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· Amber Bauer, ASCO staff

[New Strategies to Improve Quality of Life for Patients, Survivors, and Caregivers From the 2014 ASCO Annual Meeting](#) [1]

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Today the [2014 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology](#) [2] kicked off in Chicago, IL with research that looked at identifying new strategies for managing the short- and long-term side effects of cancer treatment and improving quality of life for people with cancer and their caregivers.

"We've made incredible strides in cancer treatment, and more cancer survivors are alive today than ever before," said Patricia Ganz, MD, FASCO, a member of ASCO's Cancer Communications Committee and Director of Cancer Prevention and Control Research at the University of

California's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center in Los Angeles. "But oncology isn't just about helping people live longer—we need to ensure that patients have the best quality of life possible at every stage of their cancer journey, from active treatment through survivorship."

In this podcast, Dr. Ganz discusses the results of five important studies that were announced at the meeting earlier today.

Highlights from these studies include:

[Taking a Hormone-Suppressing Drug During Chemotherapy Helps Preserve Fertility for Women with Hormone Receptor-Negative Breast Cancer \[3\]](#). Results from this phase III clinical trial show that goserelin (Zoladex) dramatically reduces the risk of [premature ovarian failure](#) [4], also called early menopause, caused by chemotherapy for early-stage, hormone receptor-negative breast cancer. Women taking goserelin were more likely to become pregnant and deliver a healthy baby after cancer treatment.

[Taking Zoledronic Acid Less Often After the First Year of Treatment Is Safe for Women with Metastatic Breast Cancer \[5\]](#). After a year of monthly treatments, women taking zoledronic acid (Zometa) for [breast cancer](#) [6] that has spread to the bone can safely scale back to a once-every-three-months schedule. According to this study, less frequent treatment appeared to be as effective in reducing complications from bone metastases as monthly dosing and may decrease the risk of certain rare, but serious side effects of zoledronic acid.

[Certain People with HPV-Positive Head and Neck Cancer May Benefit From a Lower Dose of Radiation Therapy \[7\]](#). This phase II study suggests that lower-dose radiation therapy is an effective treatment option for some people who have been diagnosed with [oropharyngeal cancer](#) [8] caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). Lowering the dose of radiation therapy can improve quality of life by decreasing the risk of serious long-term side effects.

[Caregivers who Receive Palliative Care Support Immediately After an Advanced Cancer Diagnosis Have a Better Quality of Life \[9\]](#). Participating in a phone-based [palliative care](#) [10] support program after an [advanced cancer](#) [11] diagnosis helps caregivers by reducing depression, decreasing the burden of caregiving, and improving quality of life. The results suggest that the earlier palliative care services are introduced to caregivers, the better they will be able to cope with the caregiving experience.

[Stopping the Use of Cholesterol-Lowering Drugs Near the End of Life Improves Quality of Life \[12\]](#). For patients with a life-limiting illness like cancer, stopping cholesterol-lowering drugs during the last year of life improves quality of life and does not decrease survival. People who stopped taking these drugs also tended to have fewer symptoms and took fewer medications overall.

You can stay up-to-date on all of the news and advances that will be announced this weekend with daily [research summaries](#) [13] or real-time [social media updates](#) [14].

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