

Support

How support needs can change

You may find that when you are first diagnosed you will need emotional support as well as practical support. Family and friends may be able to help out with everyday tasks, such as cooking meals for you and taking you to appointments. They may also be able to provide a shoulder to cry on. As things progress you may find that your support needs change. You may be able to take on more physical tasks, however you are likely to still need a shoulder to cry on and opportunities to express your concerns.

Sometimes I feel so alone

Unfortunately, most people can only keep up sympathy and support for a limited time. Once the first scare of your cancer diagnosis has passed, family and friends may think they can help you best by encouraging you to “put it behind you”. Of course this is much easier said than done, and with the best will in the world you may find yourself frequently reminded that you have been faced with your own mortality, and your future now feel unpredictable in a way it never did before. Sometimes, even when you are with people you love and care about, you may feel that no one understands what you are going through. Many women feel alone with their fears and concerns.

“Everybody needs help because things you want to say to your family you can’t without getting them upset”.

“I needed some one to unload on, without having to worry about how it might affect them”.

When it's feeling difficult to turn to your loved ones, you may need to turn to people beyond your family for support.

For support, think about turning to:

- Others who also have cancer
- A cancer support group
- People from your spiritual or religious community
- Your health care team

Looking for support

Many hospitals, cancer centers and community health centres offer cancer support groups. Talk to your treatment team if you have difficulty accessing a group near you. You may consider joining an on-line cancer support group or an e-mail chat list. Many women like to use online support groups because they can take part in them any time of the day or night. Online support groups are also good for people who can't travel to attend meetings. However, you need to be mindful that a potential problem with online groups is that you can't be sure that the information is always accurate or suitable for you. Always talk with your treatment team about any cancer information you learn from the Internet.