



PREPARING FOR TREATMENT

A Practical Guide to Help You Feel Ready, Informed, and Supported

Beginning cancer treatment can bring many emotions: relief to finally start, fear of the unknown, anxiety about side effects, or uncertainty about what life will look like. Preparing ahead of time can make this transition easier. This guide walks you through steps that may help you feel organized, supported, and confident as you get ready for treatment.

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Clear Information. Compassionate Support.

1: UNDERSTAND YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

Before treatment starts, take time to review your specific plan with your care team. Knowing what to expect may help reduce stress and allow you to prepare your schedule, home, and support system.

Ask your doctor:

- What treatment(s) will I receive?
- What is the goal of this treatment?
- How long will it last?
- How often will I have appointments?
- What side effects should I expect?
- When should I call the care team if I notice something?

If you're unsure about anything, ask again. Your care team wants you to feel informed and comfortable.

2: CONFIRM INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL DETAILS

Understanding the financial side of treatment early helps prevent surprises.

Call your insurance provider to confirm:

- Whether your doctors and treatment center are in-network
- Your deductible and out-of-pocket maximum
- Copays and coinsurance amounts
- Whether you need prior authorization
- Expected costs for chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, or medications

If possible, request cost estimates in writing. Ask your hospital's financial counselor for help with billing, payment plans, or financial aid applications.

3: ORGANIZE YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION

Keeping your medical information organized may make it easier to track details easily throughout treatment.

Create a folder (physical or digital) for:

- Appointment schedules
- Treatment plans
- Medication lists
- Lab and imaging results
- Insurance documents
- Contact information for your care team
- Notes or questions for appointments

A simple binder or shared digital folder may make managing treatment easier.

4: PREPARE YOUR HOME ENVIRONMENT

A comfortable home may support your recovery and make treatment days less stressful.

Ways to prepare your space:

- Create a quiet, cozy place to rest
- Keep blankets, pillows, chargers, and water within reach
- Stock easy-to-prepare meals or snacks
- Prepare a small basket with medications or frequently used items
- Adjust lighting or seating to reduce strain
- Improve air quality if breathing issues are a concern for you

Small changes can make a big difference in your comfort.

5: GATHER SUPPLIES AND COMFORT ITEMS

Depending on your treatment, certain items may be helpful to have ready.

Consider preparing:

- A water bottle for hydration
- Lip balm and lotion for dry skin
- Comfortable clothing or layers for treatment days
- A notebook for tracking symptoms
- Snacks for longer appointments
- Entertainment (books, headphones, tablet)
- A blanket or warm socks (treatment rooms can be cool)

Ask your care team if they recommend any specific supplies based on your treatment.

6: PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION AND SCHEDULING

Some treatments can cause fatigue or make driving difficult.

Make plans for:

- Transportation to and from treatment
- Help with errands, meals, or childcare
- Coverage at work or school, if applicable
- A routine for rest and recovery after sessions

You may want to ask a friend or family member to accompany you to your first few treatments.

7: TALK WITH YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

Lean on the people who care about you. Share what you're feeling and let others know how they can help.

Support may include:

- Driving you to appointments
- Cooking meals
- Sitting with you during treatment
- Running errands
- Checking in emotionally
- Helping manage schedules or information

People often want to help; clear communication can make that easier.

8: PREPARE YOUR MIND AND EMOTIONS

Taking steps to support your mental health can be just as important as preparing physically.

Helpful strategies include:

- Mindfulness exercises or gentle breathing patterns that feel comfortable for you
- Journaling your thoughts
- Speaking with a counselor or oncology social worker
- Attending a support group
- Setting aside time each day for something enjoyable
- Creating a calming morning or bedtime routine

Emotional preparation may help build resilience.

9: KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT ON TREATMENT DAYS

Ask your care team to describe what will happen during each treatment.

You may want to know:

- How long the appointments will take
- What the room or equipment looks like
- What you can bring with you
- Whether you can eat beforehand
- What side effects may appear first
- Who will be part of your care team during treatment

Knowing what to expect may help reduce anxiety and increase comfort.

10: MAKE A SYMPTOM-MANAGEMENT PLAN

Before treatment starts, ask your care team how to handle common side effects.

You may want to discuss:

- Medications for nausea or pain
- What symptoms require a phone call
- What symptoms require urgent care
- Helpful lifestyle tips (hydration, rest, nutrition)
- Warning signs to watch for

Having a plan in place makes you feel prepared and safe.

GUIDANCE FOR THE DAYS AHEAD

Preparing for treatment is not about doing everything perfectly—it's about taking small, thoughtful steps that make you feel more in control. With clear information, an organized plan, and a strong support system, you may feel more confident and stable as treatment begins. Your care team, loved ones, and community resources are here to walk with you through every step ahead.