

Cancer Answers

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Giving Yourself Permission to Feel Bad

I have been communicating in recent weeks with a woman going through chemotherapy. She is having a tough time dealing with guilt because she simply does not have the energy to be and do what she used to. Well-meaning friends are trying to encourage her by telling her about patients who are, or have "breezed" through chemotherapy. Although they mean well, that is not fair to her - or to YOU, if that is what you are experiencing. For the moment you ARE tired, nauseas and dealing with the "ickies".

Here are several very important things you can do for yourself. At a time when you are pretty much out of control of everything in your life...it can help you feel better just controlling these few things. Along with that control you will help yourself stay as healthy as possible physically and emotionally.

1. Make certain you are getting enough water. During chemotherapy it is imperative to stay hydrated. Chemotherapy drugs suck moisture out of your body - especially your skin. Divide your weight by two. That is the minimum number of ounces of water you need daily. If water tastes terrible you can add an ounce of unsweetened fruit juice to a glass of water to help keep you drinking.

2. Your body craves - and needs - extra protein whenever it goes through trauma...and we all know...chemotherapy is trauma to your body! You need nearly twice the protein when dealing with cancer than you need when you are not. If you do not give your body enough protein, it will begin eating itself to get the nutrients it needs to survive this journey. So, be sure to eat extra protein from good, organic sources.

3. Adjust any exercise regimen you may have done before beginning chemo. You need energy to exercise. I know you may not have much energy. However, light to moderate exercise will increase your energy level.

4. Most important is giving yourself permission to feel bad. This is not a negative mind-set. Instead it is allowing yourself to feel how you are feeling without a guilt trip. I am not advocating just laying around and moping. What I am saying is be real with what you are feeling and show yourself grace to be in that place for the moment. If you have young children, come up with new ways to spend time with them. Maybe you sit in a wagon and your children take you for a ride. They will love that! Or have them read to you while you rest. Depending on the ages of your children, purchasing a good children's recipe book for them to make menus and cook from will allow you to sit during meal preparation yet still spend time with them. The same goes for all your relationships. Ask your husband or friends to come up with new ideas for spending time together. Try to do things at home whenever possible to avoid crowds. Watch one of the DVD's suggested by mylifeline.org.

You are special to God and all those in your life. Take care of yourself and give yourself permission to feel bad today. Tomorrow may be a better day.

MyLifeLine.org

When you are diagnosed with cancer, so many people want to get regular updates on how you and your family are doing. One of the best ways to do this is with a blog. If you are not familiar with the term: it is short for "weblog". It is a place where you can write your thoughts, daily activities and more and all your friends and families can read it just by logging onto your blog site. With everything else going on in your life, the last thing you need is to try to squeeze in time to design and maintain a blog.

Recently, I learned of a site called: MyLifeLine.org. It helps cancer patients and survivors to build an online support community easily and quickly. More than a blog - this organization helps you set up your own website! Your site can foster connection, inspiration and healing. It's free and personalized...what more could you want! Here are some things you can do or have on your website.

Communicate with family and friends. Receive and read caring, inspiring messages and view photos from your friends and family.

Check out the Joke of the Day for your regular dose of laughter medicine. You will also find a list of funny-bone approved DVD movies and books to cheer you.

Read information about your specific cancer type, including symptoms, treatments and side effects.

Keep track of everything in your schedule with your personal online calendar.

Personalize the site choosing colors you love and a design that says "you".

They offer simple instructions you or a family member can easily follow. Check them out today...just log on!