

It can be tiring and overwhelming for people with cancer to repeatedly share details about their cancer.

Having a loved one take the lead on communicating with others can be a relief to them. This allows your loved one to focus on treatment, recovery, and other important priorities.

Family and friends may be curious, concerned, or want to be kept up to date. However, don't put pressure on yourself to provide updates every time something happens. Especially during a medical emergency, time of crisis, or if you're the primary caregiver. Give yourself the time and space to share news when you are ready. Also remember that everyone copes with news in their own way. Some people might struggle to accept or understand all of the details of what is happening. You don't have to take on the responsibility of providing emotional support to everyone who is being updated.

For caregivers, it can be helpful to assign the task of sharing updates to another trusted family member or friend. Set limits on how often updates are shared (i.e. one a week, once a month). There are websites that can help families share cancer information and get the help you need.

Ask your loved one what information is okay to share and with whom before talking to others. Avoid talking about situations with others (even family) unless your loved one agrees that they want it shared. While it might make you feel better to get difficult news off your chest, your loved one may not feel that way. If your loved one prefers not to have their information shared and you need to talk to someone, consider speaking to a mental health professional. They can keep details of your loved one's health confidential while providing you with the needed support.



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

1-888-793-9355



**MyLifeLine** is CSC's private, online community where patients and caregivers are able to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond.

You can use this website to:

- Keep friends and family informed and involved through a personalized blog. You can ask for help with rides, meals, etc. in the Helping Center on your page. As a caregiver, your loved one can give you access as an Assigned Care Coordinator to run their page.
- Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Discussion boards are available 24/7 and are monitored by a licensed professional.
- Learn more about cancer through **Frankly Speaking About Cancer**<sup>®</sup> resources.

Sign up at **MyLifeLine.org**.

**Special considerations for talking with children and teens.** Adults are often fearful of telling children that cancer has come into the family. We all want the children we love to be happy. It's hard to talk to them about something that will make them—and us—upset. Try the following:

- Be honest in answering their questions
- Use clear language that your child can understand – don't be afraid to use the word cancer
- For younger children, let them know that they didn't cause the cancer and they can't catch it
- Let children know it is okay to feel sad, mad, scared, or confused
- Let them know about expected changes in their routines
- Let them know about any expected changes in your loved one's appearance or behavior (hair loss, fatigue)
- Give children small, age-appropriate tasks so that they can feel involved and helpful
- Don't force information; answer questions as they come up
- It is okay to let your children see you cry

# 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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