



A CANCERHOME PUBLICATION, PROVIDING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON HEALING

REDUCING STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is upon us. All the cooking, and the shopping and the parties. Families and friends to see. So many details! It can be a wonderful time of year, but also one, regardless of how much we anticipate and enjoy the festivities, which can cause stress, especially for the cancer patient. The days between Thanksgiving and New Year's don't have to be pressure-filled, though. In fact, by putting into action some of the following strategies, cancer patients can alleviate some of the tension and still keep the door open for celebrating during the season.

Stress and fatigue are taxing and counterproductive to healing. Evaluate your to do list. Where possible, eliminate things that are stressful, or that leave you without adequate time to rest. Do you really have to reorganize the ornaments this year? Perhaps waiting until treatment is over before tackling all those boxes in the basement will lighten the load and give you extra time to relax.

Prioritizing is key with holiday festivities, especially when there are multiple doctor's appointments to keep, along with work and family responsibilities. To minimize stress and fatigue, choose what's important where holiday events and details are concerned and forget the rest. It's really okay NOT to do everything. Even more okay? Say no! Take care of yourself and save your energy for the events and activities that matter the most to you.

Also, don't attend events that are draining. Choose gatherings that are uplifting and energizing, and remember to make sure members of your support network attend events with you. It's also helpful to set limits. Decide how long you'll stay at a particular party; moreover, if you're at a party and beginning to feel weary, listen to your body and head home, rather than wearing yourself out.

Consider your family's traditions. Which ones are the most meaningful, the most stressful or the most fatiguing? Again, prioritize and keep the ones that matter most - perhaps the top three - and let the rest go this year. If you've always been the host for a particular family or friend gathering, consider starting a new tradition and change up the routine by inviting someone else to take the reins, or by moving the party to a different location.

Holidays can add extra financial burdens to families. As a strategy to reduce stress, and to experiment with a new tradition, consider drawing names with families for gift giving, or consider giving cards, or pooling money and making a family contribution to a charity. Some families find that trying something new invigorates the holidays not only to the cancer patient, but the rest of the family, as well.

If gift giving is your thing, consider creative ways to make shopping less tiresome. Catalogs and online shopping make gift purchasing much easier, leaving you with time to rest and keep clear of crowded shopping areas.

If you find you have taken on too much over the holidays, or begin to feel stressed and in need of additional support, support group meetings at our center are a great way to share your challenges and learn new ideas from others facing similar struggles. Sometimes hearing from another cancer patient who shares the same common ground can give you a fresh approach to overcoming challenges.

And finally, remember that your patient guide is a great resource and can work with you and your family members to help develop an action plan to help make this holiday season right for you.



RECIPE CORNER
QUICK CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS



Try this yummy soup from *Eating Well Through Cancer*, by Holly Clegg, for an easy, nutritious meal, perfect now that the weather is cooler. The flour tortillas are a great trick to use for no-trouble dumplings and will enhance the chicken soup. This recipe makes 8 to 10 servings. (Go to www.hollyclegg.com for more information about this cookbook and author).

Ingredients

- 5 1/4 cups canned fat-free chicken broth
- 5 1/4 cups water
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into pieces
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 10 (6-inch) flour tortillas

Directions

Pour the chicken broth and water into a large pot. Add the chicken pieces, carrots and salt and pepper to taste. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and continue to cook for 25 minutes, or until chicken is done and carrots are tender. Cut the tortillas into small wedges. Add the cut up tortillas to the pot and stir. Continue to cook until the tortillas are tender, about 5 minutes. If you need more liquid in pot, add more broth or water.

Nutritional information per serving:

Calories 178 Protein (g) 20, Carbohydrate (g) 15, Fat (g) 4, Calories from fat (%) 20, Saturated Fat (g) 0, Dietary Fiber (g) 0, Cholesterol (mg) 40, Sodium (mg) 598, Diabetic Exchanges: 2 very lean meat, 1 starch

PATIENT GUIDE'S CORNER

Not long ago, I sat with a patient, Mrs. W., in the waiting room. Holding her jaw, she seemed to be in much pain from a bad tooth. Her doctor recommended that she have the tooth pulled, but since she was without dental insurance, Mrs. W. had not had the procedure. I started gathering information on dental programs in the community and found a resource called Gainesville Community Ministry. Through this organization, I was connected with a dentist who agreed to see my patient for \$110, which included x-rays and the initial consult. To my surprise he agreed to pull her tooth at no charge, along with 2 others. After submitting a request, the CCCNF foundation assisted her with funding for the \$110. Mrs. W. was in tears, overwhelmed, and could not thank us enough for the help.

I always check on Mrs. W. when she is here at the center and recently, Brittany, a radiation therapist at CCCNF in Gainesville, came to tell me that she was asking for me. She had learned from her doctor that her disease is terminal and she has 6 months to a year to live. She was concerned about burdening her daughter financially with her final expenses when she passes.

Through a friend who owns a funeral home here in town, I was connected with a resource in the community who will provide cremation at no cost to the patient. I shared this information with Mrs. W. and her daughter when they were back at the center for treatment, and when we finished talking, as I was walking out, she gave me the biggest hug, and whispered, "You don't know what a burden you have taken off of me!"

So while it is a sad situation, I believe in my heart that the patient can rest better knowing that there is someone here who is working hand and hand with her and her daughter to make sure that things will be taken care of.

--Tina Lloyd

Healthy Connections is a publication of Community Cancer Center of North Florida and is published for the general public to disseminate health-related information. This information is not to be used for diagnosing or prescribing. Please consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment, diet plan or exercise regimen implied in this publication.

DECEMBER 2011

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|-----------------|---|--|---|---|---|----------------------|
| | | | | 1 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM - 3PM | 2 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM - 3PM | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM - 3PM SUPPORT GROUP @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 11AM - 1PM | 9 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM - 3PM | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 HOLIDAY ART THERAPY GROUP @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM - 1PM | 15 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM - 3PM HOLIDAY ART THERAPY GROUP @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 11AM - 1PM | 16 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM - 3PM | 17 |
| 18 | 19 LOOK GOOD, FEEL BETTER @ HOPE LODGE, GAINESVILLE 1PM (EVERY 3RD MON) | 20 SUPPORT GROUP @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 5:30PM (EVERY 3RD TUES) | 21 | 22 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM - 3PM | 23 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM - 3PM | 24 CHRISTMAS EVE |
| 25 CHRISTMAS | 26 CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY | 27 | 28 | 29 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM - 3PM | 30 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM - 3PM | 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE |

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