Everything how Meed to how

Finding

myths debunked

balance in the workplace

The cost of cancer: Are you insured!

You have cancer. You also have kids. How to break the news

Survivors share advice on how to stay positive

Eat well, feel good: How to refuel your body

Screening: How, what & when

8 things a cancer patient wants to hear

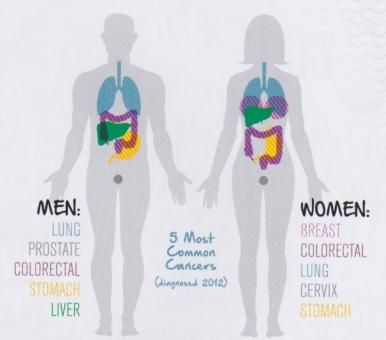
> Cancer The lowdown



Cancer: The Lowdown

What is cancer?

It's a group of diseases characterised by abnormal cell growth. There are more than 100 types of cancer, which, if left untreated, can lead to death. Globally nearly one in six deaths is due to cancer. Worldwide, the number of new cancer cases is expected to rise by about 70% over the next two decades.





Finding the Words

When a friend or loved one has cancer, it's hard to know what to say. Patients and survivors tell us what they wanted to hear.

It depends on the person, but don't be afraid to ask questions. Some people need to talk: "Tell me about it?" "How does it feel?" "What is it like having no hair?" - Carolyn Soemarjono

"I would like to be with you. but I know you will want your private moments. Let me know if you need me around, anytime, anywhere. Meanwhile, fight it squarely and beat it flat. You are strong, I know you can!" - Serene Ong Siew Hong

"I know someone who had a similar diagnosis. She was devastated initially but survived the most painful moments. She emerged a totally transformed, stronger, joyful person. If you would like to talk to her, let me know." - Serene Ong Siew Hona

What you need to hear from triends and loved onessis: "I will always be there for you. Patricia Chew



a coffee." Don't just say Let me know if there's

Acknowledge the beauty of the individual. Tell them they are courageous, that you know they'll get Katrina Bantug

Tell them "I will be praying for you" then make sure that you actually

It's good to hear my someone to look at things differently, or seek treatment. - Patricia Chew





Don't Say!



"Have you recovered?" As a cancer patient, we will only say we are in remission and not recovered.

- Patricia Chew



"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." It doesn't. It might not kill you but it certainly makes you weaker.

"It's because you were too stressed." Don't try to rationalise it or assign blame. It doesn't help.

- Katrina Bantug



"I totally understand what you are going through. My sister-inlaw had the same cancer as you and she passed on years ago despite receiving all the prescribed treatment. You must take good care."

"You look really pale and weak. You OK? You need help?"

"You will be fine, everything will be over soon ..."

- Serene Ong Siew Hona

It seems like every other day there is new research or advice about things that cause cancer, or what you can do to avoid it. We ask the experts at Parkway Cancer Centre to clear things up.

#1Processed
meats cause
colorectal cancer

FACT: Consumption of processed meat (bacon, sausages, cured meats and so on) does increase the risk of colorectal cancer

"While the risk is small, it is a risk that increases with the amount of meat consumed. In general, we should limit consumption of red meat and avoid consuming processed meat."

- Dr Zee Ying Kiat, Senior Consultant (Medical Oncology)

#2Deodorants cause breast

FACT: Deodorants do not cause breast cancer

"There is no convincing evidence that deodorants can cause breast cancer. This myth started because people believed that cancer-causing substances in deodorants could be absorbed through razor nicks from underarm shaving, which is untrue."

- Dr Khoo Kei Siong, Deputy Medical Director and Senior Consultant (Medical Oncology) #3Non-smokers
Will not get
lung cancer

FACT: Anyone can develop lung cancer

"Half of lung cancer cases in Singapore happened to people who have never smoked. While anyone can develop lung cancer, current and former smokers are at higher risk."

- Dr Lim Hong Liang, Senior Consultant (Medical Oncology)

#4 Cooking food in a microwave causes cancer



FACT: Microwaved food is not more likely to cause cancer

"The radiation given off by a microwave is too low to produce cancer cells. Microwave ovens do not make any changes to food that are not made in any other cooking method. Food does not become radioactive."

- Dr See Hui Ti, Senior Consultant (Medical Oncology)

#5Too much alcohol can cause head and neck cancers

FACT: Excessive alcohol is a major risk factor for certain head and neck cancers, like those of the oral cavity, throat and voice box

"Drinking 50 grams or more of alcohol per day (that's about three-and-a-half drinks per day) increases the risk of developing these cancers by at least two to three times compared to non-drinkers. The risks get substantially higher among those who also use tobacco."

- Dr Ang Peng Tiam, Medical Director and Senior Consultant (Medical Oncology)



Fuel Up

Chemo and other cancer treatments take a major toll on your body, and eating right is more important than ever. Parkway Cancer Centre's Senior Dietician GERARD WONG gives some advice on how to maximise your diet.

here's a famous Hippocrates quote, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food". Cancer is a complex disease, and while no superfood will eradicate it, a varied, balanced and nutrient-dense diet, together with an active lifestyle, is the best way to tackle it.

STAY ACTIVE

While not specifically diet-related, it's important to maintain a healthy weight and body mass index (BMI) as well as being physically active most days of the week.

CUT DOWN ON SUGAR

While the idea that "sugar feeds cancer" may be a myth, sweets, lollies, cakes and sugarsweetened beverages are just empty calories with no nutritional value.



STAY OFF THE BOOZE

There is no safe level of alcohol consumption, but if you have to drink, stick to alcohol recommendations of no more than two standard drinks per day for men, and no more than one standard drink a day for women.

BOOST YOUR FIBRE

There is a clear correlation between fibre intake and colorectal cancer. Increase your fibre intake by opting for brown rice, multi-grain bread and wholegrain cereals together with more fruits and vegetables.

CHOOSE LEAN PROTEIN

Your body needs protein but opt for wholesome sources like chicken, fish or tofu. Keep consumption of red meat to less than 500g per week with very little (if any) processed meats.

AVOID SALTY FOODS

Too much salt can damage the stomach lining and has been linked with gastric cancer, so limit your intake of salt-preserved, salted or very salty foods.

GET YOUR FIVE-A-DAY

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, especially low-starch veg. Lycopene-rich foods such as tomato, guava, papaya and asparagus have been associated with preventing prostate, lung and breast cancer.

GOOD OILS

Eat oily fish a couple of times a week. Salmon, mackerel, cod and sardines are all low in saturated fat but high in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Other good oil sources include walnuts, olive oil and chia seeds.

Breast cancer

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Early Detection

Cancer is the leading cause of mortality in Singapore. In 2014, it accounted for 29.4 percent of the total number of deaths*, many of which might have been avoided.

Regular screening means early detection, which in turn means a better chance of successful treatment. This is especially true when it comes to three of the most common types of cancer: breast, cervical and colorectal. Being aware of your own body is also key; you know yourself better than anyone. "If you have persistent symptoms, don't ignore them – get them checked," says Dr Ang Peng Tiam, Medical Director and Senior Consultant at Parkway Cancer Centre. "Cancer is not a death sentence. There is a high chance of curing cancer if it's diagnosed early."

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Change in bowel or bladder habits

A sore that does not heal

Unusual bleeding or discharge

T Thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere

Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing

Obvious change in a wart or mole

N Nagging cough or hoarseness

SCREENING:

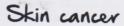
Mammogram and selfexamination

Breast self-examination consists of a woman regularly examining her own breasts for signs of change including lumps, distortion and swelling. Mammography is a specialised type of medical imaging that uses a low-dose x-ray to look inside the breasts. As well as being used to diagnose women experiencing symptoms (such as lumps or nipple discharge), mammograms can detect changes in the breast up to two years before a patient or doctor can feel them

WHO SHOULD DO IT?

39 years and below: Monthly breast self-examination.
40 to 49 years: Monthly breast self-examination, annual mammogram.
50 years and above: Monthly breast self-examination, mammogram every two years.







Colorectal cancer



Cervical cancer

SCREENING:

Self-examination and visual check by a doctor or dermatologist

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in Caucasian populations and the sixth most common cancer amongst both men and women in Singapore. A regular head-to-toe self-examination is a good way to identify any unusual looking moles. If you spot anything suspicious, a doctor or dermatologist can perform a detailed visual check. If they find anything out of the ordinary, they can take a sample to perform a biopsy.

WHO SHOULD DO IT?

Men and women

The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends everyone do a monthly self-examination, following up on any concerns with a doctor. Those at high risk of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, may wish to make an annual appointment to get their skin checked.

SCREENING:

Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) and colonoscopy

The FIT tests for traces of blood in the stool, which can be an early sign of cancer. If any abnormalities are found, it will likely be followed up with a colonoscopy. Almost all colorectal cancers develop from benign growths called polyps which can be located and removed during a colonoscopy. This involves a colonoscope (a thin, tube-like instrument) being inserted through the rectum and into the colon allowing doctors to look for signs of cancer.

WHO SHOULD DO IT?

Men and women

50 years and above: FIT and a colonoscopy every 10 years.

Those with higher risk of colorectal cancer should start screening earlier and get a colonoscopy once every three years.

SCREENING:

Pap smear test

This test involves collecting a sample of cells from a woman's cervix (the end of the uterus that extends into the vagina) during a routine pelvic exam. A substance called 'Papanicolau stain' is added to the cells, which are then examined under a microscope to identify

WHO SHOULD DO IT?

Sexually active women

25 years and above: Pap smear test every three years.



Why does good insurance matter?

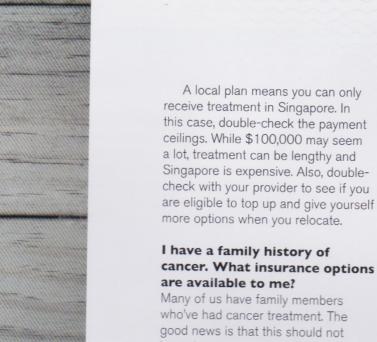
As an expat, being far from your loved ones at the time of diagnosis can heighten an already traumatic life event. The treatment process needs to be as seamless and as comfortable as possible. A good insurance broker works with the best global healthcare providers to make sure you receive the highest quality of treatment in the least stressful way.

I've been diagnosed with cancer; what will my insurance cover?

Almost all comprehensive global packages have excellent cancer care packages built into them. This basically means that all

cancer treatment received as an inpatient, day patient or outpatient is fully covered. This includes oncologist fees, surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy from the point of diagnosis. You can also take a global plan with you when you relocate from Singapore. This is terrific as you won't have to start from scratch with a new insurance provider.

Some of these global comprehensive plans also allow for some treatment in your home country. There is a limited window in which you can do this, but it can be an option and may help significantly with regards to the emotional support that you and your family will no doubt need.



Many of us have family members who've had cancer treatment. The good news is that this should not impact you or your individual policy. For example, if you remain free of the Big C, but your mum has had stomach cancer, this is unlikely to affect your own cover. On some plans, your individual cover will be affected if and when you receive cancer treatment yourself. If you have received treatment in the past, you will not be covered when getting a new policy. This is another benefit of comprehensive global coverage as you can stay on the same plan whether

you go home or move elsewhere for work.

How much will it cost?

This varies from person to person. As a guide, a healthy 30-year-old can get a global comprehensive annual plan with full coverage for all cancer-related treatment from roughly \$4,500 to \$5,000 per person.

expatinsurance.com.sg

While medical treatment is a significant factor, there are also other costs to consider:

1. Loss of income

You may need to cut back your hours at work, or even stop entirely depending on your individual circumstances.

2. Physical rehabilitation

Physical therapy plays an important role in recovery but it can take months to get back to a level of fitness that you are happy with.

3. Transportation

Trips to the hospital quickly add up and side effects like fatigue and nausea will likely mean taxis rather than public transport.

4. Family and living expenses

Treatment will leave you less active at home with possible extra costs incurred for cleaning or childcare, for example

5. At-home care

Some situations may necessitate specialised home care to support your medical treatment

6. Legal, financial and social issues

This includes things like writing a will, financial or emotional counselling, and learning about your employment rights.



Mummy is Sick

Everyone reacts to diagnosis in their own unique way, but whether it's sooner or later, you'll need to share the news with your loved ones.

hile it's natural to want to protect your children, when it comes to cancer, honesty is the best policy. JAIME YEO, Counsellor at Parkway Cancer Centre, explains more.

How to tell children that a parent or loved one has cancer

BE UPFRONT AND HONEST

Communication should be open and honest. Children can be very sensitive and observant. If they sense changes in the family's routine and emotions without understanding why, it may cause them distress. Don't lie to your children and don't make promises you can't keep. If the prognosis is uncertain, don't be afraid to let children know that, but assure them that the doctor is doing their best. For advanced end-of-life situations, don't be afraid Don't feel that you need to explain everything in to use words like "death" or "dying". Avoid words like "sleep" and "resting" as children need to know the permanency of death.



CONSIDER THEIR AGE

How to break the news depends on your child's age, maturity and personality. The younger they are, the simpler the language you'll need to use. For example, say "medicine" for younger kids instead of "chemotherapy". Older kids and teens are able to understand more complex explanations of cancer and treatment.

CONSIDER THEIR NEEDS

This also differs according to age:

- Young infants and children need more physical reassurance to meet their need for safety and love. They also need to feel that their needs will be taken care of. Try to establish a routine as much as possible, and make sure any changes are communicated to them in a reassuring way.
- · Older children may worry more about the sick parent's wellbeing. Try to keep them informed and assure them you are being taken care of. Also be sure to create opportunities for them to talk about and express their feelings.
- Teenagers may need more support to express and manage their emotions. As older children and teens start to have social circles outside of family, they can be encouraged to share and talk with their friends about how they feel.

DISPEL THE MYTHS

Children these days are very exposed to information from friends and the media that may not be true or accurate. You may need to reassure them the cancer was not caused by their bad behaviour, or that it cannot be spread by hugging or touching. Find out what they already know (or think they know) so you can clear up any misunderstandings.



(1) TAKE YOUR TIME

one sitting. You may well need a few conversations. Repeat key information to make sure they understand and use simple language, not medical jargon. Don't share more than they are able to handle at that moment and always give them the opportunity to ask questions and share how they feel.



USF TOOLS

Things like storybooks, toys and illustrations can help explain cancer to young children. Music, art, play and journaling can also encourage children to express their feelings. If your child loves video games, one way to explain is that cancer is like the bad guys. Chemotherapy is the weapon used to fight them, but sometimes the good guys get injured in the process as well.

minim When to tell them minimum

Before you break the news, you need to be

- Prepare for any questions they may ask.
- taking a walk or during another activity.

Returning to work during treatment is a very personal decision. For those heading back to the office, Parkway Cancer Centre Counsellor DOMINICA CHUA has some advice on how to stay balanced in body and mind.



hen it comes to going back to work, there's no right or wrong answer, just what is best for your body and your unique circumstances. These "4 Ms" are designed to help patients cope psychologically and emotionally, and can be especially useful when applied in a working environment.



Adopting a growth mindset is not easy upon hearing the diagnosis of a life-threatening illness. However, it's important to attempt this in such circumstances, as a growth mindset allows us to remain spontaneous, trusting in the natural process of life and allowing things to unfold on their own.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is being aware of the present moment, paying attention in a non-judgemental, open, curious and accepting way. Mindfulness can lessen stress and help you focus on the task at hand.

One common method to practice mindfulness is meditation. Taking 5 to 10 minutes to become aware of your breath is a very simple way to start. This will bring you into the present moment; you cannot breathe for the past, nor for the future.

"Don't be afraid to enjoy and be joyful. Take the opportunity to celebrate upon achieving and accomplishing a goal."

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Patients experience many changes when receiving treatment, especially if they continue with work. However, things can be managed by setting achievable goals and establishing open, honest communication with your boss and colleagues. Don't be afraid to enjoy and be joyful. Take the opportunity to celebrate upon achieving and accomplishing a goal.

O ME-TIME

When patients are diagnosed, many become overly anxious about health and other logistical issues. Some choose to "escape" through excessive work. While work is important, it's also crucial to take time for activities you enjoy. Spend time alone in quiet reflection and discover something new within and about yourself. Most importantly, be gentle with yourself.

""Talking about your diagnosis ""

Be true to what you sense, feel or think at that moment. It is your right to share as much or as little as you wish.

If you're concerned about awkward conversations with colleagues on your return to work, it can be helpful to briefly plan and rehearse what you would like to say.



Staying Positive

From diagnosis to treatment, cancer is a disease that turns your world upside down. Three inspirational women share their stories and advice on how to stay positive.

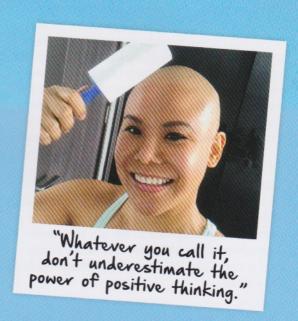
Katrina Bantug

A successful businesswoman and triathlete based in the Philippines, Katrina was diagnosed with breast cancer in August 2017. She was 37 years old. She came to Singapore to seek treatment and, after a double mastectomy and six months of chemotherapy, will soon undergo reconstructive surgery. So, what got her through it?

"I reached out to my family and friends and asked for prayers. I really felt it helped everything fall into place. I went through chemo, my hair fell out, my nails and tongue went black. Although I did feel a little weak, I did not experience any other side effects. Chemo is brutal. It kills your good and bad cells. Most people that I spoke to landed in the hospital after the first round of treatment. I honestly think the prayers were very helpful. I was also a triathlete and already in good shape, eating organic, healthy food. I also have a very positive mind-set; I run a few businesses back in the Philippines and have an endurance mentality. There are always things that go wrong, you just have to get through them."

BE GRATEFUL

"It's hard to imagine, but it could be worse. It could have been a fatal car accident or a debilitating disease with no cure. Many people don't even have the opportunity to get diagnosed and even more can't afford medical treatment at all."



DON'T THROW YOURSELF A PITY PARTY

"This is as much a mental game as a physical one. You need to be strong. If you are an athlete or have done endurance sports you will be fine. If not, you will still be fine. Surround yourself with loved ones and friends for support. It's OK to have good days and bad ones."

TALK TO PEOPLE AND ASK FOR PRAYERS

"I called all my friends and family one by one and created a WhatsApp thread to keep them posted. You will be surprised by the outpouring of love and support. In my case it was prayer, but whatever you call it, don't underestimate the power of positive thinking and the collective consciousness."

Carolyn Soemarjono

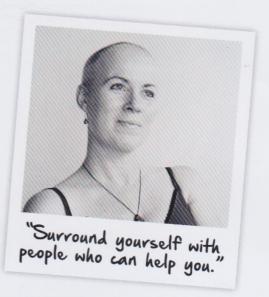
Carolyn had recently run the Tokyo marathon when she self-diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2011. In the space of a week, she went from being a busy HR manager at a multinational to having a complete hysterectomy and starting on six months of weekly chemotherapy. Today, she has come through on the other side and into quite a different life. Having decided against going back to the stressful corporate world, she followed her passion and set up Singapore's first and only "boudoir photography" studio (theboudoirphotographer.com.sg).

"I went to see my GP because I was so tired.

After running the marathon, I was suddenly struggling to run 10km. They chalked it up to stress, but I knew something wasn't right. I kept googling and over the weeks I started to get more symptoms, like bloating and feeling full quickly when eating. I stumbled upon some other women's personal blogs and everything suddenly made sense. I went back to my GP and tests showed I had a 10-centimetre cyst on my ovary."

TURN THE NEGATIVE INTO POSITIVE

"Take control by putting a positive spin on traumatic events. When my hair started to fall out, I didn't wait around for it to happen. I got some girlfriends together, went to the wig shop and drank champagne while they shaved my head and I chose a wig. We filmed the whole thing and had a blast."



FIND SUPPORT

"Surround yourself with people who can help you. My husband was able to work from home and my teenage daughter was around every day after school. A lot of friends also came forward to visit. There was also an excellent expat cancer support group that met every two weeks where everyone was in the same boat."

STAY ACTIVE

"It's hard, but try to get out and walk a little every day. I would go to the Botanic Gardens and shuffle around with my husband or a friend. It wasn't much but it was important to me."

Staying positive: Caregivers' perspectives

GET MOVING AND EAT WELL

"Serene used to dislike exercise. Throughout her treatment, come rain or shine, we would walk Kent Ridge Park very early in the morning to experience the negative ions. It's also important to eat healthily to sustain energy levels and boost immunity."

NEVER GIVE UP

"It's only human to experience denial and grief, but don't let it last too long. Pick yourselves up and deal with each stress point one by one to put your family in a stronger position to cope."



Kelly Chung

When Kelly first saw her GP about a lump in her breast she was 27 years old. Because of her young age, it was dismissed as fatty tissue. She went off to the UK for a gap year then, on her return, a routine check found that same lump to be cancerous.

"I opted for a mastectomy instead of a lumpectomy as the lump was quite near my nipple. This also meant I would not need radiotherapy after surgery. I had breast reconstruction using my tummy fat and now my breast feels natural, although one-and-a-half years later, my tummy and breast still feel numb.

"Cancer is fearful only when you don't understand it."

"Fortunately, my risk for recurrence is low, so I opted for a longer medication instead of chemotherapy which carries a risk of infertility. We are newly married and have plans for children."

ACT FAST

"Come to terms with the situation but start treatment as soon as you can. Things may not be as bleak as they seem and cancer is fearful only when you don't understand it. Find doctors you trust, trust them to do their best for you, and you will be on the road to recovery sooner than you think."

DON'T GIVE UP

"See the good in every situation. Get a daily dose of the little things that make you happy, like writing, reading, listening to music, drawing or taking a slow walk. I wrote a lot on an app called Dayre. Sharing my story became very therapeutic for me, while also creating awareness in others."

DON'T GO THROUGH IT ALONE

"Get strength from your loved ones, support groups, religion or any other source. You are braver when you start sharing. You are stronger than you think and with love, this journey gets a little easier to fight."

STAY UPBEAT

"Your mood affects the patient's emotions directly, so it is vital to be positive and believe the road to recovery will be smooth and successful."

LIVE YOUR DREAMS

"After diagnosis, you realise that life is short and unpredictable. Always seek to fulfil each other's dreams and goals so you have nothing to regret. – Ee Huai (Kelly Chung's husband)





At Parkway Cancer Centre, patients and their loved ones are at the heart of all that we do. Our holistic approach to cancer management is reflected in the multitude of services we offer to make patient care our topmost priority. Every day, our medical doctors, nurses, counsellors, dietitians and other paramedical professionals work as one to make every patient's journey to health and well-being as smooth and comfortable as we can. No matter what it takes, our multidisciplinary team is always with them—joined by hope, to multiply hope.

Our Services

- Medical Oncology
- Surgical Oncology
- Radiation Oncology
- Haematology Oncology
- Paediatric Oncology
- Translation Services
- Nutritional Education
- Palliative Care
- CanHOPE Counselling



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