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Printed March 6, 2015 from <http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/young-adults/being-young-adult-cancer/things-know>

Things to Know [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 02/2012

Key Messages:

- It is important to find a doctor who treats your type of cancer and can offer you the best options.
- Finding accurate information about your cancer diagnosis often helps to ease some of the anxiety and stress associated with it.
- You may find it helpful use organizational tools to keep track of information.
- Coping with cancer can be difficult; identify sources of support to help you during and after treatment.

Once you've been diagnosed with cancer, there is a lot to figure out. This includes finding a doctor, learning about your diagnosis, organizing information, and finding support.

Finding an oncologist

An oncologist is a doctor who specializes in treating people with cancer. Oncologists practice in different settings, such as university hospitals, [cancer centers](#) [3], community hospitals, and local offices. It is important to find a doctor who has treated other people with your type of cancer and who can provide you with the best available treatment. Doctors at cancer centers often have more experience treating young adults with cancer. In addition, cancer centers often offer [clinical trials](#) [4] (research studies involving people) and have a greater availability of support services (such as counseling or nutritional assistance) than other health care settings.

To find an oncologist, talk with your primary care or family doctor, your health insurance company, or your local hospital. Or [find an oncologist](#) [5] who is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). ASCO is the world's leading professional organization representing doctors of all oncology subspecialties who care for people with cancer. In addition, oncologists may be found through the [American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology](#) [6] and the [Children's Oncology Group](#) [7].

Learning the facts

Many people with cancer say that learning about cancer and knowing what to expect during

treatment helps them feel more in control and less anxious. Here are some ways to find cancer information:

Learn about your treatment plan. Your oncologist will work with you to develop a treatment plan, including what types of treatment you will have and how long treatment may last. Ask the doctor or nurse what to expect before treatment, how to prepare for treatment, and whether they have any suggestions on how to care for yourself during treatment.

Speak up during appointments. These are your opportunities to talk with the doctors and nurses [8], ask questions, and tell them how you are feeling.

Talk with other people living with cancer. Get in touch with support groups [9] of young adults who are going through treatment or have recovered from the same type of cancer that you have.

Use the Internet. There are many websites about cancer [10], including some written just for young adults. Keep in mind that not everything you read on the Internet is reliable, factual, or current, especially if the information comes from other patients. Ask your doctor or nurse to recommend some good websites, and learn more about how to evaluate cancer information on the Internet [11].

Go to a public library. Ask a librarian to help you find information about your type of cancer.

There is a lot of information available about cancer, so don't feel like you have to read everything right away. If you find information that's different from what you have been told by your doctor, ask your doctor or nurse to explain it.

Staying organized

As a person diagnosed with cancer, you may be gathering cancer information, making appointments, getting test results, and learning about treatment options. One way to avoid feeling overwhelmed is to become organized. Consider these tips:

- Keep a record of your appointments, names, and phone numbers of your health care team members, and appointment notes with these medical forms [12].
- Ask for a copy of your test results, and keep them for future reference.
- Get a record of your cancer treatment with a treatment plan and summary [13]. Treatment summary forms provide a convenient way to store basic information about your medical history for your records and for doctors who will care for you in the future.
- Keep all of the information in one place, such as a binder or folder.

Learn more about how to organize your cancer care [14].

Asking for help

Coping with cancer is often difficult. Turn to your parents, friends, and other young adults with cancer to get support. In addition, many people find that they benefit from talking with a therapist or counselor [15] trained in helping people with cancer. You may also want to join a support group or find an organization [16] that may provide you additional information, services, and support.

Learn more about finding help and support [17].

More Information

When the Doctor Says Cancer [18]

Cancer in Young Adults [19]

Additional Resources

LIVESTRONG: How to Organize Important Records [20]

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship: The Cancer Survival Toolbox [21]

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/young-adults/being-young-adult-cancer/things-know>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3]

<http://www.cancer.net/patient/Publications+and+Resources/Support+and+Resource+Links/General+Cancer+Organizations+and>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Clinical+Trials>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Newly+Diagnosed/Find+an+Oncologist>

[6] <http://www.aspho.org/>

[7] <http://www.curesearch.org/>

[8] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Young+Adults/Being+a+Young+Adult+With+Cancer/Talking+With+the+Doctors+and+Nurses/T>

[9]

<http://www.cancer.net/patient/Publications+and+Resources/Support+and+Resource+Links/General+Cancer+Organizations+and>

[10] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Young+Adults/Resources+for+Young+Adults>

[11]

<http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Quality+of+Life/Evaluating+Cancer+Information+>

[12]

<http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Newly+Diagnosed/Managing+Your+Care/Medical+Forms/Medical+Forms>

[13] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Survivorship/ASCO+Cancer+Treatment+Summaries>

[14]

<http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Newly+Diagnosed/Managing+Your+Care/Organizing+Your+Cancer+Care>

[15]

<http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Quality+of+Life/How+to+Find+a+Counselor>

[16] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Publications+and+Resources/Support+and+Resource+Links/Cancer-Specific+Resources>

[17] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Young+Adults/Being+a+Young+Adult+With+Cancer/Finding+Help+and+Support/Finding+Help>

[18] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Newly+Diagnosed/When+the+Doctor+Says+Cancer/When+the+Doctor+Says+>

[19] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Young+Adults>

[20] <http://www.livestrong.org/Get-Help/Learn-About-Cancer/Cancer-Support-Topics/Practical-Effects-of-Cancer/How-to-Organize-Important-Records>

[21] <http://www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox/>