

Feeling one way then another?

Being diagnosed with cancer and undergoing treatment can impact a patient's mental well-being. Cancer treatments, including many cancer medications, can directly impact the way people feel emotionally and physically and can bring up a wide range of feelings and changes in your mood. Although mental health changes may be harder to notice, they are just as significant as any physical changes.

Your health care team is there to treat the whole person, including your mental health concerns. Discussing mood changes with your health care team when they arise can strengthen your emotional well-being and provide relief.

Your care team can help you determine if your mood changes are related to stress or to treatment side effects. They can help you develop a plan to feel better.

Good Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being are important aspects of whole person care. You are part of your team. Good communication with your care team, with a complete medical history and awareness and communication of your mood changes are important aspects of whole person care.

Help with determining the source of your mood changes:

Since mood changes can be related to treatment, discuss this with your care team. Your care team can help you determine whether you are having mood changes from treatment side effects, stress, anxiety, or other emotions. They can provide options for help. For more serious mood changes, options may include adjusting treatment or referral to a mental health provider such as a therapist, psychiatrist, or psychologist.

Some patients have mood changes that can be managed with self-help methods and through support from others:

- **Express Your Feelings, Seek Support.** People have found that when they express their uncomfortable feelings like anger or sadness, they may be more able to work through them. Some sort out their feelings by talking to friends or family, other cancer survivors, a support group, or a counselor. If you prefer not to discuss your moods and feelings with others, you may be able to sort them out by thinking about them or writing them down.
- **Be as Active as You Can.** Doing something active can help you focus on other things besides cancer and the worries it brings. Walking, exercise or gentle yoga and stretching can help too.
- **Try simple breathing exercises.** Take a deep breath from your diaphragm (the muscle between your lungs and abdomen). Hold the breath for several seconds—however long is comfortable for you—and then exhale slowly. Repeat two more times. Afterward, relax for a moment and let yourself feel the experience of being calm and breathing at a relaxed comfortable pace.
- **Other Self-Help Methods.** Meditation, guided imagery, complimentary therapies (also called integrative medicine), improved nutrition, acupuncture, music therapy, massage, and other modalities may add another layer of assistance.

Content adapted from websites below.

Resources for Additional Information:

- [NCCN, Mood Changes](#)
- [NIH, Feelings and Cancer](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Maintaining Good Mental Health](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Complementary Therapies](#)
- [Chemocare.com, Depression and Chemotherapy](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Mood Changes](#)

Recursos en Español:

- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Los Sentimientos y el cancer](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Cambios Emocionales](#)
- [Chemocare.org, Neurotoxicidad Central](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Dialogo con su conyuge o pareja](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Cuando alguien tiene cancer](#)