

Journeys

News and inspiration for
Dignity Health Cancer Institute
patients and family

Fall 2018



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Talking with Your Doctor

Do you have an open and honest dialogue with your doctor about your health? Your answer to this question could affect the quality of care you receive. An open discussion with your doctor is critical to ensure you are getting the care you need.

Below are some tips to keep in mind for your next visit to the doctor. Remember, your doctor wants to provide you with the best care possible and needs all of your health information to provide you with the best diagnosis and treatment options.

Be Prepared

If you believe you are at risk for a blood condition, be sure you are prepared to talk to your doctor about it. Make the most of your visit by preparing in advance.

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September is Prostate/
Childhood/Ovarian/
Gynecologic/Thyroid/Blood
Cancer Awareness Month

October is Breast Cancer
Awareness Month



Dignity Health™
Cancer Institute
of Greater Sacramento



Before Your Visit

- Prepare questions to discuss.
- Make a list of your symptoms and health concerns.
- Make a list of medications you are currently taking.

During Your Visit

- If you feel you need moral support, you may want to bring someone with you such as a friend or family member.
- Arrive in plenty of time to fill out any medical and insurance forms. Answer all health- and family history-related questions honestly.
- Do not withhold any information from your doctor. Even if you think it might not be important, make sure you mention it because it might be something your doctor needs to know in order to prescribe the best treatment.
- When speaking with your doctor, make sure you understand the diagnosis and the next steps you should take.

- If there is a word or phrase you do not understand, ask your doctor to explain it in a way that will make sense to you.
- Do not be afraid or embarrassed to ask about symptoms or concerns; remember, your doctor has dealt with similar questions before.
- Prior to leaving the doctor’s office, make sure you know what the follow-up plan or arrangements are.

After Your Visit

- Call your doctor’s office with any additional questions you did not get to ask or that may have occurred to you after the visit. Your doctor may be able to answer your questions by phone, or may be able to schedule another visit to address them in detail.

See a dermatologist if a lesion grows quickly, bleeds, or looks different than other spots on the skin (the ugly duckling). Most skin cancers can be cured if detected early. If in doubt, see a dermatologist!



YANA Ministry Donation

Over 100 blankets were delivered to Mercy Cancer Center for patients from YANA, You Are Not Alone Comfort Ministry. Volunteers who are cancer survivors from the organization made the blankets as a symbol of faith, hope, and love for patients as they go through their treatment journey. Patients were overjoyed and grateful for the gifts!

Five Legal Tips for Patients with Cancer and Survivors



Stephanie Fajuri, ESQ.
Program Director,
Cancer Legal Resource Center
Disability Rights Legal Center,
Los Angeles, California

1. It Is Your Responsibility to Understand Your Health Insurance Coverage

We often assume that the doctors and nurses treating us understand our health insurance coverage, and that they know better than to suggest treatments that are not covered or that we can’t afford. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. To save yourself frustration (and possibly significant medical debt) down the road, learn as much about your insurance coverage as you can, so that you are not left with unexpected bills. You can do this by reading your summary plan description or evidence of coverage booklet, both of which are usually available online. If you have questions about your health insurance plan, call your insurance company, and take detailed notes about what the customer service representative tells you. And, if you’re not well enough to handle this on your own, ask a friend or a family member you trust to help you. Insurance can be confusing, but knowing what is covered can help you plan accordingly.

2. Ask for Accommodations at Work Before Your Performance Is Affected

If cancer and the effects of treatment are making certain aspects of your job more difficult, you may be entitled to something called a “reasonable accommodation.” The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects workers with disabilities from discrimination at companies with at least 15 employees, and people with cancer are usually considered “disabled” under the ADA. If you work for a smaller company, you may be protected by state fair employment law, depending on where you live. In addition to prohibiting disability-related discrimination, these laws also require your employer to make changes to the work environment (accommodations) to help you to keep doing your job, as long as the changes you request are not too expensive or too difficult for your employer to make. For example, changing your work schedule so that you have time

to go to your doctor appointments, working from home, or even adjusting the office temperature may be considered reasonable accommodations, depending on your job. Keep in mind that you need to ask for accommodations before your work performance is affected. If you start showing up to work late, missing work, or missing deadlines, your employer may be allowed to write you up or even fire you if the employer did not know about your need for an accommodation.

3. You May Not Have to Quit Your Job Just Because You Have Cancer

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job- and health-benefit protected leave for eligible employees. If you have worked for your employer for at least one year, worked 1,250 hours in the last year, and your employer has at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius of where you work, you may be able to take FMLA leave for yourself if you are sick, or if you are a caregiver for your spouse, parent, or child. Under FMLA, you can take the 12 weeks all at once or in smaller increments. So, whether you are having surgery that requires a long recovery or you only need one day off per week for treatment, you may be able to use FMLA leave to maintain your job and insurance benefits while you are off work. If you don’t qualify for FMLA, you may still be able to take time off as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA as noted above. It’s also a good idea to check your employee manual or check with human resources about medical leave, because some larger employers provide even more time off than the law requires.

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4. Prioritize Your Debt

Cancer treatment is expensive, even if you have great insurance coverage. You may not be able to prevent taking on some debt, so prioritizing which debts you pay first can help to improve your quality of life. There are two main types of debt—secured and unsecured. Secured debt is a debt that is tied to a piece of property (such as a home or a car) called “collateral,” which means that if you do not pay the debt, that property can be repossessed. Unsecured debt is not linked to collateral. If you don’t pay an unsecured debt, the company or person to whom you owe money cannot get anything from you unless they get a judgment against you in court. Examples of unsecured debts are credit cards, medical bills, and student loans. Sometimes it can be a good idea to prioritize paying for necessary expenses over unsecured debts. For example, if you need your car to get to and from treatment, you will need to keep making your car payment so that it does not get repossessed. Also, a landlord or a bank can start eviction or foreclosure proceedings if you do not pay your rent or mortgage, even if you have cancer. Having a place to live is obviously essential, so you may want to prioritize paying your rent or mortgage instead of making your credit card payment.

5. Don’t Take “No” for an Answer

If your health insurance company denies coverage of a certain service or treatment, appeal the decision. First, you usually have to appeal directly to your insurance company to get it to reconsider the decision. If the insurance company still says “no,” most people with private health insurance now have access to an external insurance appeals process—sometimes called an “Independent Medical Review”—



thanks to the Affordable Care Act. An external appeal is when an independent third party reviews your request to consider whether the insurance company was right in denying you coverage. In addition, most people are denied Social Security Disability benefits the first time they apply. If you apply for Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income because you are disabled and no longer able to work, and you are denied benefits, you have a better chance of getting approved and maintaining back pay you may be entitled to if you appeal instead of submitting a new application. You usually don’t need a lawyer to help with a Social Security appeal until you are scheduled for a hearing.

Get to Know Your Rights

Learning your rights and how to enforce them can help to prevent legal problems down the road. The Cancer Legal Resource Center is a national program of the Disability Rights Legal Center in Los Angeles, California. The Cancer Legal Resource Center provides free education and resources on cancer-related legal questions to cancer survivors, caregivers, and healthcare professionals. For more tips or answers to cancer-related legal questions, or to download or order a free copy of our “Patient Legal Handbook,” contact the Cancer Legal Resource Center at 866-843-2572 or visit cancerlegalresources.org.

Key Points

- Read your summary health insurance coverage plan description or evidence of coverage booklet, or call your insurance company
- If you work for a smaller company, you may be protected by state fair employment law, depending on where you live
- Patients with cancer are usually considered “disabled” under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and therefore protected from discrimination in the workplace
- The ADA also requires your employer to make necessary, reasonable accommodations to help you do your job
- If you have worked full time for your employer for at least one year and your employer has at least 50 employees close to where you work, you may be eligible for medical leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act

Upcoming Events

Free Prostate Screening

Dignity Health Cancer Institute will once again be holding its FREE Prostate Cancer Screening Event. As in previous years, men will be able to take advantage of a free PSA blood test and digital rectal exam. Dignity Health is proud to offer this screening in collaboration with the PCEC (Prostate Conditions Education Council). Appointments are required for this event. Please call 916-556-3303 for additional information.

Friday, 9/28 @ 8:30am to 4:00pm, Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Suite 550, Sacramento, CA 95816

Free Prostate Cancer Screening, Grass Valley

The Sierra Nevada Cancer Center is offering a free prostate cancer screening event. Appointments are required for this event. Scheduling will begin August 13th. Please call 530.274.6848 to schedule your appointment.

Wednesday, 9/19 @ Noon to 5:00pm
Sierra Nevada Cancer Center
155 Glasson Way, Bldg 3, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Breast Cancer Prevention and Screening Events

Join us for an educational event to learn more about breast cancer prevention. Our panel of experts, with specialists in surgery, oncology, radiology and genetic counseling, will share key insights on topics including:

- Importance of annual screening mammograms
- Genetics and family risk
- Diet, nutrition, exercise and lifestyle

For more information, or to RSVP, contact Community Outreach Coordinator Angela Gianulias at 916.962.8893.

Thursday, 10/11 @ 6:00pm to 8:00pm, Woodland Clinic
2081 Bronze Star Drive, In the Costco Shopping Center

Tuesday, 10/16 @ 6:00pm to 8:00pm, Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Suite 550, Sacramento, CA 95816

BRA Day 2018

Join us for an evening of hope reconstruction. On National Breast Reconstruction Awareness Day, Dignity Health Cancer Institute of Greater Sacramento and the Mercy Cancer Centers are teaming up with BRA Day USA to hold a panel discussion on different breast cancer treatments and their associated reconstructive options. Admission is free and includes appetizers from local restaurants, beverages, a tote bag with goodies and some tantalizing shopping opportunities. Please pre-register by October 12th at 916.851.2138.

Wednesday, 10/17 @ 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Suite 550, Sacramento, CA 95816

Transition to Wellness

Dignity Health Cancer Institute will be holding a “Transition to Wellness” discussion for those patients who have completed cancer treatment and are on the road to recovery. Survivorship care is a specific approach taken to address the long-term needs of cancer survivors. A dietician, psychosocial therapist and a nurse navigator will be able to address any concerns for patients who feel like they have nowhere to go or no one to talk to after treatment is complete. Our goal is to empower survivors to advocate for their own healthcare needs. Some of the areas we expect to cover are:

- Surveillance for reoccurrence
- Screening recommendations
- Guidance about health education, diet and exercise

Please call Angela Gianulias at 916.962.8893 for additional information.

Thursday, 11/8 @ 4:30pm to 6:00pm
Dignity Health Cancer Institute
6403 Coyle Avenue, Suite 200, Carmichael, CA 95608

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Walk on 9/16/18 with OCERN:

Ovarian Cancer Education and Research Network, Inc. Join Team Dignity Health and the Dignity Dynamos at www.letsrocrun.org

It’s a fun way to support and educate the community about ovarian cancer during September, which is Ovarian Cancer Month. Call Nurse Navigator Ann Chrisler for more info at 916.556.3129 or call the main navigation line at 916.962.8892.



Dignity Health Mercy SOUL (Source of Unconditional Love) Dog Therapy Program

Madeline Levy, leader of Mercy SOUL dog program since 1994, and volunteer Heather Robertson brought Buster to the Mercy Cancer Center for another weekly visit. SOUL (Source of Unconditional Love) is an animal assisted therapy program providing joy and comfort to patients, caregivers and even staff. Patients can view or pet animals during visits offering much needed relaxation and lots of smiles to all those around. Thank you to our four-legged volunteers and their handlers!

Would You Like to Have a Peer Navigator of Your Own?

A peer navigator is a trained volunteer who has had cancer and can connect with people with the same type of cancer. Peer navigators answer questions, can direct you toward needed resources (such as transportation, support groups, and financial aid), accompany you to appointments, and connect with you by phone. Peer navigators offer a message of hope and empowerment in coping with cancer. They listen with a compassionate and understanding heart because they have been on the same journey. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact your nurse navigator or the Dignity Health Nurse Navigation Team at 916.962.8892.

“The peer navigation program is a rewarding way to help patients through a difficult road to recovery. As a cancer survivor I feel I am aware of how cancer patients feel and the fears they face providing the hope they need.”

“My peer navigator provides me with guidance to the answers or just listens to my fears and provides support. It continues to be a relationship I treasure. I am so grateful for this program that I have become a peer navigator myself hoping to pay it forward.”

“I have found peer navigation very valuable as a cancer survivor. It has also given me the chance to meet new patients, get perspective on their lives, and learn how to handle this incredible cancer journey. As a peer navigator it is very valuable to be able to give back to our community. I have seen that initially some of the patients are reluctant to share their story and their journey, and yet when I can talk to them and tell them my adventure, they become more confident that they too can gain insight and support.”

“Being a peer navigator is my way of giving back. It is a privilege to be able to help another patient going through this journey.”

“I felt so hopeful when a peer navigator came to meet me at the hospital after I had my surgery. He said he just came from the golf course, and I was so shocked and happy to learn that there is life after chemo, radiation, and surgery.”

“I want patients to know that there is hope after treatments, and recovery is attainable. I want to be able to encourage them, answer questions, and let them know they’re not alone.”

Grass Valley Cancer Center Resources

A Cancer diagnosis impacts not only the patient but loved ones as well. Families and other interested patients are welcome to utilize these resources. Services are offered at no cost to cancer patients, family members, and caregivers. For information on any of the groups or classes below (where another number is not given) call Rebecca Parsons at **530.274.6656**.

CANCER CENTER LENDING LIBRARY

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP WITH LINDA MEYERS, LCSW

Wednesdays, 3 – 4:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.478.1273

CARE SUPPORT GROUP WITH JEANINE BRYANT, MS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF CANCER PATIENTS

Wednesdays, 3 – 4:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.274.6654

COMFORT CUISINE MEALS

Delicious, nutritious, homemade meals for patients and caregivers. Frozen, individual portions, ready to reheat. Pick up in the Cancer Center

G.A.T.E.: GRIEVING AND TRANSITIONING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE TO CANCER WITH JEANINE BRYANT, MS

Tuesdays, 3:30 – 5 p.m.
Contact: 530.274.6654

HARP CLASSES WITH LISA STINE

Fridays, weekly for 12 weeks
Contact: Lisa Stine, 530.632.6226

HEAD AND NECK CANCER HELP GROUP WITH JIM VARDON

First Saturday of each month, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Contact: 530.432.3022

KIDSCOPE: FOR CHILDREN IMPACTED BY CANCER WITH JEANINE BRYANT, MS

Contact: 530.274.6654

NUTRITIONAL CONSULTATIONS KELLEY KULL, RD, CDE

Available for appointment
Contact: 530.274.6600

ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATORS

Laurie Ells RN, BSN, OCN
Contact: 530.274.6179

Linda Aeschliman, RN
(Breast Cancer Patients)
Contact: 530.274.6657

ONCOLOGY SOCIAL WORKER REBECCA PARSONS LCSW, OSW-C

Referrals to community resources, individual and family counseling
Contact: 530.274.6656

OVARIAN CANCER GROUP

Third Sunday of each month, 1 – 3 p.m.
Contact: Rebecca Parsons, 530.274.6656

PROSTATE DISCUSSION GROUP WITH MARY PETERSON, LMFT

Fourth Thursday of each month 4:30 – 6 p.m.
Contact: 530.478.1880

TRANSFORMATIONAL WHOLENESS WITH Nanci Shandera, PhD

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.265.9097
drnanci@earthspiritcenter.com
EarthSpiritCenter.com

WOMAN TO WOMAN: SHARING THE CANCER EXPERIENCE WITH JEANINE BRYANT, MS

Wednesdays, 9:30 – 11 a.m.
Contact: 530.274.6654

WRITING TO HEAL WITH MOLLY FISK CREATIVE WRITING CLASS

8 weekly classes
Thursdays, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Contact: 530.265.8751

YOGA FOR CANCER SURVIVORS WEEKLY, GRASS VALLEY YOGA

Contact: Janet Rankin, 530.401.0484

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

CANCER AID THRIFT SHOP

Provides financial assistance, equipment, etc.
Contact: 530.273.2365

HOPE BEARERS

Christ-centered cancer and chronic illness support group
Third Saturday of the month
11 a.m. Foothill Church
Contact: Amy & Wayne, 530.518.0519
or Sally, 530.273.1468

Dignity Health Cancer Institute Complementary Classes & Support Groups

For more information on any of the listings below, call **916.962.8892**.

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Thursday of every month, 4:30 – 6 p.m.
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
6555 Coyle Avenue, Ste. 140, Carmichael, 95608

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Friday of every month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816
For more information please contact 916.990.8454

FOLSOM CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Every Tuesday, 4 – 5:30 p.m.
1580 Creekside Dr., first floor conference room
Folsom, 95630
For more information please call 916.986.4585

GYNECOLOGIC CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Wednesday of every month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816

LUNG AND ESOPHAGEAL CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

1st Wednesday of every month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Alternates every other month between Mercy Cancer Center
& Mercy San Juan Medical Center
(MCC = Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov)
(MSJ = Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec)
Call 855.637.2962 for location

LOOK GOOD, FEEL BETTER

2nd Tuesday of every other month, 6 – 8 p.m.
(Jan 9, Mar 13, May 8, Jul 10, Sep 11, Nov 13)
Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816

4th Monday of every other month, 2 – 4 p.m.
(Jan 22, Mar 26, May 28, Jul 25, Sep 24, Nov 26)
Woodland Healthcare
515 Fairchild Ct, Woodland, 95695
To make an appointment to attend, call the American
Cancer Society 800.227.2345

MEDITATION GROUP

Every Tuesday, 1 – 1:45 p.m.
Dignity Health Cancer Institute
6403 Coyle Avenue, Carmichael, 95608
For more information, please contact 916.990.8454

MULTIPLE MYELOMA SUPPORT GROUP

1st Saturday of every month, 10 a.m. – noon
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
6555 Coyle Avenue, Ste. 140, Carmichael, 95608

NUTRITION CLASSES

Quarterly, Tuesdays, 2 – 3 p.m.
(Feb 6, May 15, Aug 7, Nov 13)
Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816

Individual appointments available at Mercy San Juan
For more information please contact 916.983.7598

ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATORS

1-833-DHCINAV
DHCINAV@dignityhealth.org

OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP

1st Saturday of every month, 10 a.m. – noon
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
6501 Coyle Avenue, Carmichael, 95608

PROSTATE SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Thursday of every month, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Alternates every other month between Mercy
San Juan Medical Center & UC Davis
(MSJ = Jan 18, Mar 15, May 17, Jul 19, Sep 20, Nov 15)
(UCD = Feb 15, Apr 19, Jun 21, Aug 16, Oct 18, Dec 20)

YOGA CLASSES

Every Monday & Wednesday, 5 – 6 p.m.
Mercy Cancer Center
3301 C Street, Sacramento, 95816

3rd Thursday of every month, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
6555 Coyle Avenue, Ste. 140, Carmichael, 95608

If you're looking for support from our Oncology Nurse Navigators, please call **833.DHCINAV** or email **DHCINAV@dignityhealth.org**.