

Tips for Cancer Patients: Pre-Surgery



This list was compiled by cancer survivors.

- Clean your home, including bedding and towels.
- Have all dishware and cups within reach.
- Set up a room or space for you to recover in. Be sure there is a table by your side, a clear walkway, and clothes ready and clean.
- Ask your family or friends for help. Have someone ready as a caregiver. Explain the surgery process, along with any restrictions you may have.
- Arrange for care of your children, pets, or house.
- Ask your doctor or surgeon if you need to stop certain medications prior to surgery.
- Take your multi-vitamins.
- Get your flu shot, if recommended.
- Rest up.
- Limit unhealthy foods and alcohol.
- Stop smoking.
- Ask questions! Write down any questions you think of in between appointments.

Tips for Cancer Patients: Chemo & Radiation



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- Fully understand your treatment. If there is something you are not sure of, ask your doctor.
- Bring things to treatment such as a blanket, snacks, books, and fluids. Comfort is key.
- Prepare your body by stocking up and eating healthy foods and liquids.
- Find a good plastic bottle to drink your fluids in. Avoid metal because everything tastes metallic.
- Talk to others who have gone through what you are about to experience.
- Try and stay active when you can. Treatment can pack a punch. Listen to your body, as always -- but get up and take a gentle walk when you can.
- Talk to your doctor about the medications you will need to take.
- Arrange for a caregiver. You will need help at home in every way: cleaning, cooking, childcare, and pet care.
- Prepare for side effects. You can prepare for hair loss by getting a wig or having your hair cut.

Tips for Cancer Patients: Items to Have at Home



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- Biotene (for dry mouth)
- Blankets & pillows
- Button front shirts and nightgowns with little pockets in the front
- Crossword puzzles and coloring books
- Fuzzy socks
- Gatorade and freezepops
- Gloves (for cold touch and neuropathy)
- Hand warmers
- Hard candy (ex: lollipops, ginger, mints)
- Heated eye mask
- Journal to write down thoughts, notes on side effects, daily activity updates, and questions
- Lip balm
- Peppermint tea
- Plastic straws
- Plastic utensils
- Plastic water bottle or tumbler
- Port pillow for seatbelts
- Slippers
- Soft scarf and hat
- Tissues
- Unscented lotion or petroleum jelly

Tips for Cancer Patients: Post-Surgery



This list was compiled by cancer survivors.

- Comfort is key. Find a spot to rest in that is comfortable and easy to get out of.
- Your caregiver should help with meals, fluids, showering, cleaning, taking you to/from appointments, getting up and move around. Also, they can give updates to and answer questions from caring and concerned friends.
- Take your medications, when needed and always be ahead of them. Don't wait to take your pain medication! Write down the times of when you need to take the next dose.
- Try relaxation techniques.
- Shower, as needed to prevent infection.
- Protect your wound and avoid touching it. If you have a drain, follow your nurse's instructions for caring for it.

Tips for Cancer Patients: Post-Surgery (cont'd)



- Drink fluids and eat healthy. You need food as your fuel.
- Move around. It will prevent blood clots or anything else that may delay your recovery. Walk around the house as much as you can.
- Stay away from anyone who may be sick or coming down with something. It's okay to say no to visitors.
- Stay away from public places that may delay your recovery.
- Be patient. Expect to be tired. Recovery may last longer than expected. Listen to your body. It's okay to take the time you need.
- Reduce your external stressors. Read books or watch movies that give you motivation, positivity, and happiness.
- Try writing, journaling or connecting with others who have shared a similar experience.

Encouraging thoughts from those who have “been there”

- Remember to give yourself grace. Adjust your expectations and allow yourself to heal.
- People will want to help you. They will want to tell you stories of other cancer patients. They will want to help in many ways that you may not need at the time. It is okay to ask for help. It’s okay to say “no, thank you”.
- Have someone as your caregiver to be able to speak up for you.
- Take it day by day. There will be good days and bad days, but always find a way to see the good in each day.
- If you have young children, play time may be difficult. The NYOH Community Cancer Foundation provides some great books for you and your child to read together to help understand what you are going through.
- Ask questions! Write down any questions you may have in between appointments.

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