

Feeling Anxious?

Periods of anxiety following a cancer diagnosis are common. Distress is very common among people with cancer. Actually, everyone with cancer has some distress at some point in time.

It is important you learn to self manage your stress or get help with so you can feel better, be better able to make decisions and function better in every aspect of your life.

Nearly half of cancer patients report experiencing significant distress.

Anxiety and distress may affect a patient's ability to cope with a cancer diagnosis or treatment. Experiencing stress over a period of time can weaken the immune system, leading to other health problems. Untreated anxiety and long-term stress can also make other aspects of your care and health more difficult. Even mild anxiety, arising from stress from work, family, or financial concerns, can make coping with cancer more difficult.

Content adapted from websites below.

There are a variety of ways to cope with anxiety including relaxation techniques, psychological treatment (or counseling) and medication.

Many are used together. Talk with your care team to find the best options for you. Many cancer centers have social workers, counselors, support groups and psychologists who specialize in helping cancer patients manage anxiety and stress during cancer treatment.

Self-help stress management by exercising regularly, spending time outside, scheduling social activities, eating well, getting plenty of sleep, joining a support group, taking time to relax daily, doing things you enjoy, writing in a journal, or learning a new hobby.

Engage in physical activity. Exercise improves fitness and strengthens your ability, in both mind and body, to cope with cancer. There are small changes that can be made to increase your physical activity. Walking is a gentle way to get into exercising. You may want to start by walking 5 to 10 minutes and build from there. Keep in mind that you should talk with your doctor before starting any type of exercise.

Deep breathing. Done slowly for a few breaths in and out, this way of breathing can be done anywhere, anytime to reduce stress.

Progressive muscle relaxation. This is a technique that involves lightly tensing one muscles group after another beginning at the toes or the head and slowly relaxing those muscles.

Guided imagery. This technique uses your imagination to direct the mind's attention on a peaceful scene that generates a sense of calm and safety.

Meditation helps redirect distressing thoughts about the past and future uncertainty.

Hypnosis may useful for guided relaxation, intense concentration, and focused attention as a means to relax.

Yoga uses breathing and posture exercises to promote relaxation.

Local Organizations providing support for anyone impacted by cancer:

Cancer Wellness Center	Northern Suburbs	Cancerwellness.org	847-509-9595	Programas en Español
Gilda's Club Chicago	Chicago	Gildasclubchicago.org	312-464-9900	Programas en Español
Living Well Cancer Resource Center	Far West Suburbs	Livingwellcrc.org	630-262-1111	
The Cancer Support Center	South Suburbs	CancerSupportCenter.org	708-798-9171	
Wellness House in Chicago	Northwest & West Suburbs	Wellnesshouse.org	630-323-5150	

Access an interactive map of these local resources at: <http://cancer-help.me/communitycancerresourcecenters>

Resources for Additional Information:

- [NCCN Guidelines for Patients®, Distress](#)
- [American Cancer Society. Anxiety, Fear, and Depression](#)
- [NIH. Learning to Relax](#)
- [NIH. Adjustment to Cancer: Anxiety and Distress \(PDO®\)](#)
- [Cancer.Net. Anxiety](#)
- [CancerCare.org. Anxiety and Cancer](#)
- [NCCN. Patient and Caregiver Resources, Advocacy and Support Groups](#)

Recursos en Español:

- [NIH. Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer. Cómo hacer frente al cáncer](#)
- [NIH. Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer. Adaptación al cáncer: ansiedad y sufrimiento \(PDO®\)–Versión para pacientes](#)
- [CancerCare.org. Técnicas de relajación y prácticas de la mente y el cuerpo: cómo pueden ayudarle a sobrellevar el cáncer](#)