



FERRARO
LAW

THE FIRST 30 DAYS AFTER DIAGNOSIS

A Step-by-Step Guide to Help You Stay Calm, Informed, and Organized

Disclaimer: This guide is for informational and organizational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always follow the guidance of your healthcare providers.

Getting a cancer diagnosis is one of the most overwhelming experiences a person can face. The first days often feel like a blur filled with new terminology, unfamiliar specialists, and appointments that come faster than you can process. This guide is designed to support you during the first 30 days by breaking the month into steady, manageable steps. You do not need to do everything at once. What matters is building a foundation of understanding, organization, and support. Remember, your doctor is the best source of information. You should always follow your doctor's recommendations.

Take some time to process. You're not expected to have all the answers today. This guide will help you stay grounded, informed, and confident as you take each step forward.

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Clear Information. Compassionate Support.

WEEK 1:

UNDERSTANDING AND PROCESSING THE DIAGNOSIS

01. TAKE TIME TO PROCESS

The first week can be emotionally intense. Give yourself permission to pause and process what you're feeling. Acknowledge emotions such as fear, shock, anger, or confusion. Keep a small notebook nearby to write down questions or emotions as they come to you. Bring someone you trust to appointments to help take notes and offer support.

02. GET CLEAR ON YOUR DIAGNOSIS

Ask your doctor direct questions to help you understand your condition.

- What type of cancer do I have?
- What stage is it?
- Has it spread?
- What tests do I still need?
- Who will be my main point of contact?

Ask for simple explanations whenever needed. Understanding the basics of your diagnosis helps you feel more grounded.

03. START A MEDICAL BINDER OR DIGITAL FOLDER

This is your central place for all medical information. Include:

- Diagnosis documents
- Lab results and imaging reports
- Pathology reports
- Doctor contact information
- Appointment notes
- Current medications and dosages

Having everything in one place reduces stress and confusion later.

04. BUILD YOUR CARE TEAM

During the first week, identify the key people involved in your care. This typically includes your primary oncologist, nurse navigator, social worker, and an after-hours contact number for urgent concerns. Knowing who to reach out to gives you confidence when questions arise.

WEEK 2:

LEARNING ABOUT TREATMENT OPTIONS

01. DISCUSS YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

Have a detailed conversation with your oncologist about what comes next. Ask:

- What treatments are recommended for me?
- What is the goal of treatment (cure, control, comfort)?
- How soon should treatment begin?
- How will treatment affect my daily life?

Understanding the reasoning behind each recommendation helps you make informed decisions.

02. UNDERSTAND POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Knowing what to expect helps you prepare physically and mentally. Common side effects may include fatigue, nausea, appetite changes, and emotional shifts. Ask what is normal and what should be reported immediately. Ask your care team before starting any new supplements or medications.

03. GET A SECOND OPINION IF DESIRED

Many patients seek a second opinion for reassurance or additional insight. This is common and encouraged. Ask your doctor which specialists they recommend. Most insurance plans cover second opinions.

04. START TRACKING SYMPTOMS

Record anything new or unusual, including pain levels, appetite shifts, sleep patterns, or changes in energy levels. Tracking symptoms helps your care team tailor your treatment and respond quickly to changes.

WEEK 3:

GETTING ORGANIZED AT HOME AND WORK

01. REVIEW YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE

Now is a good time to understand your financial picture. Confirm that your treatment center and providers are in-network. Ask whether any procedures require prior authorization. Review your deductible, out-of-pocket maximum, and expected costs. Request a case manager if your insurance offers one.

02. PLAN FOR WORK AND DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Speak with your employer or HR department to understand your options.

- Medical leave
- Short-term disability
- Modified schedules
- Remote work options

At home, begin building a support circle. Ask trusted family and friends to help with meals, errands, childcare, or transportation. Create a shared calendar so helpers can coordinate.

03. SET UP YOUR HOME FOR COMFORT

Small adjustments can make a big difference. Create a calm, comfortable resting space. Keep medications and important items organized and within reach. Improve air quality by opening windows or using an air purifier. Prepare your home so daily routines feel easier and less stressful.

WEEK 4:

PREPARING FOR TREATMENT

01. FINALIZE YOUR TREATMENT START DATE

By this stage, your treatment plan should be clearer. Confirm your appointment dates, times, and locations. Ask how long each session will last and arrange transportation if needed. Feeling prepared before treatment begins can help reduce anxiety.

02. PLAN FOR SIDE-EFFECT MANAGEMENT

Stock up on items that will support your comfort. This may include easy-to-eat meals, hydration options, soft blankets, a supportive pillow, lip balm, a water bottle, or entertainment for longer treatment days. Having these items ready helps you feel more in control.

03. EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

This is a good time to establish emotional support routines. Consider counseling, oncology-specific therapists, or support groups. Journaling, mindfulness, meditation, and grounding exercises can also help manage stress. Find what helps you feel centered. If you experience severe anxiety or depression, contact a mental health professional or your care team.

04. REVIEW ADVANCE PLANNING (OPTIONAL)

This step is not about expecting the worst but preparing thoughtfully.

- Choose a healthcare proxy
- Update emergency contacts
- Ask a trusted person to help with future paperwork

This can help give you peace of mind and help your family understand your wishes.

BEYOND 30 DAYS: MOVING FORWARD WITH STRENGTH

The first month after diagnosis is not about solving everything at once. It is about creating a solid foundation—understanding your condition, building your care team, establishing routines, and preparing emotionally and practically for the path ahead.

As time goes on, you will learn more about your treatment, your body, and your needs. You will discover coping strategies that support you. You will build relationships with your care team and support system. And you will grow stronger and more confident in navigating this journey.

You do not need to face this alone.

Support, guidance, and hope are available at every step.

Take each day one step at a time.