

Information and Supports for Caregivers

You are a caregiver if you provide physical and/or emotional care to another person who is not well. This includes a person who is receiving care and treatment for a cancer diagnosis. This handout offers information and supports for caregivers.

It can be stressful to be a caregiver. You may need to be a caregiver for weeks, months or even years. It is not something you expect or plan for. It often involves taking on new responsibilities. At times you may feel unprepared or overwhelmed. You may have a lot of questions and concerns or be unsure what to expect or what to do next. Caregiving can be very rewarding. You may feel a closer bond with the person you care for and find strength you did not know you had.

As a caregiver, it is important to take care of your physical and emotional health. This helps you have the strength you need to be a caregiver.

Read the Canadian Cancer Society's booklet on Being a Caregiver to Someone with Cancer. This booklet is found on the website at cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/resources/publications/being-a-caregiver-to-someone-with-cancer

Below is a list of suggestions on how to take care of yourself.

Access support

Talk to another person about your experience as a caregiver. This may include a family member, friend, social worker, counsellor, or others in a caregiver support group. Tell this person about any feelings you have.

Learn what caregiving tasks are needed

Make a list of your caregiving responsibilities (what you need to do). How much care and support the person needs may change over time. The person may need less care and support as they get stronger and healthier after treatment is finished. The person may need more care over time if their cancer is advanced.

Set limits

You may need to set limits. Ask yourself:

- What caregiving responsibilities can I manage along with other responsibilities (examples: at home, work, school)?
- Are there others I can ask to help with some of the caregiving responsibilities?

It may be helpful to see what other resources and supports are available to you.

Resources and supports available to you

Practical supports and tools

1. Ontario Health atHome

A care coordinator from Ontario Health atHome will help plan for care and services in your home. For more information, call 1-800-263-3877 or 310-2222 or go to the website at ontariohealthathome.ca. A referral from the healthcare team is not needed.

2. My Cancer Circle (online tool)

Offers a free, online tool to help manage the list of people who want to help with caregiving responsibilities. For more information, go to the website found at mycancercircle.net

3. Nankind

Offers support services to people who have young children. These services include child-care, meal support, homework help, and peer connections. For more information, go to the website found at nankind.com

4. Teva Canada

Offers a free online tool to help you create a personalized plan to improve your overall health and wellbeing as a caregiver. For more information, go to the website found at caregiverselfcareplan.ca

Caregiver information and supports (listed in alphabetical order)

1. African Cancer Support Group

Offers mental, emotional, financial and educational supports to African, Caribbean, Black Canadians and their caregivers. For more information, go to the website found at: africancancer.ca

2. Bladder Cancer Canada

Offers online support groups and one-on-one support for caregivers of people living with bladder cancer. For more information, go to the website found at bladdercancercanada.org

3. Canadian Cancer Society

Offers an online community to connect people with cancer and their caregivers with others who know what they are going through. For more information, email cancerconnection@cancer.ca or go to the website found at cancer.ca/en/living-with-cancer/how-we-can-help/connect-with-our-online-community You can also search 'caregiver'.

4. Ontario Health - Cancer Care Ontario

Offers a toolkit with resources and information for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who require palliative care support. For more information, go to the website found at cancercareontario.ca/en/guidelines-advice/treatment-modality/palliative-care/toolkit-aboriginal-communities

5. Canadian Mesothelioma Foundation

Offers facilitated discussion groups for caregivers of people living with mesothelioma. For more information, go to the website found at cmfonline.org

6. Caregiver Exchange

Offers practical guides and a list of available supports and services for caregivers. For more information, go to the website found at www.caregiverexchange.ca

7. Colorectal Cancer Canada

Offers educational guides and a support group for caregivers of people living with colorectal cancer. For more information, go to the website found at colorectalcancercanada.com/colorectal-cancer/who-we-help/family-caregivers

8. Gilda's Club

Offers a caregiver support group. This group discusses topics such as: managing at home, self-care, alternative or complementary treatments, healthy lifestyle choices, and dealing with emotions. For more information, go to the website found at gildasclubtoronto.org

9. Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre

Offers individual and group support, education and wellness programs for caregivers. The support group helps caregivers develop self-care tools to reduce stress, change negative self-talk, communicate their needs to others, manage difficult feelings and help with decision-making. For more information, call 905-579-4833 or go to the website found at hearthplace.org

10. Indigenous Navigator for the Central East Regional Cancer Program

Can offer support to you if you:

- Identify as having Indigenous ancestry,
- Identify as having First Nation, Metis or Inuit heritage.
- Have Indigenous cultural needs.

For more information, call 905-576-8711 extension 32554, email kmacleodbeaver@lh.ca or go to the website found at lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/Indigenous-Navigator.asp

11. Kidney Cancer Canada

Offers an online discussion forum for caregivers of people living with kidney cancer. For more information, go to the website found at kidneycancercanada.ca

12. L'Chaim Cancer Support Program

Offers 1 to 1 support for caregivers of Jewish women living with cancer. For more information, go to the website found at ncjwctoronto.org/our-projects/lchaim-cancer-support-group

13. Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada

Offers online support groups and peer-to-peer telephone support for caregivers of people living with a blood cancer. For more information, go to the website found at bloodcancers.ca

14. Lung Cancer Canada

Offers a support group for caregivers of people living with lung cancer. For more information, go to the website found at lungcancercanada.ca, and navigate to “resources” and select group support.

15. Lymphoma Canada

Offers 1 to 1 peer support for caregivers of people living with lymphoma. For more information, go to the website found at lymphoma.ca

16. Melanoma Canada

Offers 1 to 1 peer support for caregivers of people living with melanoma. For more information, go to the website found at melanomacanada.ca

17. Myeloma Canada

Offers online and in-person peer support groups for caregivers of people living with myeloma. For more information, go to the website found at myeloma.ca

18. Ontario Caregiver Organization

Offers 1 to 1 support, peer group support, practical resources and toolkits to help you organize your caregiver responsibilities. They also offer a helpline that provides 24/7 support by phone or as an online chat. For more information, go to the website found at ontariocaregiver.ca

Handouts available on the website:

- [I am a Caregiver](#)
- [I am a Caregiver](#) (adapted for Indigenous People)
- [Work and Caregiving: A Balancing Act](#)

19. Pancreatic Cancer: Craig's Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society

Offers a support group for caregivers of people living with pancreatic cancer. For more information, go to the website found at craigsc ause.ca

20. Prostate Cancer Canada Network – Side by Side

Offers a peer support group for caregivers of people living with prostate cancer. For more information, call 416-932-8820, email info@pcstoronto.ca or go to the website found at pcstoronto.ca/side-by-side

21. Young Caregivers Connect

Offers 1 to 1 peer mentorship, peer support groups, a 24/7 helpline and information for young adult caregivers. For more information, go to the website found at youngcaregiversconnect.ca

22. Young Adult Cancer Canada (YACC)

Offers a private Facebook group for caregivers of young adults living with cancer. For more information, go to the website found at youngadultcancer.ca

23. Wellspring

Offers support and wellness programs for caregivers to people living with cancer. For more information, go to the website found at wellspring.ca

Education for Caregivers

1. Central East Self-Management Program

Offers workshops to help you manage stress and build the skills needed to care for yourself as you care for another person. For more information, go to the website found at ceselfmanagement.ca

2. Caregivers CAN

Offers a series of online learning modules with information and strategies to help you build the skills you need as a caregiver. For more information, go to the website found at virtualhospice.ca/caregiving

3. Hospice Palliative Care Ontario

Offers an online, self-learning program for caregivers. For more information, go to the website found at caregiversupport.hpco.ca/ocp For First Nations Caregiver Education, go to the website found at caregiversupport.hpco.ca/ocpfn

4. LEAP Carers

Offers an online course with information and resources to help you care for a person living with a serious illness. Topics include: the role of the caregiver, communication skills, advance care planning, providing personal care, and self-

care. For more information, go to the website found at pallium.ca/course/leap-carers

Caregiving and Work

If you need time away from work to provide care for someone who is ill, there may be financial support available to you. The Federal Government offers two benefits through Employment Insurance: The Family Caregiver Benefit and the Compassionate Care Benefit.

For more information, read the handout: “Financial Supports”, which is available on the Cancer Care pages of the Lakeridge Health website found at lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/resources/Cancer/Financial-Supports.pdf

Counselling

Being a caregiver to a person living with cancer can come with challenges that are unique to you and your personal experience. Accessing individual counselling can help you learn how to manage these challenges.

Everwell

Offers a team of therapists who have lived and professional experience supporting caregivers of people living with cancer. For more information, go to the website found at everwellcounselling.ca/blog-counselling-psychotherapy-mental-health/are-you-a-cancer-caregiver

For more information about other community or private counselling services available to you, read the handout: “Cancer Information and Supports” available on the Cancer Care pages of the Lakeridge Health website found at lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/resources/Cancer/Cancer-Information-and-Supports.pdf

This list is for information only and may change at any time. The Central East Regional Cancer Program does not represent or support any organization or individual on this list.

Ask to talk to a social worker at the cancer centre if you have questions or concerns about any information in this handout.

Last reviewed: September 2024