

The most important things to remember when you have been diagnosed with cancer:

1. Write your questions down. Don't think that any question is too "dumb" to ask, or that you need to ask the same question again and again. Your doctor and nurse (usually specialists in cancer care or "oncology") want you to be "informed", to understand your disease and your treatment.

2. Always bring a family member or friend with you to your doctor's visits and treatments with the oncology nurse. They can make sure that you remember to ask your questions, and they can help to remember and understand the answers. You can bring a tape recorder to record your doctor or nurse's answers.

3. Take care of yourself. Get enough sleep, and try to organize your life to decrease the stress and demands you face every day. Ask your family and friends for help with your children, with your household duties, and with your work responsibilities.

4. Ask your doctor or nurse for the name of a social worker or counselor who works with cancer patients a lot. It often times helps to talk with a professional person about the family, financial, insurance issues and work related stresses that you are concerned about. They can refer you to resources that can help you, or they can do some counseling with you and your family.

5. Ask your nurse for advice about your diet while you are on treatment. Certain treatments can make eating difficult. There are things you and your family can do to help you with your nutrition.

6. Getting cancer treatments, visiting the doctor, having tests performed, can all be very stressful. There is a lot of waiting, and procedures can be uncomfortable. You can bring a tape recorder or CD player. Listen to music or books on tape that you enjoy. Some

people like to write or draw during these frequent waiting periods. Bring plenty of water, juices and snacks to help you get through these long stretches. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

Some people learn how to do focused relaxation exercises. There are specialists who can teach you how to do self-relaxation exercises so you can tolerate the sometimes-uncomfortable treatments you may experience. Ask the social worker for some recommendations.

7. If you don't like how things are going, if they are not what you expected, or if you don't understand what is being done and why, speak up. Talk with your doctors or nurses. They are very experienced in working with patients with your type of disease and treatment. They want to help you do your very best. They will do their best to answer your questions, to change your medications if necessary, and to make you more comfortable.

8. Finally, be hopeful. You have a great "team" looking out for you. Work WITH them. Take care of yourself. Keep your appointments. Communicate with your doctors and nurses so they understand how you are doing, and what needs to be done to help you do better. Communicate with your family and friends.

You WILL get through this treatment.



Asian American
Cancer Support Network

Generating Resources for Hope

WWW.AACSN.ORG

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Asian American Cancer Support Network (AACSN)

Organization Background

The Asian American Cancer Support Network (AACSN) is a San Francisco Bay Area-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and community resource network serving Asian Americans affected by cancer through non-medical, social supportive programs and creative fundraising.

AACSN was founded in July 2003 to address an important need in the Asian American/Pacific Islander community: Cancer is the leading cause of death among Asian and Pacific Islander women – and the second-leading cause of death among Asian and Pacific Islander men – in this country. Despite this alarming statistic, there are few cancer support groups addressing the specific needs of Asian Americans.

When the founders of AACSN met, they discovered that they both had family members affected by cancer. Each knew first-hand that being diagnosed with cancer changes lives – often a frightening, confusing, depressing, emotional and burdensome experience.

AACSN was created to provide emotional support for those coping with cancer, as well as their families and friends. The organization accomplishes this through a number of different programs and activities:

HATWALK Gala:

AACSN's gala event raises money and promotes awareness of how cancer affects Asian Americans and their families. The event celebrates the value and importance of hats in bringing comfort to those cancer patients who lose their hair through treatment. The first HATWALK in 2003 was successful in bringing together hundreds of supporters, volunteers and sponsors.

Care Basket Program:

For patients newly diagnosed with cancer, AACSN provides packages that include pamphlets introducing the concept of chemotherapy and radiation, comfort care products, a relaxation CD, appointment calendars, and – best of all – hand-crafted hats made by volunteers for patients who may lose their hair during treatments.

“Project Strength” Crane Display:

AACSN volunteers are organizing a fundraising project to build a beautiful origami crane display with paper cranes sponsored through donations. The display will honor the courage of cancer fighters enduring and battling the disease. The making of origami cranes first attracted the world's attention in late-1950s when Sadako Sasaki, a 12-year-old survivor of leukemia caused by the Hiroshima bomb, attempted to fold 1,000 cranes after hearing a legend about the wish-granting powers of such an effort.

Support Workshops and Programs:

AACSN is planning a series of workshops addressing cancer and fatigue, Eastern medicine, relaxation and health exercises such as Qi Gong and Tai Chi, and nutrition.

AACSN is also working with a team of health care professionals on a program to provide cancer patients and their families a forum to discuss their experiences, either in a group setting or matched with a survivor or patient undergoing similar treatment.

The Asian American Cancer Support Network is increasing its presence in the community. We are in the process of reaching out to other local cancer-related organizations to coordinate resources for the community.

For more information on the Asian American Cancer Support Network, please visit www.aacsn.org, email info@aacsn.org, or send your donations to AACSN, P.O. Box 2919, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.