

BASIC DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS CANCER

DO

- Take your cues from the person with cancer. Respect the person's need to share or their need for privacy.
- Respect their decisions about how their cancer will be treated, even if you disagree.
- Include the person in usual projects, plans, and social events. Let them be the one to tell you if the commitment is too much to manage.
- Listen without always feeling that you have to respond. Sometimes a caring listener is what the person needs the most. Know that it's okay to say "I don't know what to say."
- Expect the person with cancer to have good days and bad days, emotionally and physically.
- Keep your relationship as normal and balanced as possible. While greater patience and compassion are called for during times like these, your loved one should continue to respect your feelings, as you respect theirs.



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DON'T

- Offer advice they don't ask for or be judgmental.
- Feel you must put up with serious displays of temper or mood swings. You shouldn't accept disruptive or abusive behavior just because someone is ill. Take things too personally. It's normal for the person with cancer to be quieter than usual, to need time alone, and to be angry.
- Be afraid to talk about the illness.
- Always feel you have to talk about cancer. Your loved one may enjoy conversations that don't involve the illness.
- Be afraid to hug or touch your loved one if that was part of your relationship before the illness.
- Tell your loved one, "I can imagine how you must feel," because you really can't.
- Be around your loved one with cancer if you are sick, feel you might be getting sick, or have a fever or any other signs of infections.