LIVING HEALTHY AS A CANCER SURVIVOR: LIFESTYLE CHOICES

A cancer survivor is a person who has been diagnosed with cancer. They are considered a survivor for the rest of their life.

- There are both physical and emotional side effects of cancer and its treatment. They can effect survivors in different ways.
- Choosing healthy behaviors is important. You can lower your risk of getting cancer again through exercise, eating healthy foods and not being overweight.
- This document provides survivors with information on ways to live healthy after treatment ends. The document should not replace consultation with a health care provider. It is important that all survivors see their health care provider for regular medical care.

Find Ways to Relax and Cope With Stress

- Take care of your basic needs, like eating healthy, exercising and getting enough sleep.
- Talk to your health care provider about meeting with a social worker, psychologist or support group if you have stress and anxiety.
- Stress can be caused by a busy schedule. Use a calendar to track your appointments.
- Practice meditation, music, prayer or art to establish a sense of calm and peace.
- Spend time outside and enjoy the fresh air.

Get a Good Night’s Sleep

Cancer survivors may have sleep problems after treatment, and find it hard to get the recommended seven hours of sleep or more a night. This can be due to treatments, pain, medication, stress and anxiety. Try these tips:

- Go to bed and wakeup at the same time every day.
- Go to bed when tired. Get up if you cannot sleep after a few minutes.
- Come up with a calming bedtime routine, like a warm bath or reading.
- Talk with a physical therapist about comfortable pillow, mattress and sleep positions.

Use Sun Protection

Limiting exposure to the sun and other sources of ultraviolet light are the best ways to lower the risk of skin cancer.

- Stay in the shade - especially during midday hours.
- Wear a hat and clothing that covers your skin - including arms and legs.
- Wear sunglasses that block harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays.
- Use sunscreen.
- Avoid indoor tanning.
Ask Your Health Care Provider About Vaccinations

Two vaccinations may be important for cancer survivors.

1. **Flu (Influenza) Vaccine**
   The flu vaccine may protect against influenza, which can cause breathing problems. As a cancer survivor, you may be at greater risk of problems related to the flu due to a weakened immune system. Family members may also want to consider getting a yearly flu vaccine.

2. **Pneumonia (Pneumococcal Vaccine)**
   Pneumonia is caused by bacteria that spread to different parts of the body including the lungs, sinuses, throat and ears. A pneumonia vaccine can help prevent individuals with weakened immune systems from getting pneumonia.

Talk to your health care provider about which flu and pneumonia vaccines may be right for you.
- Check with your local health department about getting vaccines free or at little cost, if they are not covered by your insurance.

Helpful Resources for Survivors

- Call The American Cancer Society’s National Cancer Information Center at 1-800-227-2345 for more information and resources.

References