

How to Create a Cancer Wellness Plan

To thrive with and after cancer, actively map out ways to nourish your mind, body, spirit and more.

December 9, 2024 By [Kate Ferguson](#)

A cancer diagnosis can be destabilizing, but it can also serve as an opportunity to take stock of your life and actively plan for a healthy future. Striving for wellness requires creating a custom plan that meets your unique physical, psychological, social, spiritual and economic needs and boosts your quality of life. The following suggestions can help you envision a wellness plan that fits your circumstances.

Take Care of Your Body

“Being physically active, consuming foods that reflect a healthy dietary pattern and avoiding obesity after completion of cancer treatment improves long-term survival,” concludes the American Cancer Society’s 2022 Nutrition and Physical Activity Guideline for Cancer Survivors. It recommends a diet “rich in a variety of plant foods, such as vegetables, whole fruits, whole grains and beans/legumes, but limited in or not including red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened beverages, highly processed foods and refined grain products.” Consult with your health care team for advice about fitness programs that address your particular needs.

Assemble a Support System

Medical professionals, fellow cancer survivors, family and friends can all help you meet your emotional, psychological, spiritual and intellectual wellness needs. It's tough to beat the support of a fellowship of people with shared experiences and common goals—whether online or via local community programs. Such a connected network can help you cope with stress and build healthy, nurturing relationships.

Assess Your Financial Situation

Doriot Kim

The hard reality is that cancer care costs money. Nearly three quarters of people with cancer are concerned about the cost of health care; indeed, 70% of cancer patients are worried about incurring medical debt due to their care and treatment. Such stress could negatively affect health outcomes. Start by assessing your health insurance coverage. If you don't have health insurance

or don't qualify for Medicare or Medicaid, experts suggest you explore state-based health insurance marketplaces to find a plan that fits your needs. You can also search online for financial assistance programs that can help with insurance premiums and prescription drug costs. Don't overlook organizations like the HealthWell Foundation and Triage Cancer, which provide educational resources, tools and even funding. Also, talk with members of your health care team—they often know about hospital-specific programs or local resources.

Challenge Your Brain

Doriot Kim

Engaging in new activities can help keep your mind sharp and support intellectual wellness. By continually learning, asking questions and participating in new activities—think knitting, cooking,

painting or dancing—you'll exercise your brain, which may help combat possible brain fog from cancer treatment. Or read a book, watch a documentary, take an online class, play a musical instrument, solve puzzles or more.

Explore Your Spiritual Core

Doriot Kim

Have you ever asked yourself who you are and what your purpose is in life? Cultivating gratitude for what you have and a connection to something greater than yourself—through volunteering, perhaps—is a way to look outward and find balance and fulfillment. Many people with cancer rely on or turn to prayer or other religious practices. Experts advise trying meditation and deep breathing, especially when you feel stressed or anxious. Step outside and tune in to nature, or visit new places and absorb the energy around you.
