

## Creative Care

Cancer patients, their families and their caregivers need ministry that will boost their spirits, as well as meet physical needs. In this section, you will find some suggestions for how to meet those needs. These are just a starting point. Let your creative juices flow and brainstorm new ideas for how to show love and compassion in a practical way to those that are dealing with cancer.

### Self-Image

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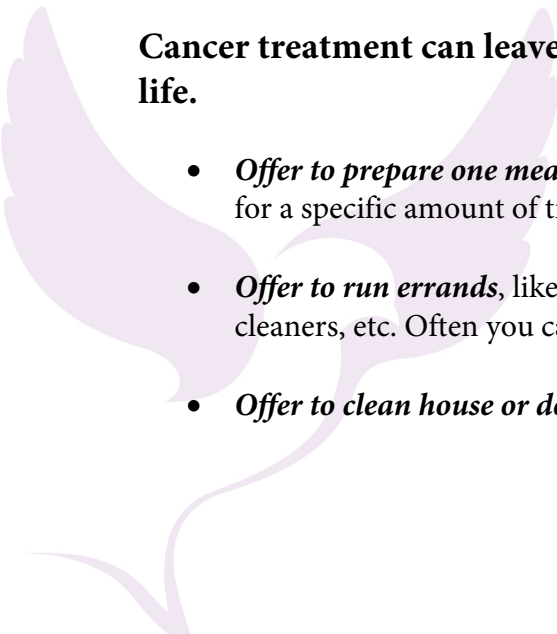
**Cancer treatment often affects self-image.**

- ***Loss of hair*** – Buy a fun hat for a cancer patient or shave your own head to show support. Buy silly bows for both your heads. Buy them a wig before they lose their hair, or give them the money to pick out their own.
- ***Loss of a body part*** – Talk to them about getting involved in a support group or talking to a support service.
- ***Get a gift certificate*** at a spa for a massage or facial – something special.

### Daily Life

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**Cancer treatment can leave a person feeling overwhelmed with the daily tasks of life.**

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- ***Offer to prepare one meal a week*** for the cancer patient and his or her immediate family for a specific amount of time during treatment.
  - ***Offer to run errands***, like taking pets to the vet, grocery shopping, taking clothes to the cleaners, etc. Often you can just add their errand onto your own errand list.
  - ***Offer to clean house or do yard work*** once a week during treatment.

- ***Offer to babysit the kids*** once or twice a month, so the parents can spend time together as a couple.
- ***Create a special date for the cancer patient*** and his or her spouse at a bed-and-breakfast or hotel.
- ***Offer to learn a craft or new skill*** with the person battling cancer, or teach him or her one. It is fun, keeps the mind occupied with something positive and often creates a fun memory as you learn something new together.
- ***Offer to drive when you are going out together***; it is a nice, simple, delightful courtesy.
- ***Offer to plant and tend a victory garden with the cancer patient.***  
Whether it is flowers or vegetables, growing something beautiful or good for you can take your mind off heavy thoughts and give you something to look forward to in the future.

## Encouragement

**Cancer treatment can leave a person depressed or wondering whether the fight is worth it.**

- ***Make a daily phone call*** just to chat.
- ***Write a letter of encouragement*** that can be read over and over.
- ***Be a secret pal*** sending encouraging cards every few days from lots of different places, so the cancer patient is kept guessing who it is. Get creative in getting those different postmarks – like sending a card inside another envelope to a relative or friend in another city and then having them mail the already addressed and stamped card back to your cancer-fighting friend.
- ***Remind the cancer patient how many people love him or her*** and the many concrete ways his or her life makes a difference in the lives of others.
- ***Help the person start a journal***, or write or record what he or she is feeling and experiencing that might be helpful to someone else going through cancer.
- ***Give flowers...*** maybe one a day... or make a hanging basket. They bring a smile.
- ***Be yourself.*** If you were a good friend before cancer, do not change. Be the same kind of friend during and after cancer. That brings great normalcy. If you are generally silly, be

silly. If you are normally thoughtful, be so. Conversely, do not be afraid to do something out of the ordinary for a change.

- ***Make the cancer patient laugh.*** There is nothing like a good laugh to help you remember that life is worth living. Be sure the humor is not demeaning in any way.
- ***Send a basket of gifts, one to be opened each day of a hospital stay.*** That way, you can give surprises throughout the course of treatment, reminding the cancer patient that there is life outside the hospital and people who love him or her. Snacks, beauty products, a candle, a picture frame... little things that show you care.
- ***Discuss future plans/return to work/vacation/recreational activities*** with the person. Do not dwell on the cancer and treatment but on what he or she plans on doing when the treatment is over. That is always a great place to put the mind and thoughts!

## **Finances**

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**Cancer treatment is usually very expensive and not always covered by insurance.**

- ***Coordinate a fundraiser*** to help with the expenses of treatment. Get the neighbors, churches or groups together that might know the cancer patient, or a family member, then hold a garage sale, bake sale, car wash, etc. and donate all the money toward the expenses.
- ***Think of things you can cut out of your life*** for a while (like renting movies, going out to eat, buying extra clothes, etc.) and give the money you normally spend on these things to the cancer fighter to help with expenses.
- ***Ask God if there is some sacrifice*** you can make that would be a special blessing, financial or otherwise, to the one fighting cancer.

