



CANCER SUPPORT  
**COMMUNITY**  
ARIZONA

# Cancer Self-Care Guide

A Checklist for Living Well When You're Living with Cancer

## **Your cancer does not define you.**

The diagnosis and the treatment can impact you in countless ways - physically, mentally, emotionally and even spiritually. It can be scary and frustrating and sometimes debilitating. It can make you feel like you've lost control of your own life. But it doesn't define you.

That's why **practicing self-care** is so important during this time. The treatment plan you develop with your care team will help your body get healthier - but its

focus, rightly, is on battling the disease. A self-care plan treats the rest of you, keeping you as healthy and active as possible during treatment and beyond.

Doing some - or all - of the items on this checklist will help you feel more in control during this challenging time. They can help boost your spirit. They can give you some of your power back. Most importantly, they'll help remind you that you are more than your cancer. Because your cancer does not define you.



# Your Body

- ☐ **Drink Enough Water** - That sounds simple, right? Eight glasses a day is the rule at all times, but it's even more vital for you now. When you run low on fluids, your cells struggle to work. Plus you might need additional hydration to fight the side effects of cancer treatment.
- ☐ **Eat Well** - Nourishing foods (think lean protein, fruits, vegetables and whole grains) will keep up your strength, keep up your weight and fight off infections.
- ☐ **Exercise** - Yes, this might be the last thing on your mind right now, particularly if you are feeling tired and weak, but physical activity will build up your strength and does not have to be strenuous. Talk to your care team about what type of exercise might be best for you.
- ☐ **Sleep** - Illness, treatment and stress can interrupt your natural sleep patterns. Getting a good night's sleep plays a big role in your physical and emotional health, so if you are having problems, work with your care team to identify possible solutions. These could include relaxation techniques, therapy or even medication.
- ☐ **Alternative Therapies** - Now is the time to consider alternative therapies that might speak specifically to your body's needs during treatment. For example, acupuncture and aromatherapy have been used to successfully combat pain and nausea.



# Your Mind & Emotions

- ☐ **Learn** - Knowledge is power and one of the best ways to address the uncertainty about your condition is to learn everything you can. Don't be afraid to research or ask questions about your specific illness, the course of treatment being proposed, side effects and the financial impact this will have on you. This will help you prepare, feel more in control and ask for the help you need to get you through this time. That support will help you focus on the most important thing - getting healthier.
- ☐ **Relaxation Techniques** - Take advantage of the connection between the mind and body by employing relaxation techniques to reduce anxiety and control pain. Breathing exercises and muscle relaxation techniques can yield positive results in only a few minutes.
- ☐ **Journaling** - Writing or drawing your thoughts and feelings about this journey is a powerful way of taking care of yourself.

It gives you the space to work out how you feel and helps you feel more in control. It can be stream-of-consciousness, a gratitude journal, a diary or a doodle - there's no "wrong" way to journal.

- ☐ **Find Time for the Things You Enjoy** - Any life-threatening illness will make you keenly aware of how precious time is. Don't forget to do the things that truly bring you joy. It could be a hobby, time spent with friends, even just sitting outside and watching and listening to nature around you.
- ☐ **Keep Up Your Grooming Routine** - In general, caring for your appearance can boost your spirits. It's especially important now, because it's often hard to feel attractive when you are ill. There are changes you might want to make (using an electric razor, for instance, to avoid nicks and cuts), but making time to look your best will increase your confidence and sense of control.



# Your Spirit

- ☐ **Continue What Feeds Your Soul** - Before your diagnosis, there were things you did that fed your spiritual side, such as religious services or meditation. Don't let cancer keep you from these things, as they will probably be more important than ever.
- ☐ **Surround Yourself with Loved Ones** - You are not on this journey alone. Your family, friends and caregivers are all in it with you. Give them a chance to help and enjoy their company.
- ☐ **Sharing is Power** - Support groups give you a chance to talk with people who intimately understand exactly what you are going through. They are a safe place to share and work through your feelings, plus you can learn from your fellow support group members.





At Cancer Support Community Arizona, our mission is to uplift and strengthen people impacted by cancer by providing support, fostering compassionate communities, and breaking down barriers to care.

We offer more than 100 programs each month (including both in-person and virtual sessions) to provide emotional and social support to anyone affected by cancer, including the newly diagnosed, those undergoing treatment, cancer survivors, caregivers, and loved ones.

**All programs are offered free of charge to participants.**

To learn more, or register for one of our free sessions, please visit [cscaz.org/get-support/](https://cscaz.org/get-support/).

## Locations

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