

# THE CANCER CHANNEL

One year.  
Two cancers.  
Three miracles.

Sarah E. McDonald



## 10 THINGS TO DO FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE WHO HAS RECEIVED A CANCER DIAGNOSIS

- 1. Show up.** Check in. Call / write / text / show up in person. What your loved one needs most right now is to know she is loved and has supporters surrounding her. In the early days of a cancer diagnosis, I try to text every other day to simply check in and let her know I am thinking of her.
- 2. Ask questions** to show concern and caring, but don't push if your loved one is uncomfortable or unable to give you answers. Unfortunately for everyone, there are a ton of unanswered questions especially when someone is first diagnosed and it can be overwhelming when well-meaning friends and family press the patient with critical or constant questions.
- 3. Talk about subjects other than cancer.** Don't let cancer be the elephant in the room that no one will talk about, but if your loved ones clearly sounds exhausted from talking about cancer all the time, then talk about something else. Give her a break from the cancer channel that plays "all cancer all the time." The important thing is that you're there and listening to your loved one.
- 4. Don't offer advice** (on treatment or diet or on how you think they should be "doing cancer") unless your opinion is asked for. It is her cancer and her decision(s).
- 5. Offer to drive to (and join) appointments.** Driving to and from appointments and treatments can be tiring – especially as treatments progress. It can be FUN to have a friend join so you could chat along the way. It is also super helpful to have another person join conversations with the doctors as two sets of ears always hear more than one. As a support person, you can take notes for your loved one to ensure s/he will retain what was said.

## 10 THINGS TO DO FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE WHO HAS RECEIVED A CANCER DIAGNOSIS

©2022 Sarah E. McDonald TheCancerChannelBook.com

**6. Offer to run an errand** for your loved one. Grocery shopping, kid activity shuttling, and other errands that used to be normal activities for the cancer patient might now be challenging due to exhaustion or nausea or even discomfort being around crowds of people. If you can lessen some of that burden for your loved one (especially during treatment weeks) that is something that's super appreciated. This can be a onetime offer (yay!) or if you can do it regularly (double yay!!), even better.

**7. Offer to do a chore** for your loved one. Mowing the lawn, cleaning the house, walking the dog, cooking the meals - really anything requiring physical effort - can simply be too much for someone who is exhausted or nauseated or in pain from her treatments. Offer to take one of those chores off her list (once or ongoing) when you can. Ask when a convenient time would be to do the chore and then show up and do it.

**8. Buy your loved one something cozy and/or thoughtful.** This gift does not need to be something big or extravagant. This is the time to focus on smaller, more thoughtful, more frequent gifts - like bringing over a pint of her favorite ice cream or buying some silly, cozy socks for her to wear to chemo. Small thoughtful gifts are a lovely way to show the cancer patient that you have been thinking of them - that you haven't dropped your relationship simply because they have cancer.

**9. Invite / Include your loved one in regularly scheduled social activities.** It is very easy for cancer patients to become isolated during their cancer treatment time. They are spending a great deal of time meeting with doctors, undergoing treatments, and not running into the friends / family / co-workers they would normally be interacting with. It can be lonely. Ensuring they are invited and feel included in normal social activities can be tremendous to boost their mood and make them feel included and loved.

**10. Offer to help their caregiver.** If your loved one already has a caregiver identified who is helping them navigate their cancer treatment - terrific. Offer to help the caregiver (all of the above suggestions work for caregivers, by the way).

**11. BONUS: Show up more than you think you need to.** Ok - I said it was 10 recommendations, but I'm ending this list with a repeat of the first recommendation because it really IS the most important one. Your loved one simply needs you to show up - again and again. Call. Write. Text. Email. Drop by. (With ice cream.)