



# Lifestyle after a cancer diagnose

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## Cancer Diagnosis Impact

The main significant change: the diagnosis itself.

Surroundings (family, job, routine) often remain constant.

Impact on lifestyle is sometimes unnecessary.

Maintaining Functionality is important

Encouragement for patients to continue daily activities.

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# Impact of Cancer Diagnosis on Work



## **Economic strain**

- Acknowledge the difference between high and low- and middle-income countries.
- Need for health policies that support the patient.

## **Increased free time**

- Leads to contemplation.
- Human need for usefulness remains crucial.
- Staying active is very important.

Encourage patients to find activities: hobbies, volunteering, keep yourself busy.  
Maintaining routine is crucial.

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## Impact of the cancer diagnose in nutrition and eating patterns

### Challenges of Defining "Healthy Eating"

- Misinformation and varying opinions on what constitutes a healthy diet.
- Differences in perceptions of healthy eating within experts, scientists, and across countries.

### Concerns in Oncological Nutrition

- Fear of accelerated weight loss in cancer patients.
- Healthy eating often associated with low-calorie foods that may be hard to digest.
- Patients may already have exaggerated weight loss and loss of appetite.

### Habit Changes

- Changing unhealthy eating styles requires habit changes, challenging especially with age.
- Patients may initially adopt healthy habits due to fear but often relax later.

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## **Focus on the Present**

- Emphasize the importance of focusing on the present for a better adherence to healthy eating patterns.
- Short-term benefits of healthy eating are immediate and impactful.
- Highlight that benefits of eating healthy start making an effect today.
- Encourage a focus on immediate well-being rather than long-term outcomes.

## **Focus on making patients stronger today and supporting cancer treatments.**

- Promote a personalized nutrition considering the patient's current state, treatments, and preferences.

## **Avoid extremes in dieting**

- This can lead to overindulgence and guilt.
- Food should not be a cause of stress.

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**Health Benefits of Physical Activity** : Widely recognized, also in cancer patients.

**Exercise is a Habit:** Encourage starting even if not previously exercised, but gradually.

## **Supervised Exercise**

- Must be supervised by professionals familiar with cancer's effects.
- Caution against excessive calorie burning and inappropriate advice.

## **Stress-Free Approach**

- Exercise should not cause stress
- Suggest outdoor walking for mental benefits.

## **Maintaining Stability / Functionality**

- Urges continuation of normal physical routine.
- Avoid Drastic Changes

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# Sleeping Challenges in Cancer Patients

## Two scenarios

- Chronic poor sleepers
- Those who slept well but face insomnia after diagnosis.

Thoughts related to the disease intensify during wakeful hours, leading to heightened anxiety.

Emphasizes the vital importance of quality sleep for overall health.

Encourage seeking help from professionals such as sleeping coaches.

Pay attention to routine changes: patients who change routines may experience sleep disruptions.

## Individualized Solutions

- Acknowledges diverse methods like pills, acupuncture, and homeopathy.
- The patient decides what to do.
- No universal solution; every patient is unique.

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## Impact of a cancer diagnose in family and social relationships

**Acknowledge the support from loved ones and the impact of cancer news on family members, who are most of the time in turn, affected emotionally by the diagnose.**

- Those who care for the patient naturally want to be close and supportive with good intentions.

### **Communication is Key**

- Tailor support to the patient's pace, respecting individual personalities, and understanding varying energy levels.

### **Patients often complaint that “they are being treated differently”**

- Advocate for an open communication with loved ones, discussing patient preferences and finding common ground

**Create awareness about the emotional toll on families and the importance of providing them with adequate support.**

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## Mental Health affection in Cancer Patients

### Respecting Individual Preferences

- Understand that not every patient wants to discuss the diagnosis immediately.
- Emphasize the importance of timing and not forcing discussions.

### Consideration of Previous Psychological State

- Recognize the impact of a patient's pre-diagnosis psychological health on therapy.
- Highlight the persistence of personality, life, and previous issues after a diagnosis.
- Consider the different Responses to Stress (Acknowledges gender differences in how men and women respond to stress).

### Clarify the distinction between dealing with cancer and dealing with death

- This two, require different psychological approaches

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## **Focus on the Present**

- Encourage focusing on the present, as the past is a memory, and the future is an idea.
- Advise exploring present stressors beyond the disease and try to work on that.
- Note that most patients want things to return to normal.
- Desires of patients mostly include continuing routines, working part-time, caring for family, and more.

## **Role of Religion and spirituality**

### **Advice for Seeking Support**

- Find a good psychologist, especially health or oncological psychologists.

## **Stress the importance of maintaining functionality**

### **Surround oneself with positive influences.**

- Differentiating Supportive and Draining Influences
- Support groups? Not for everyone, but an excellent option for some.
- Advises staying close to "vitamin people" with positive vibes.
- Cautions against "anchor people" who unintentionally drain energy, even with good intentions.

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## REFLECTIONS

Avoiding oversimplification of lifestyle concepts and emphasize the importance of personalized attention.

A cancer diagnosis doesn't automatically lead to healthier habits, and changing habits often takes time and practice.

To focus on the present is the key to success in lifestyle changes.

I Advise against extremes in nutrition, and in exercise, promoting healthy eating, and adequate moving.

It is extremely important to keep “functionality” on a patient

Despite initial thoughts of lifestyle changes, cancer patients tend express the desire for things to return to their pre-diagnosis state.

It is necessary to acknowledge the vital role of an open communication and support from family and friends throughout the journey, contemplating their good intentions while respecting the patient's pace and preferences.

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Each patient has a unique personality, life, and pre-diagnosis state that should be considered in treatment plans.

Contemplate the importance of differentiating between the challenges of dealing with cancer and the broader concept of death, emphasizing tailored mental health approaches for each.

I make a call for everyone involved in the healthcare professions, to learn from the Practice, and listen to the patients.

Reflect on the practical experience with patients, noting that theory often falls short, and underscores the responsibility of professionals to be creative in meeting the real needs of the patient.

Ask the patient, they will tell you what they need.

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