

Information and Supports for Young Adults with Cancer

It is stressful to find out you have cancer. You may have a lot of questions and concerns. You may be unsure what to expect or what to do next. This handout offers information on the supports available to you and what you can do to manage your concerns.

As a young adult, you may have concerns related to:

- Physical changes
- Finances
- Education
- Work
- Intimacy and sex
- Fertility
- Family members/partners-in-care

Ask to talk to a social worker if you have questions or concerns about any of the information in this handout.

Physical changes

You may experience physical changes caused by your cancer and cancer treatments. Ask the healthcare team about the physical changes you may experience. You may be worried or have concerns about these physical changes. Talk to your healthcare team about this.

Finances

Learn about the benefits and financial assistance programs offered through your work, federal and provincial governments or non-profit foundations. Ask your healthcare team for a copy of our Financial Supports handout or go to:

lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/resources/Cancer/Financial-Supports.pdf

Go to wellspring.ca/programs and search 'finance' for information on available programs and webinars.

Education and work schedules

You may need to make changes in your schedule for school or work because of your cancer treatments. This may mean working or going to school part-time or taking a leave of absence. This may be a difficult decision for you to make. Talk to your healthcare team about this.

Go to wellspring.ca/programs and search 'work' for information on available programs and webinars.

Intimacy and sex

Cancer may affect how you see your relationships and how you feel about intimacy and sex. Talk to your healthcare team about this. Ask your healthcare team for a copy of our Sexual Health handout or go to lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/your-sexual-health.asp

Fertility preservation

Cancer treatment can change your ability to have biological children. You may want to preserve your fertility by freezing your sperm or eggs. Talk to your healthcare team about this before treatment starts. Ask your healthcare team for one of these handouts:

- Fertility Preservation for People Who Produce Eggs. This handout can also be found at: lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/resources/Cancer/Fertility-Preservation-for-People-Who-Produce-Eggs.pdf
- Fertility Preservation for People Who Produce Sperm. This handout can also be found at: lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/resources/Cancer/Fertility-Preservation-for-People-Who-Produce-Sperm.pdf

Your family members/partners-in-care

Your family members/partners-in-care will need information about your cancer and cancer treatments too. This may help them understand your experience and how you may be feeling. Supports you find helpful may also be helpful for your family members/partners-in-care. This may help them know how to best support you. Your family and friends may offer to help you in practical ways (example: make a meal for you or drive you to an appointment). You may need to ask them for help.

Supports available to you and your family members/partners-in-care

It is important to find ways to care for yourself. It may help to listen to calming music, participate in a yoga or meditation class, or spend time with friends and family. Think about what made you happy before you had cancer. Find ways to bring those things into your new routine. Keeping things normal can be helpful.

You may find it helpful to talk with someone about your experience and feelings. See the list below for the options available to you. The type of support you find helpful may depend on your needs.

Organizations offering support to young adults with cancer

1. **Canadian Cancer Society** offers information about cancer. You can talk to someone about how you are feeling. You can do this by phone or through a chat group. Call 1-888-939-3333 or go to the website found at cancer.ca. and search 'how we can help'.

- 2. CancerConnection** offers support and information about cancer. Call 1-888-939-3333 or go to the website found at cancerconnection.ca.

3. Cancer Fight Club

Offers programs for young adults facing cancer, which includes peer support, workshops and seminars, retreats, exercise and physical activities, social get-togethers, stress management. Go to the website found at cancerfightclub.com for more information.

4. First Descents

Offers outdoor adventures for young adults living with cancer. Participants must have been diagnosed with cancer between the ages of 15 to 39 and must currently be between the ages of 18 to 45. Go to the website found at firstdescents.org for more information.

5. Look Good Feel Better

Offers virtual and in-person workshops to women and men on how to manage the effects of cancer and treatments on your physical appearance. These workshops offer information on skin care and hair alternatives. Go to the website found at lgfb.ca for more information.

6. Movember

Offers information and supports to young adults with testicular cancer. This organization also offers information and support for mental health challenges. Go to the website found at ca.movember.com for more information.

7. Nankind

Offers in-person and virtual support to young moms and their families living with a cancer diagnosis. This includes:

- In-home childcare (4 hours/week).
- Meal support with healthy and delicious meals delivered to your home.
- Virtual homework club.
- Fun-in-a box: A fun and creative activity box delivered to your door once a month with 4 weekly activities.
- A support group for moms.
- One to one support with a Child Life Specialist for children.
- The Ronda Green Camp Program providing children the chance to go to the camp of their choice and experience the magic a summer camp has to offer.

You need to meet certain criteria for some of the programs. Email info@nankind.com for more information.

8. Pink Pearl

Offers resources and supports for young adult women. This includes peer support programs. Go to the website found at pinkpearlcanada.org for more information.

9. Queering Cancer

Offers resources and supports from LGBTQ2+ communities for you and your family members/partners-in-care. Go to the website found at queeringcancer.ca for more information.

10. Stupid Cancer

Offers resources and peer support. They host meet-ups, a yearly convention as well as digital webinars. Go to the website found at stupidcancer.org for more information.

11. Young Adult Cancer Canada (YACC)

Offers online supports and resources. You will find a list of activities and retreats on the website that can help you connect with other young adults. Call 1-877-571-7325 or go to the website found at youngadultcancer.ca for more information.

YACC Chats are held multiple times a week for any young adults diagnosed with cancer. Each chat is themed to offer a variety of opportunities to connect within the young adult cancer experience.

YACC Chats Series is similar to the regular YACC Chats, but participants sign up and commit to getting together weekly for eight weeks in order to deepen connections and build on the conversation.

Out With Cancer is a monthly chat that provides a safe space for 2SLGBTQIA+ people to connect with others diagnosed with cancer in a private, affirming, empowering online space.

Advanced and Metastatic Chats is a monthly chat that provides a safe space for people who have been diagnosed with an advanced or metastatic cancer with other young adults who understand this experience.

Cancer Support Centres

1. **Gilda's Club of Greater Toronto** offers support groups for you and your family members/partners-in-care. Call 416-214-9898 or go to the website found at gildasclubtoronto.org for more information.
2. **Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre** offers individual and group support, education and wellness programs. They offer a 'Young Hearts' support group for adults between 18 and 40. Call 905-579-4833 or go to the website found at hearthplace.org for more information.

3. **Wellspring** offers online support groups and educational workshops. Call 1-877-499-9904 or for more information go to the website found at wellspring.ca/online-programs

Ask for a copy of the [Cancer Information and Supports](#) handout if you did not already receive a copy. This handout offers information on disease site specific peer support programs.

This list is for information only and may change at anytime. The Central East Regional Cancer Program does not represent or support any organization or individual on this list.

This handout was created by the Patient Education Program at the Durham Regional Cancer Centre/Lakeridge Health. It was last reviewed in November of 2024.