-image, etc.
- **Social impact:** e.g. Decreased motivation to socialize, loss of friends, etc.
- **Spiritual impact:** e.g. Loss of meaning in life, loss of faith, etc.
- **Practical impact:** e.g. Loss of income resulting from unemployment/ job loss, etc.



STRATEGIES TO MEET DIFFERENT NEEDS OF YOUR LOVED ONES

“When my husband received the cancer diagnosis, my mind went blank. I felt sad watching him cry... it was so scary as he was the first in the family to get cancer... Slowly, I opened myself to learn more about cancer and what I can do to help... I created a list of tasks and tried to divide the tasks between my family members, friends and professionals... Caring for my husband turned out to be an opportunity for me to grow through pain...”

Sally

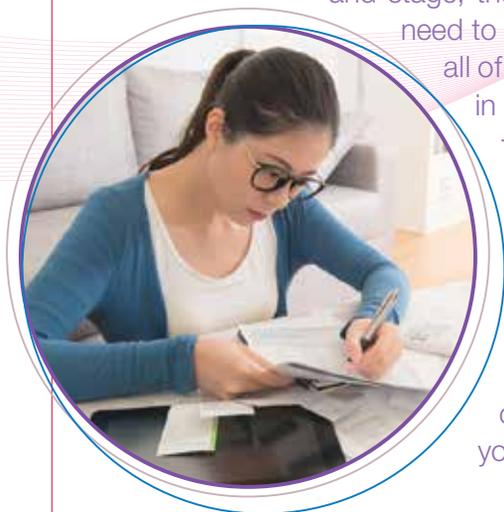
65 years old, caregiver

1. Create a list of caregiving tasks

The caregiving journey is often a dynamic experience. There is no one map that fits all cancer patients and caregivers in navigating the cancer journey. You can consider creating your own caregiving map to help organize roles, tasks and activities that would arise throughout the trajectory of the cancer progression.

Depending on your loved one's own coping ability, as well as the type of cancer and stage, there are different roles and tasks that you may need to take on. It may help to start by making a list of all of your caregiving tasks. You can try to list them in order of importance.

There are various common tasks that caregivers may be required to take on. You may start getting some ideas from the list below and adapt them according to the needs of your loved ones. Every cancer patient deals with cancer in his or her own unique way. Thus, it is important to assess if what you do in your caregiving is relevant in meeting the needs of your loved one.



♥ To meet physical/practical needs

- Coordinating the care of your loved one and arranging your loved one's schedules, transport and visits to the hospital
- Helping your loved one in day-to-day household activities and running errands for them.
- Feeding, dressing and bathing your loved one and lifting your loved one from the bed if he/she is immobile.

♥ To meet health/medical needs:

- Managing, recording and reporting the treatment side-effects that your loved one may be experiencing.
- Ensuring that your loved one has sufficient nutrition in his/her daily meals and reminding him/her to take his/her food and medicine on time.
- Keeping track of medicines and test results and giving medicines to your loved one.

♥ To meet emotional needs:

- Lending your loved one a listening ear and providing him/her with love and support. This may include attending to his/her feelings, especially during his/her lowest and most vulnerable moments.
- Helping your loved one search for support groups where he/she can connect with other cancer survivors in the community.
- Keeping family and friends informed so that they can provide appropriate support to your loved one.

♥ To meet spiritual needs:

- Helping your loved one find meaning in his/her illness.
- Keeping him/her connected in his/her religion if it gives him/her comfort and meaning.
- Celebrating religious festivals with your loved one.

♥ To meet financial needs:

- Dealing with the financial and legal issues such as managing insurance claims.
- Discuss and plan for financial matters involving will, assets, trusts, joint properties and bank accounts.



2. Identifying your limitations, strengths and resources

Taking some time to know yourself is helpful. You can start by recognising your personal strengths, available resources and limitations to provide a rough guide towards drafting a reasonable caregiving plan.

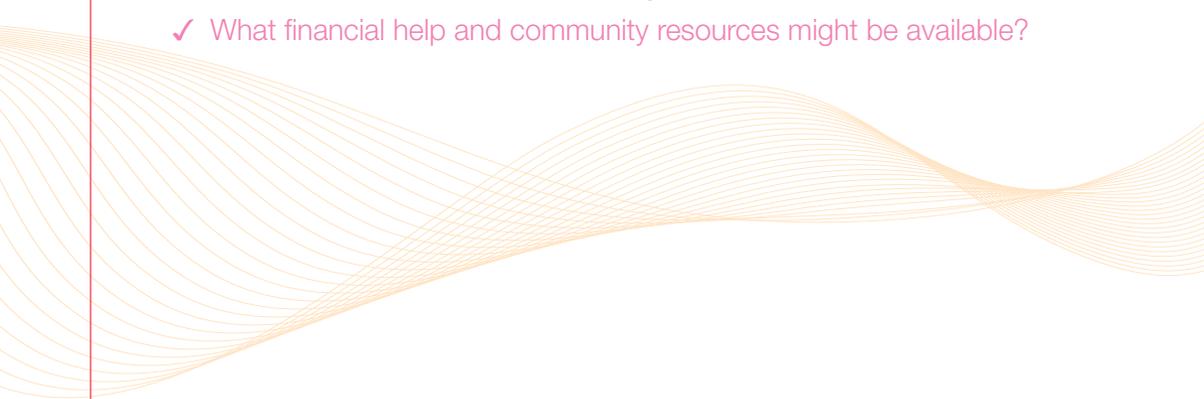
Recognising personal strength and resources can help you identify key areas of support to meet future caregiving challenges.

Recognising your limitations can help you flag out signs when you need help, as well as to be aware of your caregiving limits.

Knowing your limits can also help you identify activities that your loved one can carry out independently while you take a break. This can help to prevent burnout.

For a start, do consider asking yourself some of these questions:

- ✓ What is the amount of care that my loved one needs to live as independently as possible?
- ✓ What would my loved one's preference be?
- ✓ How much of my attention, time and energy is needed to provide my loved one with the necessary care?
- ✓ Am I able to cope with other commitments?
- ✓ Do I have the skills needed to provide my loved one with the appropriate care?
- ✓ How can I improve myself as a caregiver?
- ✓ What am I good at as a caregiver?
- ✓ Am I being realistic about how much I can do in a day?
- ✓ What other help might be available? What or who do I need to complement my caregiving duties and tasks?
- ✓ When are those moments I know I would need help?
- ✓ How much will it cost to care for my loved one?
- ✓ What financial help and community resources might be available?



3. Be proactive

When you are able to take charge of your planning process, it helps you meet anticipated care needs and know what to do during emergencies.



(A) Make a caregiving plan

- ♥ To better support your loved one, you may want to consider making a caregiving plan.
- ♥ A caregiving plan is a plan that can help you take better care of your loved one by laying out key tasks that need to be accomplished in managing the health and well-being of your loved one.
- ♥ This plan can help you better manage various caregiving and medical schedules, serve as a communication tool and help you plan for help in advance.
- ♥ Caregivers often try to balance their caregiving with other responsibilities. Having a caregiving plan can help you get organized and maximize your time.

What to consider when making a caregiving plan

- When making a caregiving plan, it is important to work with your loved one to understand his or her wishes, needs and situation. Do involve your loved one in putting together the care plan, so that he or she will be more motivated to cooperate and follow through with the plan.
- It may be worthwhile to consider other family members' input on this caregiving plan to foster open communication and minimise potential conflict.



- Consider your loved one's diagnosis, prognosis and needs. Know what medication and equipment your loved one needs. Be aware of what the treatment goal (immediate, medium-term and long-term) is for your loved one.
- Care needs may increase or decrease along the cancer journey. Caregiving tasks may change as the person's health changes. It is always good to be ready to anticipate changes to your caregiving plan and your loved one's health goals.
- Do have some ideas on the roles played by different healthcare professionals so you know how they can complement your role as a caregiver. Sharing with the healthcare team about your family values and beliefs help them to understand what treatment options and care preference are important to your loved one.

Caregiving plan: some templates

Your caregiving plan can include a daily care plan, which can help you access your needs, skills and available resources. For example:

Daily caregiving needs	People who can help	When can they come? How often?
E.g. Bathing	E.g. Richard (Husband)	E.g. Daily
E.g. Going for medical appointments	E.g. Cassy (Auntie)	E.g. Weekly
E.g. Buying groceries	E.g. Joseph (Son)	E.g. Daily

If your loved one needs to take medication regularly, you may want to include a medication chart as a record for all the medications consumed and to serve as a reminder for taking medications on time.

Name of medication	What is this for?	How much to give?	How many times to give?	What are the side effects?	Who prescribed this medication?	Where is it available?
E.g. Letrozole	E.g. Prevent the cancer from returning	E.g. One tablet	E.g. Once a day, before or after meals	E.g. Hot flushes, hair loss	E.g. Dr. A.Z. Wong	E.g. XYZ Pharmacy

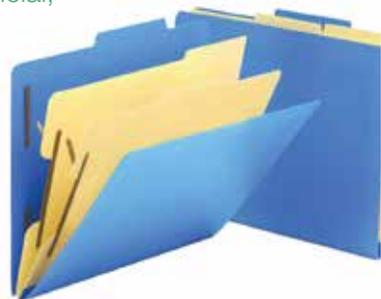
Your caregiving plan can also include a meal plan, to help in planning for meals on a daily basis.

Meal time	Nutrition needs	Allergies	Dietary restrictions	Preference	Prepared by
E.g. Breakfast	Protein	E.g. Peanuts	E.g. No fried or raw food	E.g. Egg porridge	E.g. Cassie (Auntie)
E.g. Lunch	Vitamins and fibre; calcium & iron	E.g. Peanuts	E.g. No fried or raw food	E.g. Baked chicken & green leafy vegetables	E.g. Cassie (Auntie)
E.g. Dinner	Carbohydrates	E.g. Peanuts	E.g. No fried or raw food	E.g. Steamed fish rice & mashed potatoes	E.g. Richard (Husband)



(B) Caregiving file

- ♥ You may want to organize a caregiving file to organize various caregiving information. You may want to include the caregiving plan in your caregiving file.
- ♥ You can also file your caregiving notes and pointers in this file, as well as a contingency plan of what to do in case the primary caregiver or key service providers are unavailable at some point.
- ♥ Photocopy important documents (such as medical records and test results) and keep them in the caregiving file.
- ♥ Keep a list of contact details of your family members as well as healthcare professionals in this file for emergencies.
- ♥ You may also want to include a timetable of how different people involved in the caregiving can help in the caregiving duties.
- ♥ You may want to organise this caregiving file under the following different tabs/sections (Do add on additional tabs that you may find useful): Medical notes, Caregiving plan, Financial, Social/People who can help, Useful/ Helpful numbers.



“ My relatives were well-meaning in their intentions to help, but not everything they did was helpful, especially when they tried to offer advice when we did not want it... What helped was when we had a family meeting, facilitated by the social worker, with several members of the family. Harry (patient) and myself (caregiver) were able to express what we needed and how our family could help practically...”

Megan

35 years old, caregiver



(C) Enlisting the support of others

- ♥ Asking for help is not a confession of weakness or inability to cope. Recognise that an important part of problem-solving is being able to seek advice and receive help from others.
- ♥ Remember that caregiving is a team effort. As a caregiver, you are part of a team of family members, friends, neighbours, supporters, volunteers and health care professionals.
- ♥ The acronym T.E.A.M. stands for Together Everyone Achieves More. Sometimes you may need to ask for another pair of helping hands.
- ♥ Together with your family, friends and/or relevant professionals, you may be able to come up with creative solutions for your loved one's caregiving needs. They may have strengths and skills that can complement your role.



Holding a family meeting

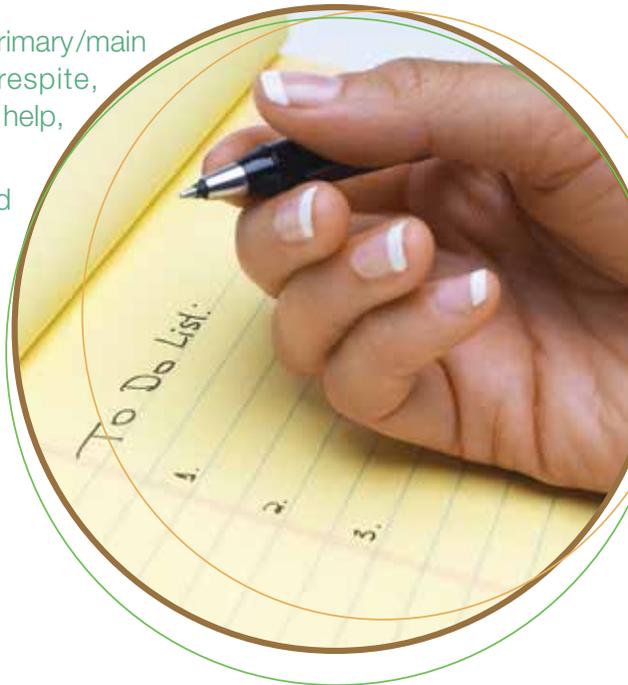


- Often you may find that your family members are a crucial source of support that you may want to turn to.
- However, they may have their own views on how care should be provided. You may want to hold a family meeting to ensure that there is a discussion of different perspectives.
- This ensure that everyone in the family is able to participate in planning and decision-making with regards to supporting your loved one. This way, there can be a clearer understanding of who is available to help and how each member of the family can contribute in caring for the loved one.
- Such family meeting will also ensure that everyone is on the same page in understanding your loved one's medical condition and needs.
- You can consider family meeting based on demand. As there is a likelihood that care needs will be changing, it may take more than one session throughout the caregiving journey.
- You may also want to get assistance from a social worker in facilitating the family meeting to make best use of the time spent.



You may want to use the following checklist of what to cover during the family meeting:

- ✓ Do share your most important concerns first. Consider who will make decisions (e.g. financial, medical, hiring extra help, etc) and how these decisions will be made. You may also consider who can be the secondary caregiver if the primary caregiver is not at home and someone needs to take charge in the event of emergencies.
- ✓ Consider who the main spokesperson will be that will liaise with the healthcare team to communicate your loved one's needs and decisions made for the care of the loved one.
- ✓ Consider what support role each member of the family wants to play. Establish clear roles and how tasks will be distributed.
- ✓ Consider who your loved one will be staying with and who will be in the best position to attend to the daily caregiving needs of your loved one.
- ✓ Consider if the care needs of your loved one will be best attended to in a nursing home, hospice or home.
- ✓ Discuss how the caregiving and support needs will change as the illness progresses. Discuss the changes you and your family members will be prepared to make in order to accommodate caregiving roles and duties.
- ✓ Discuss and organize in advance for tests, appointments and treatments to give people tasks to do, in the weeks ahead, to share in the care of your loved one.
- ✓ Discuss what support the primary/main caregiver will need (e.g. respite, emotional support, practical help, etc).
- ✓ Make sure everyone is informed about emergency warning signs given by your healthcare provider. Write them down and make sure that all family members know these warning signs and what to do in the event of emergencies.



“ I knew we couldn’t do this alone. I contacted Singapore Cancer Society and was referred to a social worker. This social worker helped us connect with other resources we needed. She was also able to provide us with counselling, which helped us see our situation in a more positive light. We felt we were not alone in this cancer journey... So, ask for help, but be specific of what kind of help you need... ”

Christopher

51 years old, caregiver

Consider tapping on professional and volunteer resources and services

- Do consider enlisting help from others. Try not to take on everything by yourself. There are various community resources with professional and volunteer services that you can tap on for help.
- Knowledge is power. Informing yourself help you locate specific assistance you may need. Do consult a social worker to understand what services and assistance may be available.
- Services may include professional home care, therapy services, meals delivery, medical escort services, respite care and help with everyday activities.
- Depending on the type of services and your family’s household income, you may qualify for subsidies for some of the services.

(For other resources and schemes, please refer to the appendix)

Singapore Cancer Society also has a range of services that you can tap on *(For more details on SCS available services and schemes, please refer to “Getting support from Singapore Cancer Society”, p.34 and “How Singapore Cancer Society can help”, p.39, “Rehabilitation after cancer”, p. 48, and “Palliative Care Services”, p. 53).*



4. Caring for your loved one emotional well-being

It is important to maintain the emotional well-being of your loved one by helping him/her to focus on what he/she can still do and enjoy doing.



(A) Maintaining a sense of control

- ♥ Sometimes, caregivers can become overprotective, which may affect your loved one's adjustment and recovery process negatively.
- ♥ A cancer diagnosis may result in your loved one having little sense of control about his/her circumstances. Hence, do consider supporting your loved one to maintain as much personal control as possible.
- ♥ You can start by asking if you can help with a specific task or decision instead of assuming your loved one wants help and bypassing his/her opinion.
- ♥ As far as is possible, do try to involve your loved one in day-to-day decisions and activities if he/she feels up to it.
- ♥ There will be good days and bad days. Your loved one has his/her own feelings and thoughts too. Do give your loved one space to consider your offer to help and not take it personally if he/she declines.
- ♥ It is fine to give your loved one some privacy and if he/she does not feel like talking. Gently check in once in a while so that your loved one will know he/she is not alone.



(B) Helping manage your loved one's expectations

- ♥ As your loved one faces stress, fear and worries in his/her cancer journey, sometimes he/she may have expectations of himself/herself or others that are not realistic.
- ♥ He/she may have goals that are not achievable, or expect a level of care that you cannot meet.



- ♥ Do have a chat with your loved one regarding his/her concerns, while negotiating how best his/her needs can be met realistically given current resources.
- ♥ Being open about what you are able or not able to do, especially in the long term, may be helpful in managing mutual expectations. It is fine to be aware of the limitation that you are currently facing and consider seeking appropriate help.



(C) Help your loved one live life as normally as possible

- ♥ Help your loved one to get back to life and live as normally as possible. Help him/her to live fully despite any limitations he/she have to live with.
- ♥ Do allow your loved one to share his/her cancer experience if you sense that he/she would like to talk about it. It is also fine if your loved one prefers not to dwell on the disease.
- ♥ Treat your loved one normally. Do listen to his/her cues and consider what works for your loved one better.
- ♥ Sometimes, your loved one may not be able to take part in activities that he/she used to find pleasure in. Help him/her to look for other ways he/she can stay connected to the world beyond cancer.



- ♥ Involve your loved one in everyday activities that he/she finds meaningful or enjoyable, in spite of illness.
- ♥ For areas of life that need to change, there may be a permanent 'new normal' the family may need to adjust to. Life as you all know it has been transformed by the cancer.
- ♥ Adjustment may include new roles, responsibilities or tasks based on the demand of care and impact of cancer.
- ♥ It will certainly take time to adjust and create a 'new normal'. Be easy on yourself and do communicate with your loved one openly that it takes time to get used to this 'new normal'.
- ♥ Do meaningful activities together or embark on a meaningful project together with your loved one.



(D) Being there for your loved one meaningfully

- ♥ Your presence can sometimes speak louder than words to your loved one. Just being there for your loved one can convey love and support.
- ♥ Do not underestimate the value of your calming presence when you visit and keep your loved one company.
- ♥ You may find creative ways to engage your loved one, such as using humor and playing music. Touch can be a powerful way to let your loved one know that you care (e.g. gentle hugs and holding hands).
- ♥ Do understand that being there for your loved one goes beyond just the cancer treatment phase. Your loved one will still need your understanding and support even after cancer treatment ends. Post-treatment can be an isolating time.

- ♥ Your loved one may have to cope with the emotional impact as well as treatment side effects for months or even years after treatment.

It is important to let him/her know you are there to support him/her.



5. Making informed healthcare decisions as a cancer caregiver

- When making a decision, it is important to make a decision that is informed. Making an informed decision means having to consider the pros and cons of all your options before coming to a conclusion.
- Discuss all the relevant information, factors and options with your loved one as well as your family members involved in the care.
- At different points of the cancer journey, you may have new questions. Feel free to clarify your questions and doubts with the healthcare team.
- A simple guideline on decision-making is to consider making decisions that are in the best interests of your loved one. It may not be easy coming to a conclusion as we may not have the best of all worlds.
- Explain to your loved one why the final decision was made and make sure he/she understands the decision.



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

“Initially we fought a lot because I had assumed that Richard (care recipient) wanted me to help him do something when that was not the case. It got a lot better when I started to listen and understand how he saw his illness and recovery... I also shared with him how I felt... This cancer experience brought us closer...”

Mary

68 years old, caregiver

As a caregiver, being able to communicate constructively and effectively is crucial. Your loved one may not be the same person he/she used to be.

It is important to have an open and honest conversation with your loved one about what both of you want. For example, your loved one may want to be cared for at home rather than in a nursing home.

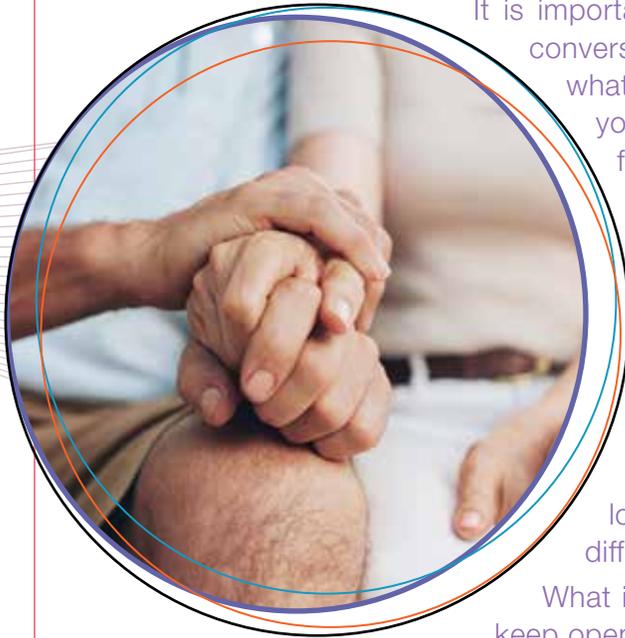
It will help to include in the discussion the key issues, priorities and care preferences that need to be addressed.

There is often the need for caregivers to be patient and understanding to communicate your care to your loved one as well as participate in difficult discussions.

What is most important is to be able to keep open lines of communication.

1. Keeping open lines of communication

- ✓ Try to maintain two-way communication between your loved one and yourself and between your family members involved in the care.
- ✓ Allow time and space for both you and your loved one to share your feelings and concerns with each other.

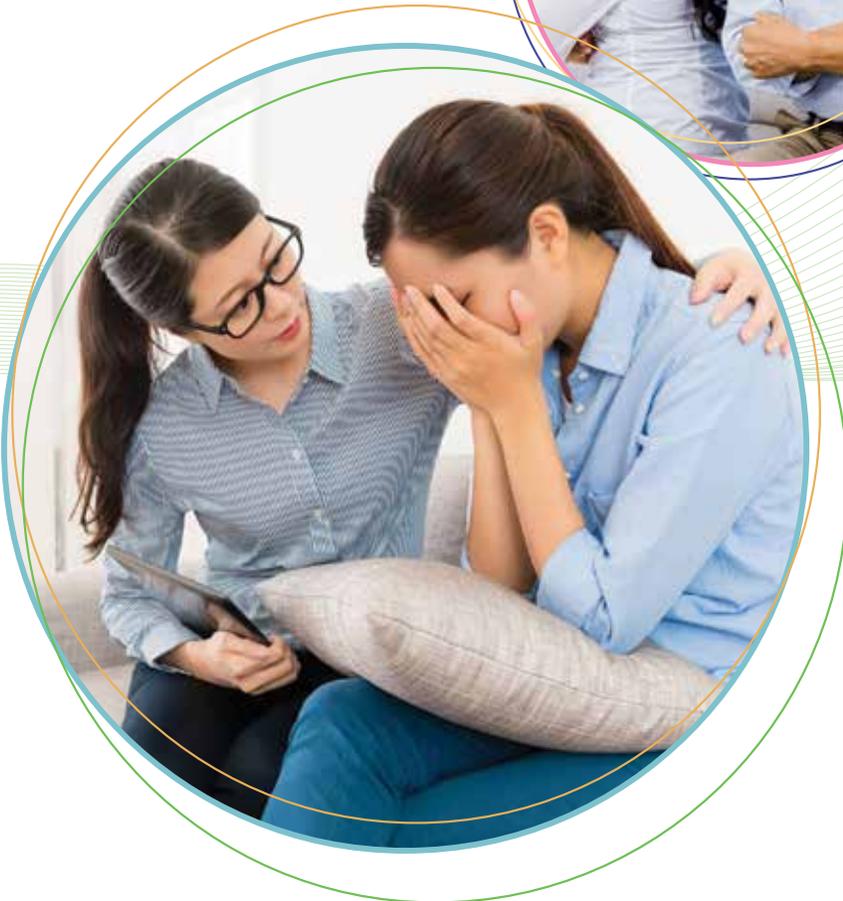


- ✓ Have an open and honest communication of you and your loved one's expectation and frustrations without judging what he/she shares.
- ✓ It is important not to assume: Ask what will or will not be helpful for your loved one.
- ✓ In your communication, avoid comparing your experiences, or your family member's experiences with those of other persons who had cancer as each person's experience with cancer is unique.
- ✓ The heart of good communication is not in the process of talking, but that of listening.
- ✓ Focus on being a good listener. If you are tense, your loved one will sense it. Be patient. Avoid steering conversation to your own agenda and imposing your own views without listening to what your loved one has to say.
- ✓ Especially in conversations with difficult emotional content, it is important to reflect (rephrase back in your own words) what you think your loved one is trying to say and check in if you understood him/her correctly.
- ✓ Be alert to all cues, including non-verbal ones (e.g. hesitations, pauses, inflection, tone, volume, facial expression, body posture, breathing, etc) when you are communicating.



2. Coping with conflicts

- As a caregiver, you do not only have to deal with your loved one's illness but also individual and family dynamics.
- Remember that your loved one will have his or her own wishes and personality even though he or she has cancer. He/she may have certain choices that you may not agree with.
- Try to diffuse the tension by practising listening with empathy. Acknowledging the feelings of your loved one and try to understand where he or she is coming from.
- Try to discuss your concerns openly by focusing on the issue. Focus on facts without attacking the person. Remember to keep your loved one's best interests as your priority when disagreements occur.
- It may be helpful to involve a neutral party, to offer another perspective on the issue.
- It may also help to put plans and agreements down in writing to prevent misunderstanding.



3. Breaking bad news

- If your loved one has been diagnosed with end-stage cancer, or if your loved one's condition has deteriorated, sometimes you may find yourself having to break bad news.
- It is recommended that you find suitable support to disclose the news together. You may get professional help from a social worker to facilitate such difficult discussions.
- Prepare yourself for such difficult discussions by making sure you are ready. You may like to note down what you like to say on a piece of paper. If your loved one feels that you are comfortable with the topic, it will make him or her more at ease to discuss it.
- As far as possible, try to use language that is direct, clear and easy to understand. Try to keep your sentences short. Check in on how much details your loved one may wish to know without being overwhelmed.
- Your loved one may need privacy and time to accept and adjust to the news. Be sensitive to his/her needs.
- Do check in on how your loved one may want to release the news of his/her diagnosis. He/she may want you to inform all relatives and friends, or quietly keep the news within the family. Being on the same page with your loved ones for the disclosure of illness may help prevent any unnecessary misunderstanding.



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AS A CAREGIVER

“ I was so stressed... Taking care of Billy (care recipient), plus the twins were still young and needed my attention... I thought I could cope initially as I had always been independent... Then I was so stressed I developed insomnia and started to lash out at the kids for the slightest reason... I had to accept that I could not do it alone, and saw a psychiatrist and social worker... I found new ways of coping and my mother-in-law also stepped in to help give me some respite... ”

Maggie

45 years old, caregiver



Caregivers often struggle from stress and emotional drain due to juggling multiple competing responsibilities. No one can draw from an empty well.

In an airplane emergency, you are always advised to wear the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping others.

In the same way, it is important to take care of yourself first so that you can have energy to better care for your loved one.

1. How can cancer impact caregivers?

- Cancer can affect the family's wellbeing, identity, roles and day-to-day functioning. It can be tiring and can affect your health if you do not have time to exercise and eat well.
- Providing care for your loved one can also stir up various emotions as you deal with the day-to-day demands of caregiving. It is normal to lose patience and feel frustrated as this can be a stressful process.
- Sometimes, you may also have to deal with changes in where you spend your day or where you live when you care for your loved one, and may experience having less time for other personal commitments.
- Such changes can be challenging and may impact you adversely.

2. How do you know you have caregiver stress? You may ask yourself if you experience any of the following:

- ✓ Cannot concentrate or think clearly or remember things or make decisions.
- ✓ Feeling overwhelming fear, anxiety and/or distress most of the time.
- ✓ Not able to eat well or get sufficient rest or sleep.
- ✓ Feeling easily irritated or angry more often than usual.
- ✓ Feeling depressed persistently for two weeks or more.
- ✓ Feeling helpless about how to care for your loved one.
- ✓ Always worried about finances/ not having enough money.
- ✓ Always quarrelling or fighting with the care recipient and/or family members.
- ✓ Feeling like withdrawing from social events more often than usual.
- ✓ Feeling like you are worthless and/or sad all the time.
- ✓ Feeling like nothing you do is good enough.
- ✓ Experiencing poor health.
- ✓ Always experiencing self-doubt and not able to make any decisions.
- ✓ Feeling guilty or trapped by your situation.
- ✓ Having thoughts of harming yourself or others or committing suicide.
- ✓ Not able to find any time or make space for yourself and other loved ones/ family members.

3. Set aside your own self-care boundary

It is important to set your own self-care boundary, so that you will not feel overwhelmed by your caregiving role.

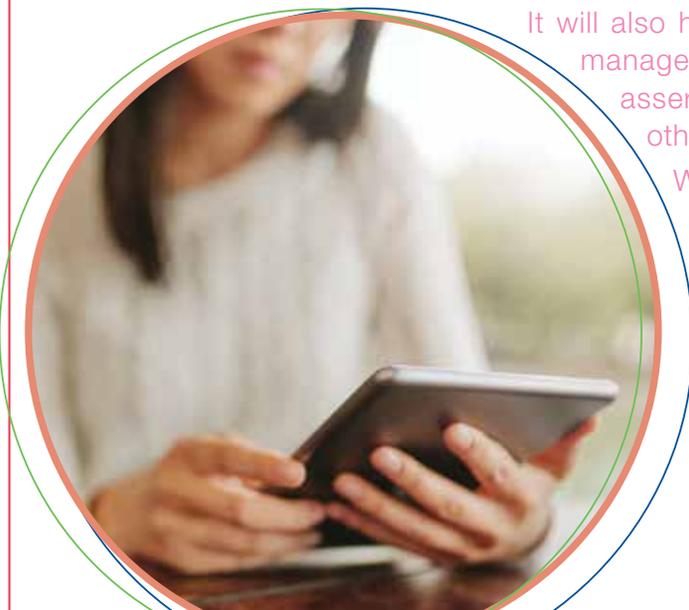
Know when to say “no”

Let go of thoughts and feelings that are unhelpful

Set aside “me” time for self-care

It will also help to learn some stress-management techniques and be assertive in communicating to others about your needs.

When you are happy, your caregiving can be a positive experience that will make a positive impact on your loved one.



4. Communicating your needs

Keep in mind that in the course of the cancer journey, there may be good news and bad news. Recognise that this news may affect you. It is important to reach out for support when needed.

To take care of yourself, you can consider the following tips:

- Advocate for yourself by being specific and clear about the kind of help you need.
- Re-establish meaningful relationships and connections that you may have lost while caring for your loved one.
- Be willing to share openly about your worries and concern with trusted individuals.
- Rather than assigning blame to anyone or yourself when things go wrong, express your feelings honestly. Inform others how you can be best supported.

5. Self-care/stress management tips

“ I was so busy taking care of my wife that I refused to leave her side for more than an hour... I was so exhausted that I became easily irritated and snapped at my children... I slipped and had a small fracture on my feet... it was a wake-up call for me to get help... I allowed my children to step in some days to give me some rest... ”

Robert

69 years old, caregiver

There are some general self-care/stress management tips you may want to consider:

♥ Taking care of your emotions

- ✓ It is normal to lose patience and be angry, frustrated or annoyed with your loved ones, especially when those we care for do not always show their appreciation.
- ✓ Acknowledge and accept how you are feeling. You may also find it helpful to express how you feel. Give yourself permission to release your emotions in a safe and appropriate way; allowing yourself to cry can help relieve the tension.

Write your feelings in a journal if it helps.



- ✓ Join a support group. Some people find it comforting meeting other caregivers or talking to someone.
- ✓ Find comfort in the encouragement and support of family members and friends.
- ✓ When you feel guilty that you are not doing enough, remind yourself you are doing the best you can and it is the most anyone can do.
- ✓ Instead of regretting about the past or worrying about the future, focus on appreciating what you have and making healthy changes in the present.
- ✓ Acknowledge that life post-treatment involve changes that will require an adjustment process to create a 'new normal'.
- ✓ Do remember that you also have your own needs.
- ✓ Try to build in some respite time. Give yourself time and space to do something relaxing and enjoyable that makes you happy; take time to pamper yourself.
- ✓ Practice relaxation and better stress-management techniques such as practicing mindfulness, deep breathing and meditation.
- ✓ If you have a religion or philosophy, find comfort through your beliefs.
- ✓ Try not to take things personally as your loved one may vent his/her fatigue, frustration, pain and fears on the ones closest to him/her.
- ✓ Seek professional help (supportive counselling and other professional services) when necessary.



♥ Taking care of your mental health

- Think positive. Try to reframe negative thinking perspectives more positively.
- Manage your own expectation and be realistic of what you can and cannot do (e.g. not trying to do everything).
- Be focused on living in the present than in the past or future (e.g. living one day at a time).

- Break big tasks down to manageable smaller steps.
- Set feasible goals by being realistic and honest with yourself about the current situation while still looking forward for possible positive outcomes in the future.

♥ Taking care of your own health-care and physical needs

- ✓ Avoid wearing yourself out by getting enough rest (try to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night).
- ✓ When you are physically fitter, your body is better able to handle stress. Do consider getting some exercise in midst of your caregiving duties (exercising for a minimum of two hours per week).
- ✓ Eating on time and healthily helps to maintain your health and prevent yourself from falling sick.
- ✓ Do take care of your own health needs (e.g. keeping your own medical and dental appointments).



♥ Getting practical help to manage some of your daily routines

- Remember that when you can involve other competent people/ alternative services to be part of your caregiving team, more can be achieved and the caregiving tasks will be more manageable.
- It will also help you better balance your caregiving role with other roles and responsibilities in your life and find some time for yourself.
- Each member of the team comes with their strengths, specialized skills and knowledge that you can tap upon to help you more effectively.
- Possible people you can involve as part of your caregiving team to support you are your friends/loved ones, your employer and colleagues, your spiritual, religious and cultural community, someone who has been through similar experiences (e.g. support groups, online forums) and/or healthcare providers, respite care providers and community agencies.

NAVIGATING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

It can be challenging and confusing navigating the healthcare system, especially in the event of a crisis. For first-time caregivers, it can be a daunting process, especially when one is caught off guard.

It is important to be adequately informed, so that you know what to expect and how you can tap on the people and resources available in the healthcare system.

The general hospitals provide multi-disciplinary acute inpatient and specialist outpatient services and a 24-hour emergency services.

1. Critical points during the caregiving journey

- **In the event of a medical crisis:**

When you call 995 (for emergencies), emergency ambulance service by the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) will take your loved one to the nearest designated government restructured hospital for immediate medical attention. Or you can also call 1777 (for non-emergencies) for private ambulance services in Singapore.

When you call an ambulance:

- ✓ Provide the age of your loved one.
- ✓ Give your loved one's medical history.
- ✓ Explain the medical problem and how long it has lasted.
- ✓ The emergency team will be able to advise you what you can do while waiting for arrival of the ambulance.



Prepare to tell the healthcare team the following:

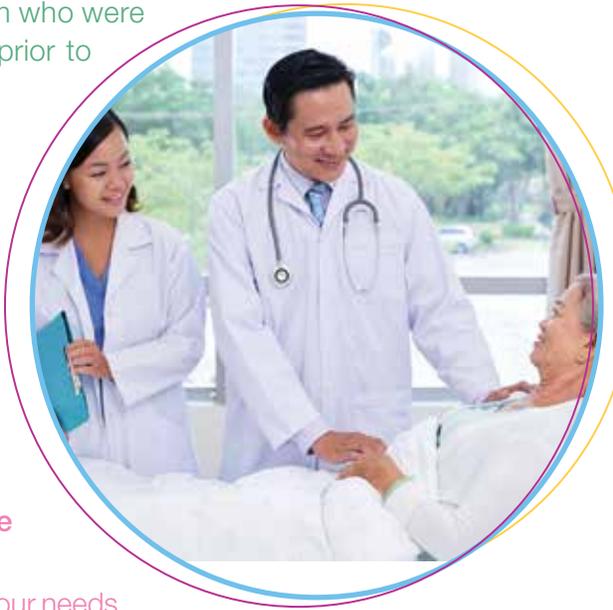
- ✓ Signs and symptoms displayed by your loved one that triggered the call for emergency (e.g. any pain or side effects your loved one is experiencing).
- ✓ What was done while waiting for the arrival of the ambulance.
- ✓ Your loved one's preference for care or his/her Advance Care Plan (ACP).
- ✓ Names, roles and contact information of key persons in healthcare team who were caring for your loved one prior to the medical emergency.

2. During cancer treatment

Going through cancer treatment is a collaborative process with the healthcare team. The healthcare team will benefit from knowing how you and your loved one would like to manage this cancer journey.

- **Working with your healthcare team**

- ✓ Be prepared by assessing your needs and the needs of your loved one.
- ✓ Bring along another relative or friend to provide you with moral support if needed.
- ✓ If your loved one has an Advance Care Plan (ACP), it is important to inform the healthcare team about your loved one's wishes.
- ✓ Do feel free to get all your questions answered. It can be helpful to prepare a list of questions and concerns in advance to discuss. List the questions in order of importance, so that the most pressing concern can be addressed first.
- ✓ Be prepared to ask and clarify technical medical terms, abbreviations or jargons that you do not understand.





- ✓ Advocate for your loved one by being assertive (being clear, direct and honest) about the identified needs of your loved one and yourself.
 - ✓ It is helpful to have a main contact person as well as a back-up person to liaise with the healthcare providers regarding your loved one's needs. This may prevent miscommunication.
 - ✓ Ask questions and take notes on various medications, treatments, side-effects or medical procedures that you are not familiar with.
 - ✓ Communicate with your healthcare team what will be helpful for you and your loved one.
 - ✓ Request for alternative solutions that enable the best fit with your needs and the needs of your loved one.
- **When your loved one is hospitalized**
 - ✓ During hospitalization, there will be times when you may need to advocate for your loved one.
 - ✓ During admission, let the medical staff doing the intake know precisely what medications your loved one is on.
 - ✓ Ask about any new medications prescribed to your loved one by the doctors and why he/she needs it if you are not clear what it is for.
 - ✓ Address any concerns you may have with the medical team.
 - ✓ Try to ask about the visiting hours of the hospital and arrange for family members to visit your loved one regularly. This is to provide your loved one with moral and emotional support. It will also help you to be aware of the level of care provided during the hospital stay and changes to your loved one's condition.

3. Post-treatment

- After the treatment ends, most people want to put their cancer experience behind them. However, it is important for you to know that your loved one is still coping with the impact of cancer and adjusting to changes that arise from treatment side-effects.
- It can be a vulnerable experience when your loved one is no longer under the close supervision of the medical team. It may be frightening for you and your loved one to know that you will see the medical team less often.
- It is common that your loved one will be given a schedule of routine follow-up medical appointments and/or tests and scans.
- Do share your worries and concern with the medical team. Ask them on any long-term side effects that your loved one may experience and the plan for management of the side effects.

APPENDIX

For information on relevant government agencies:

Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) (<http://www.msf.gov.sg>)

- MSF is a government ministry that develops the “heartware” for Singapore through policies, community infrastructure, programmes and services.
 - You can search for more information on various assistance schemes, such as:
 - ✓ **Foreign Domestic Worker Grant (FWD):** An assistance scheme that is intended to assist families who need to employ a foreign domestic worker to take care of their loved ones with moderate to severe disabilities.
 - ✓ **Caregiver’s Training Grant:** The training grant helps caregivers defray the cost of attending training to pick up the needed knowledge and skills that would increase their capacity in providing care to persons with disabilities.
 - ✓ **Assistive Technology Grant:** Persons with disabilities may apply for subsidies to obtain, change, upgrade or repair needed assistive technology equipment and accessories (e.g. wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.). For more information, please call **1800 8585 885**.
 - ✓ **ComCare Financial Assistance Schemes:** ComCare provides social assistance for low-income individuals and families. There are schemes to cover from short-to-medium and long-term assistance. ComCare assistance is available at the Social Service Offices (SSOs). SSOs bring social assistance closer to residents in need. They make ComCare assistance and other forms of assistance such as job matching and family services more accessible to those who need it. For more information, please call **1800-222-0000**.
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Ministry of Health (MOH)

(<http://www.moh.gov.sg>)

- MOH is a government ministry whose mission is to encourage good health and reduce illness, secure access to good and affordable healthcare and pursue medical excellence.
- You can search for information on various healthcare schemes and subsidies, such as:
 - ✓ **Seniors Mobility and Enabling Fund (SMF):** Individuals may apply for subsidies through the SMF to offset the costs of assistive devices and home healthcare items.
 - ✓ **Caregivers Support Action Plan:** MOH, together with partner agencies have developed a Caregiver Support Action Plan to strengthen support for senior caregiving. For more information, please go to <http://www.moh.gov.sg/caregiver-support>

Central Provident Fund (CPF)

(<http://www.cpf.gov.sg>)

- CPF is a comprehensive social security system that allows for working Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents to plan for retirement by setting aside necessary funds.
- You can search for more information on:
 - ✓ **The Dependents' Protection Scheme:** It is a term insurance that provides insured members and their families with some money in the event of that insured members pass away, suffer from total permanent disability and/or terminal illness.
 - ✓ **Home Protection Scheme:** A mortgage-reducing insurance that protects insured members from losing their Housing & Development Board flat should they pass away, suffer from total permanent disability and/or terminal illness.
 - ✓ **CareShield Life:** CareShield Life is a long-term care insurance which provides financial protection against long-term care costs of Singaporeans.
 - ✓ **Eldershield:** It is a severe disability scheme that provides basic financial protection to those who are unable to perform simple daily activities and need more term care, especially in their old age.

Housing and Development Board (HDB)

(<http://www.hdb.gov.sg>)

- The Housing & Development Board (HDB) is Singapore's public housing authority.
- You can search for information on housing-related schemes such as:
 - ✓ **Public Rental Scheme:** Flats under the Public Rental Scheme are heavily subsidised to cater to Singapore Citizen (SC) households who have no other housing options.

Ministry of Manpower (MOM)

(<http://www.mom.gov.sg>)

- MOM's mission is to develop a productive workforce and progressive workplaces, for Singaporeans to have better jobs and a secure retirement.
- You can search for information on manpower related issues such as:
 - ✓ **The Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM):** TADM provides employees and employers with services to resolve salary-related claims and employment disputes. For more information, please call **6438 5122**.

For cancer-related helplines:

- **National Cancer Centre Singapore: Cancer Helpline**
 - ✓ Cancer Helpline is a free hotline manned by cancer-trained nurse counsellors
 - ✓ **Phone:** 6225 5655
 - ✓ **Email:** cancerhelpline@nccs.com.sg
 - ✓ **Website:** <http://www.nccs.com.sg>
- **National University Cancer Institute, Singapore: CancerLine**
 - ✓ CancerLine is a free counselling hotline managed by trained oncology nurses
 - ✓ **Phone:** 9722 0569
 - ✓ **Email:** CancerLineNurse@nuhs.edu.sg
 - ✓ **Website:** <http://www.ncis.com.sg>

For information on work related issues:

- ***Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFPEP):***
 - ✓ The TAFPEP aims to promote the adoption of fair, responsible and progressive employment practices so as to enable employees to realise their full potential and help their employers achieve organisational excellence.
 - ✓ **Phone:** 6838 0969
 - ✓ **Website:** <http://www.tafep.sg>

For information on eldercare services and schemes:

- ***Singapore Silver Line:***
 - ✓ The Singapore Silver Line is a toll-free and one-stop national helpline providing convenient access to information to all eldercare and caregiving support services
 - ✓ **Phone:** 1800-650-6060
- ***Singapore Silver Pages:***
 - ✓ Singapore Silver Pages (SSP) serves as a one-stop resource on Community Care. SSP is the first portal to integrate social care, healthcare, community mental health, and caregiving resources under one roof for seniors and caregivers.
 - ✓ **Website:** <http://www.silverpages.sg>

For crisis-related resources:

- ***Samaritans of Singapore:***
 - ✓ Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) is dedicated to providing confidential emotional support to individuals facing a crisis, thinking about suicide or affected by suicide.
 - ✓ **Phone:** 1800-221-4444
 - ✓ **Email:** pat@sos.org.sg
 - ✓ **Website:** <http://www.sos.org.sg>

For palliative care related resources:

- ***Singapore Hospice Council:***

- ✓ Singapore Hospice Council is an umbrella body representing all organisations that actively providing hospice and palliative care in Singapore.
- ✓ **Phone:** 6538 2231
- ✓ **Email:** secretariat@singaporehospice.org.sg
- ✓ **Website:** <http://singaporehospice.org.sg>

- ***Office of Public Guardian:***

- ✓ The Office of the Public Guardian (“OPG”) works towards protecting the dignity and interests of individuals who lack mental capacity and are vulnerable as well as encouraging proactive planning for an eventuality of losing one’s mental capacity.
- ✓ **Phone:** 1800-226-6222
- ✓ **Email:** enquiry@publicguardian.gov.sg
- ✓ **Website:** <http://www.msf.gov.sg/opg/Pages/Home.aspx>

- ***Advance Care Planning:***

- ✓ Advance Care Planning (ACP) is the process of planning for your future health and personal care. It includes discussing your personal beliefs and goals for care with your loved ones and healthcare providers.
- ✓ **Website:** <http://www.livingmatters.sg>

For information on disability related services and schemes:

- ***SG Enable:***

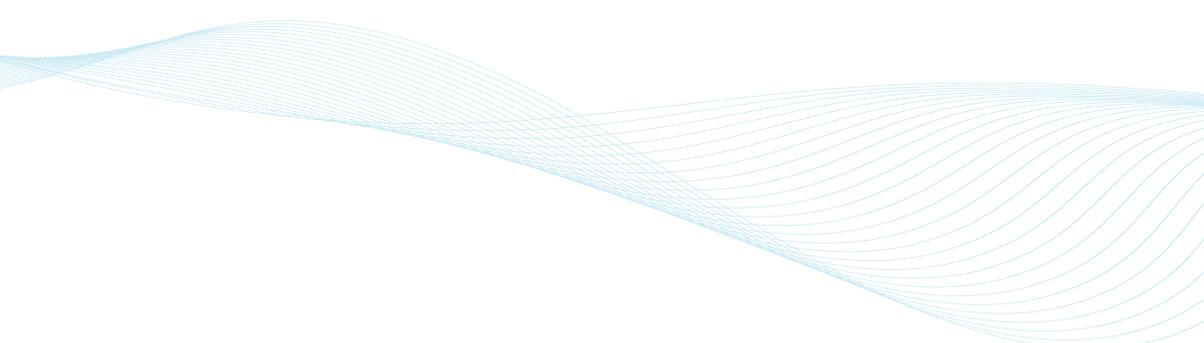
- ✓ SG Enable is an agency dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities
- ✓ **Phone:** 1800 8585 885
- ✓ **Website:** <http://www.sgenable.sg>

For information on community resources to support daily living:

- ***Pass It On:***

- ✓ A non-profit project to provide a meaningful way to distribute unwanted, albeit useful items to benefit the needy (home appliances, home furniture, medical aids, mobility aids, learning aids & etc).
- ✓ **Phone:** 8511 9160
- ✓ **Email:** passiton@thehelphand.org
- ✓ **Website:** <http://www.passiton.org.sg>

- ***Kampung Senang:***

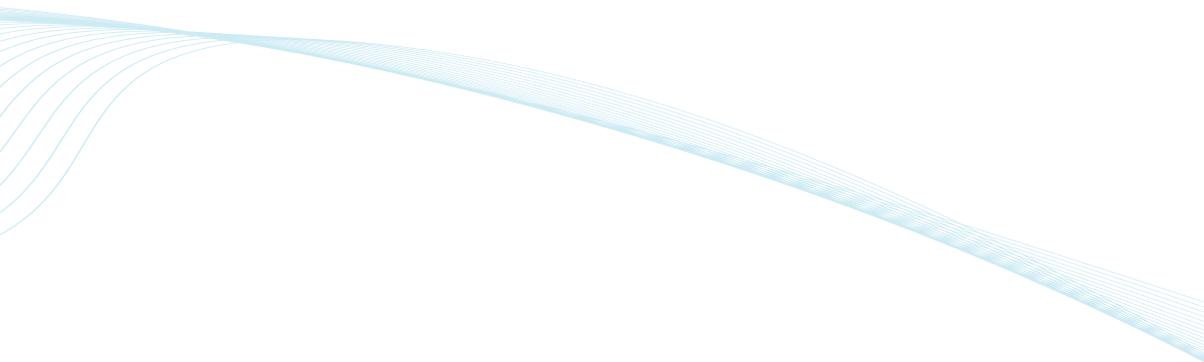
- ✓ Kampung Senang Charity & Education Foundation (Kampung Senang) is a charity that provides mobility aids such as hospital beds, wheelchairs, commode chairs, walking frames, walking sticks and crutches, among its other services.
 - ✓ **Phone:** 6749 8509
 - ✓ **Email:** woh@kampungsenang.org
 - ✓ **Website:** <http://www.kampungsenang.org>
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REFERENCES

Agency for Integrated Care	http://www.aic.sg
American Cancer Society	http://www.cancer.org
Canadian Cancer Society	http://www.cancer.ca
CancerCare	http://www.cancercare.org
Cancer Council Australia	http://www.cancer.org.au
Cancer Council SA	http://www.cancersa.org.au
Cancer.Net	http://www.cancer.net
Central Provident Fund Board	http://www.cpf.gov.sg
Health Promotion Board	http://www.hpb.gov.sg
Living Matters: Advance Care Planning	http://www.livingmatters.sg
LIVESTRONG Foundation	http://www.livestrong.org
Macmillan Cancer Support	http://www.macmillan.org.uk
Ministry of Manpower	http://www.mom.gov.sg
Ministry of Health	http://www.moh.gov.sg
National Cancer Institute	http://www.cancer.gov
National Environment Agency	https://www.nea.gov.sg
Singapore Cancer Registry	Singapore Cancer Registry Annual Registry Report 2015
Singapore Free Legal Clinics	http://legalclinics.sg
Singapore Hospice Council	http://singaporehospice.org.sg
The Law Society of Singapore	http://www.lawsociety.org.sg
Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices	http://www.tafep.sg

GLOSSARY

Benign tumour	a non-cancerous growth in the body that stays in one location and does not spread to other parts of the body
Biopsy	a medical procedure that involves taking a small tissue sample and examining it under a microscope
Blood count	refers to a count of the number of cells in a given blood sample
Carcinogen	a substance that can cause cancer
Clinical trials	research studies which use human volunteers to test new drugs or treatments
Extraordinary life-sustaining treatment	refers to medical treatment that artificially prolongs the lives of terminally ill patients without curing the illness
Genetic mutation	an abnormal change in a gene
Genetic testing	a type of testing that is used to check for mutations in a person's genes that may increase cancer risk
Malignant tumour	a cancerous growth in the body that can invade nearby tissues and spread to other parts of the body
Mental capacity	means being unable to make your own decisions
Oncologist	a doctor who specialises in treating people with cancer
Palliative care	also known as hospice care, this concept of care focuses on improving quality of life by relieving distressing symptoms experienced by patients who are seriously ill. It also offers practical and psychosocial support to family members and caregivers
Prognosis	a prediction of the course of disease or the estimated outlook for survival
Rehabilitation	a programme that helps maximise recovery after a serious illness or injury
Tumour	a lump or growth in a part of the body that is formed from abnormal cells. Tumours can be benign or malignant





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