

About half of all cancer patients say they feel some sort of anxiety and one-fourth report feeling a great deal of anxiety. Nervousness and fear are a common reaction to a stressful life event like cancer. Many caregivers worry about their loved one's fears as well as their own. It is also common to worry about the medical procedures or financial pressures associated with cancer treatment.

If feeling nervous and afraid is keeping you from everyday activities or finding enjoyment in your life, talk to your health care team. Some fear and anxiety are some normal reactions to being under stress and being a caregiver. Chances are this is a short-term problem that will lessen as they begin to feel better. However, extreme or prolonged nervousness and fear can lead to a more serious anxiety disorder. This may keep you from being an active member of your loved one's treatment or affect your daily home and work activities.

### **SIGNS YOU MAY NEED HELP WITH FEELING NERVOUS OR AFRAID\*:**

- Feeling worried all the time or not being able to focus
- Not being able to “turn off thoughts” most of the time
- Trouble sleeping most nights
- Frequent crying spells
- Feeling afraid most of the time
- Symptoms such as fast heartbeat, dry mouth, shaky hands, restlessness, or feeling on edge
- Anxiety that is not relieved by distraction or staying busy



[www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org)

1-888-793-9355



\*From the National Cancer Institute, Adjustment to Cancer, Anxiety and Distress PDQ, 2019

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE FEAR AND NERVOUSNESS:

- It's common to feel some nervousness or be afraid in the face of a stressful experience like cancer. Pay attention to how frequent and how intense these feelings are. If they last several days in a row or get in the way of doing things you need to do, talk to your health care team about getting support.
- Find ways to relax such as meditation, yoga, or breathing exercises.
- Join a support group (you and your loved one) to hear how other people are managing feelings of fear and nervousness.
- Seek professional help from a therapist who works with cancer patients and caregivers. Counseling is often the best way to manage extreme fear or anxiety. A trained therapist can teach you strategies that focus on your thinking and on your actions to help with anxiety.
- Talk with your physician or therapist about medication that can ease anxiety.
- Use humor. Find something to laugh about every day.
- Consider prayer. For many people, prayer is a useful tool in managing the roller coaster of emotions.
- Keep a journal to record and release your feelings.

# General Cancer Information, Survivorship & Support

**Cancer Support Community** • 888-793-9355 • [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org)

**American Cancer Society** • 800-227-2345 • [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

**CancerCare** • 800-813-4673 • [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)

**Cancer.net** • 888-651-3038 • [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net)

**Caregiver Action Network** • 855-227-3640 • [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org)

**Healthcare.gov** • [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

**Livestrong Foundation** • 866-673-7205 • [www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org)

**National Cancer Institute** • 800-422-6237 • [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

**National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine** • 888-644-6226 • [www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov)

**Patient Advocate Foundation** • 800-532-5274 • [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)

## Cancer Support Community Resources

**Cancer Support Community's** (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. Call 888-793-9355 or visit [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org) for more info.

**Cancer Support Helpline**® — Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon–Fri, 9 am–9 pm ET.

**Open to Options**® — Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

**Frankly Speaking About Cancer**® — Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs. [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer).

**Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs** — With the help of 170 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club affiliates provide services free of charge to people touched by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more at a location near you. [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation).

**MyLifeLine** — CSC's private, online community allows patients and caregivers to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond. Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Sign up at [www.MyLifeLine.org](http://www.MyLifeLine.org).

**Grassroots Network** — Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate).

**Cancer Experience Registry**® — Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at [www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org](http://www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org).

The Cancer Support Community provides this information as a service. This publication is not intended to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor. We strongly suggest consulting your doctor or other health care professionals to answer questions and learn more.

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