

MIMA CANCER CENTER



*New Patient*  
**Information**  
**&**  
**Resource Guide**

**To contact us:**

1130 South Hickory St.

321-409-1956

&

200 E. Sheridan Road

Melbourne, Fl 32901

321-725-4500

*Dedicated to Your Health*

[www.mimacancercenter.com](http://www.mimacancercenter.com)

# MIMA CANCER CENTER

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# MIMA CANCER CENTER

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, the medical community has made significant advances in the treatment of cancer and other related disorders. Therefore, millions of Americans have undergone landmark treatments and have gone on to lead fulfilling, productive lives.

This has not happened overnight, nor have they done this alone. Families, friends, physicians, nurses, technicians, and other staff, as well as the community, have all played important roles in helping people live with cancer. Because of these people, you are surrounded by valuable resources which will help you, every step of the way.

At MIMA, a caring multidisciplinary team will help you and your loved ones through the entire process of cancer treatment and follow-up care. This manual has been designed to be a resource for you and to help guide you and your family. We hope that it will provide answers to some of your questions about treatment, side effects, and support.

We have customized the manual for you with details about your specific diagnosis and treatment plan. We realize that this manual cannot include every detail about your treatment, so please use it as a *general reference*. Read through it at your own pace, or read the sections you feel are important or with which you feel comfortable. Also, refer to it when you have questions during your treatment. Please do not hesitate to ask questions of your doctor or nurse, as issues arise.

We are fortunate to live in a community which provides a wealth of support to cancer patients and their families. We have listed some of the resources and support services that are available in the Community Resource Chapter. You may want to contact some of them either by phone or by internet. Please remember to ask any questions of your doctor, nurse, or oncology social worker.

We care deeply about you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the appropriate member of your Care Team located on page 5.

# MIMA CANCER CENTER

## INFUSION CENTER OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY – FRIDAY 7:30 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.  
SATURDAY & SUNDAY 8:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

### Chemotherapy Appointments

You may bring with you to your appointment

- Books and magazine
- CD or DVD player with earphones
- Laptop computers
- Your favorite pillow or blanket
- Snacks and Sodas
- Please refrain from wearing perfumes, powders, as many chemotherapy patients are sensitive to odors.

For your comfort the following are provided:

- Microwave
- Refrigerator
- Blankets and pillows
- Beds are available based on treatment needs

### Radiation Oncology Office Hours

MONDAY – FRIDAY 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

### Medical Oncology Office Hours

MONDAY – FRIDAY 8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES:

- Dial MIMA main number: **725-4500**.
- Notify the answering service of the problem you are experiencing and specify that you are an **ONCOLOGY PATIENT**. If your symptoms become worse, please call **911** or proceed directly to the **Emergency Room** for evaluation.

# MIMA CANCER CENTER

## My Care Team

On this page are the medical professionals that you will routinely interact with during your treatment at MIMA Cancer Center.

### Medical Oncologist:

My Medical Oncologist: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Oncology RN: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

200 E. Sheridan Rd  
Melbourne, FL 329091

(321) 725-4500

### Radiation Oncologist:

My Radiation Oncologist: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Radiation RN: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Radiation tech: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

1130A S. Hickory  
Melbourne, FL 32901

(321) 409-1956

### Infusion Center:

Clinical Nurse Supervisor: Judy Graham, RN ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Infusion Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Infusion Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_

200 E. Sheridan Rd  
Melbourne, FL 32901

(321) 725-4500

### Oncology Social Work:

My Oncology Social Worker: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_







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Please remember that consistent treatment is effective treatment. It is important to stick to the treatment plan developed with your doctor. Please arrive on time for appointments and inform your RN of any upcoming events that may interfere with treatment. If you have problems with transportation to or from your appointment please speak with one of our oncology social workers. It is important to remember that some treatments last only one time while others can last much longer. If you have multiple appointments within the MIMA Cancer Center please coordinate these appointments with your oncology social worker or RN.

## CHEMOTHERAPY

Chemotherapy is a method used to treat cancer. While most cancer-fighting drugs that are used today have been developed over the last four decades, significant advances have been made during the last ten to fifteen years.

Chemotherapy acts on the body's cells, which divide or reproduce rapidly. Most cancer cells are cells which fall into this category. Chemotherapy drugs interfere with the way cells reproduce or progress through their life cycle. If the cell is unable to reproduce, it will eventually die, and there will not be another cell to replace it. This means, then, that there will be a decreased number of tumor or cancer cells.

Unfortunately, chemotherapy medications also affect normal cells that divide rapidly, including bone marrow (which produces red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets), the gastrointestinal tract cells, hair follicles, and some reproductive organ cells. Therefore, some of the side effects of chemotherapy may include low blood counts, mouth sores, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, hair loss, infertility, and there may be others as well.

Depending on your diagnosis, the staging of the disease, and other factors, your individual treatment plan may indicate a combination of two or more drugs to fight the cancer cells. Chemotherapy is given in a "cycle," which is given on a daily, weekly, or every twenty-one to twenty-eight day schedule. Your physician and nurse will discuss your specific treatment plan and the schedule that has been developed for your chemotherapy treatment.

### **How will your medicines be given?**

Chemotherapy can be given in a variety of ways. The four most common methods are intravenous, oral, intramuscular, and subcutaneous injection. The method that will be used is based on your individual diagnosis, and the effectiveness of the individual drugs used in fighting your disease.

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## **Intravenous (IV)**

This is a common method used to put medications directly into a vein. A small, plastic needle is inserted into one of the veins in the arm. Of course, you may feel a little discomfort during the insertion because a needle stick is required to get into the vein. After that, the administration of the medication is almost painless. The chemotherapy flows from a plastic bag, down a tube, and through the vein into the blood stream. Some medications are administered by syringe, which pushes the drug through the tubing and into your bloodstream.

## **Oral**

A pill, capsule, or liquid is taken by mouth. This is the easiest and most convenient method since you can take this medication at home; however, many chemotherapy drugs are not available to be taken orally or they cannot be taken this way.

## **Intramuscular (IM)**

Medication is injected by this method directly into the muscle. You will feel a slight pinch as the needle pierces the skin and is inserted into the muscle of the arm, thigh, or buttock. However, the pain is short-lived and lasts only a few seconds.

## **Subcutaneous Injection**

When this method is used, the medication is injected into the so-called “fatty” tissue under the skin. A very small needle pierces the skin and the medicine is injected slowly into the fatty tissue of the upper arm, abdomen, or upper thigh. The injection itself causes minimal pain, but the medication may, or may not, cause a burning or stinging sensation for a few seconds.

## **Permanent IV Access Devices**

The preferred method of IV access for most chemotherapy agents, especially drugs called “vesicants,” is an **implanted in-fus-a-port**. It is round in shape and surgically inserted either into a vein under the skin on the chest wall between the neck and the shoulder area; under the arm; or in very rare cases, into the large vein in the groin. Once the device has been implanted by a surgeon, a nurse will access the port by inserting a needle through the skin of the chest into the port, thereby gaining access to the large vein where the port is seated. Chemotherapy can then be given through the catheter.

Blood can be drawn from or received through this device. After initial care of the surgical incision, there is no care needed at home for the port. You will need to schedule an appointment every four to six weeks for a “port flush” for the time that your port is in place.

## **PICC Line**

A PICC (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter) is a long, thin, flexible catheter. It is inserted into one of the large veins of the arm near the bend of the elbow and is then pushed into the vein until the tip sits in a large vein just above the heart.

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## RADIATION THERAPY

Sometimes people are concerned when they are receiving radiation treatments that they might be radioactive. External radiation does not cause your body to become radioactive. Please do not avoid being with other people because of your treatment. Even hugging, kissing, or having sexual relations with others, does not put them at risk of radiation exposure.

Usually, the side effects of radiation are most commonly related to the area that is being treated. Your doctor and nurse will tell you about the side effects you need to be aware of and how you should deal with them. Please contact your doctor or nurse if you have any unusual symptoms during your treatment. Some of these symptoms are coughing, sweating, fever, or unusual pain.

Fortunately, most of the side effects, though unpleasant, are not serious, and can be handled with medication and diet. These side effects usually go away within a few weeks after the treatment ends. Sometimes, some of the side effects last longer. Some patients have no side effects at all.

Throughout your treatment, your radiation oncologist will check regularly on the effects of your treatment, and will make changes to your treatment plan as the need arises. While you may not be aware of the changes in your cancer, you may notice a decrease in pain, bleeding, or other discomforts you may have had before you began treatment. For some cancers, the doctor may order additional X-rays or CT scans to see if the tumor is shrinking. Tumors that are large and fairly dense can often be seen on routine X-rays. Additionally, the doctor may order other tests to be sure that the radiation is causing as little damage to normal cells as possible. Furthermore, you may have routine blood work to check the levels of white blood cells and platelets, which may be lowered during treatment.

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## **Types of Radiation Therapy**

### **Brachytherapy**

Brachytherapy, or internal radiation therapy, inserts radioactive material directly into or near the tumor. The radioactive material is either later removed or left in place. Removable radiation sources are inserted with needles or small thin tubes. Sometimes the material is left in your body (permanent brachytherapy). In this case, small beads containing the radioactive material are inserted into the tumor. The beads release radiation at the site of the tumor over a few days or weeks, after which they are no longer radioactive.

### **External Radiation Therapy**

External radiation therapy, or teletherapy, uses a beam of radiation directed at the tumor. Once the area of cancer is identified, a small ink tattoo is fixed on the skin over the area of cancer so that the radiation beam can be focused on the same spot for each treatment. It is necessary to focus the radiation beam on the cancer cells and to shield nearby healthy tissue from the radiation. External radiation therapy is usually done in multiple treatments, usually once a day for several weeks.

### **IMRT**

IMRT, or intensity modulated radiation therapy, uses a radiation-blocking device, also known as a Multi-Leaf Collimator (MLC), to block some of the radiation. This causes the beam to take different shapes that are contoured to fit perfectly with the patient's tumor. Because the tumor can be contoured more efficiently with IMRT, the radiation doses to healthy surrounding tissues are minimized. With less radiation to healthy tissues, the patients treated with IMRT experience fewer harsh side effects from the radiation therapy.

### **IGRT**

Image Guided Radiation Therapy (IGRT) is a new breakthrough system for patient set-up and alignment. With IGRT, patients are x-rayed before each treatment. Those x-rays are compared to the patient's initial CT scan and the patient is matched perfectly to their original set-up position every single treatment. This positioning system is far superior to skin marks or tattoos that are placed on the patient's skin. Unlike previous methods of patient alignment, IGRT can account for daily organ movement and changes in the patient's internal anatomy throughout the course of their treatment. IGRT also allows for narrow margins between the tumor and the healthy tissues. With smaller margins, there is less radiation delivered to healthy tissue while maintaining sufficient dose to the malignant tumor tissue.

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## **SRS**

Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) is a treatment process which combines the use of a special head frame (aka halo) and high-energy radiation beams to deliver a prescribed dose to a well-defined anatomical structure in a single fraction. Because the treatment is delivered using strategically placed dynamic conformal arcs, the dose to the normal tissue surrounding the target is significantly reduced. Diseases that are commonly treated with this modality include malignant brain tumors, primary brain gliomas, meningiomas, pituitary adenomas, acoustic neuromas, and trigeminal neuralgia. We have entertained guests from all over the world to showcase the equipment and how these techniques can be used to treat patients and improve outcomes.

## **SBRT**

Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy (SBRT) is a treatment that uses high precision targeting which allows for sub-millimeter accuracy and the efficiency of the device allows for most treatments to be completed in the less than thirty minutes. The technology can monitor, track, and adjust for tumor motion.

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## SYMPTOMS AND SIDE EFFECTS

### **What causes side effects?**

Because cancer cells grow and divide rapidly, drugs which have been developed to fight cancer are made to kill fast-growing cells. Certain normal, healthy cells also multiply quickly, and treatment can affect these cells too. When this happens, you may have some side effects.

The fast-growing normal cells most commonly affected are blood cells forming in the bone marrow, cells in the digestive tract, reproductive system, and hair follicles. Anticancer drugs can also damage cells of the heart, kidney, bladder, lungs, and nervous system. The most common side effects of treatment include nausea and vomiting, hair loss, and fatigue.

### **How long do the side effects last?**

Most normal cells recover quickly when treatment is over, so most side effects gradually disappear after treatment ends and the healthy cells begin to grow normally again. The time it takes for some side effects to diminish and to regain normal energy levels varies from person to person. Therefore, how long it takes you to feel better will depend on many things, including your overall health, as well as the kinds of drugs you have been taking.

While many side effects go away fairly rapidly, certain ones may take months or years to disappear completely. Unfortunately, sometimes the side effects can last a lifetime, such as when treatment causes permanent damage to the heart, lungs, kidneys, or reproductive organs. Certain types of therapy may cause delayed effects. An example of a delayed effect might be a secondary cancer which occurs many years later.

Please remember that many people have no long-term problems because of their treatments. It is encouraging to realize that physician researchers are making great strides in the development of drugs that have a powerful impact on cancer cells, while decreasing the effects of the treatment on healthy cells. In addition, they have also developed many drugs which substantially reduce the most serious side effects.

While the side effects of your treatment can be unpleasant, they must be measured against the treatment's ability to destroy cancer. People who are under care sometimes become discouraged about the length of time their treatment is taking or the side effects they are experiencing. Please talk to your doctor, nurse, or oncology social worker about these feelings – there are ways to deal with these issues.

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## **SYMPTOMS TO REPORT TO YOUR PHYSICIAN**

- ◆ Fever greater than 100.5 degrees
- ◆ Pain in a new place
- ◆ Pain unrelieved by the pain medication you are taking
- ◆ Nausea, vomiting, or the inability to eat for more than 2 days
- ◆ Coughing, chest pain when you breathe, or shortness of breath
- ◆ Headache that is not relieved by Tylenol
- ◆ Stiff neck, blurred vision, or dizziness
- ◆ Bleeding from anywhere
- ◆ Inability to eat and continued weight loss
- ◆ Diarrhea for over 24 hours
- ◆ Increased weakness, such as the inability to get out of bed
- ◆ Sores in your mouth
- ◆ Any sores that will not heal

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**Tell your nurse immediately if you feel any burning or pain when you are receiving intravenous medications. While these symptoms do not necessarily mean there is a problem, they need to be checked out right away.**

**If you should develop sudden or severe itching, hives, wheezing, difficulty breathing, sore throat, or difficulty swallowing...let your nurse know right away. These symptoms may indicate an allergic reaction that needs to be treated at once.**

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## EFFECTS ON SKIN AND NAILS

You may experience minor skin problems while you are getting treatment. Possible side effects include redness, itching, peeling, dryness, and acne. Your fingernails may become discolored, brittle, or cracked, and they may develop vertical lines or bands.

Fortunately, most of these problems can be solved fairly easily! If you develop acne, use over-the-counter medicated creams or soaps. To help control itching, apply cornstarch as you would use dusting powder. Take short showers instead of long, hot baths in order to keep your skin from drying out. Apply moisturizer cream or lotion while your skin is damp. Avoid any topical lotion that contains alcohol, as alcohol will cause dryness. Protect your nails with over-the-counter nail strengtheners, and wear gloves when you are washing the dishes, gardening, or performing other work around the house. If your skin or nail problems do not respond to any of these suggestions, speak to your doctor for further advice.

Anticancer drugs, when given into a vein, may cause darkening along the vein. The darkened areas will usually fade a few months after you finish your treatment.

Because exposure to the sun may have adverse effects on your skin, please limit your sun exposure as much as possible. When you are outdoors, dress so that your skin is covered as completely as possible, and use a sunscreen of at least SPF 15 on all exposed areas! Do not forget to cover your head!

Occasionally, people who have had radiation therapy may develop a condition called “radiation recall” during their chemotherapy treatment. During, or shortly after the chemotherapy treatment is given, the skin over the area that was treated with radiation turns a color that may range from pink to bright red. Additionally, this area may itch or burn and the reaction may last from a few hours to several days. The itching or burning may be soothed by applying cool, wet compresses. Please report this reaction to your physician.

Most skin problems are not serious, but a few of them should receive immediate attention. For example, some drugs when given intravenously, can cause serious and permanent tissue damage if they leak from the vein during administration.

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## Nausea & Vomiting

- ◆ Nausea with or without vomiting can occur with any drug therapy
- ◆ Do not hesitate to take anti-nausea medication prescribed by your physician
- ◆ There are many treatments available to control your nausea and vomiting. If one does not work, please call your physician or nurse so that some other medication can be tried.
- ◆ Persistent vomiting is very serious. If you have nausea and vomiting, **uncontrolled for more than 24 hours**, call your physician, as some other treatment may be needed.

## Diarrhea and Constipation

Both are common side-effects of chemotherapy and other related medications

### Diarrhea

- ◆ At the first sign of diarrhea, take 2 Imodium AD tablets
- ◆ During the day, take 1 Imodium tablet every 2 hours
- ◆ At bedtime, take 2 Imodium tablets, then 2 tablets every 4 hours during the night
- ◆ Continue this treatment until you have gone 12 hours without a bowel movement
- ◆ If diarrhea persists, and you are feeling weak or dehydrated, please call the office

### Constipation

- ◆ Drink plenty of fluids
- ◆ Increase the roughage in your diet
- ◆ Consider Metamucil, Senokot, or a stool softener to relieve your discomfort
- ◆ If you have not had a bowel movement within 24 hours of your normal routine, contact the office for additional instructions.

## Bleeding Problems

- ◆ To prevent bleeding or skin breaks, avoid straining when passing stool
- ◆ Report changes in your normal bowel habits such as constipation, diarrhea, black, or bloody stools
- ◆ If you are taking medications which contain aspirin, please discuss this with your doctor at your next visit
- ◆ Report bleeding in the urine, from the gums, abnormal bruising, or a nosebleed that does not stop with normal interventions

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## Mouth Care

- ◆ Brush your teeth, gums, and tongue very gently with a very soft tooth brush or “toothettes” at least 4 times a day (after meals and before bedtime)
- ◆ Examine your mouth daily. Notify your physician if you develop white patchy areas.
- ◆ TO TREAT MOUTH SORES:
  - Mix 1 teaspoon of salt or baking soda to 1 quart of cool water. Rinse your mouth with this solution at least 4 times a day.
  - If the sores persist and prevent you from eating and/or drinking, please notify your physician’s office so they can order a prescription mouth rinse.

## Dental Needs

- ◆ Please speak to your oncologist before having dental work done while you are receiving chemotherapy.

## Fatigue

- ◆ This is the most common effect of cancer treatment. Unfortunately, there is very little effective treatment for it.
- ◆ You might find it helpful to keep a journal of the days and times you feel most tired. This will help you plan your activities.
- ◆ Several rest periods during the day may be more beneficial than one long nap.
- ◆ Eat a balanced diet with plenty of complete carbohydrates for energy.

## Alcohol

- ◆ Avoid drinking beverages containing alcohol while you are on chemotherapy.
- ◆ Please check with your physician before consuming any alcoholic beverages

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## Preventing Infections

- ◆ Avoid people with colds or other infections.
- ◆ Avoid large crowds or a trip to the mall, especially if you feel weak or have a cold.
- ◆ Look at yourself daily for signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, or soreness.
- ◆ Take your temperature daily.
- ◆ Practice good personal hygiene. Wash your hands frequently, especially before eating and after using the restroom.
- ◆ Avoid working in the garden unless you wear gloves, so you do not get cuts and scrapes.
- ◆ Your medical staff will let you know if you need to take extra precautions to prevent infection.

## Signs of Infection

- ◆ **Fever** – If you develop a fever of 100.5 degrees or above, please take 2 Tylenol. During regular business hours, call your physician. If your fever develops during non-business hours, please call the MIMA main number to reach the 24-hour answering service. If you do not receive a return call from the triage nurse or the covering physician within 1 hour, please go directly to the Emergency Room for evaluation.
- ◆ **Shaking and Chills** – Call your physician's office. If there is no response, please go directly to the Emergency Room for evaluation

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## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE YOU ARE RECEIVING TREATMENT

**Maintain adequate nutrition and fluid intake, unless your doctor tells you not.**

- ◆ Eat small frequent meals
- ◆ Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid daily

**Avoid crowds and people with infections.**

**Report any signs of illness or infection to your doctor.**

Signs of infection:

- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Sore throat or stiff neck

**Maintain good personal hygiene.**

- ◆ Wash your hands after being out of the house.
- ◆ Wash your hands before eating and after using the bathroom.

**Tell your doctor if you have any trouble with bleeding, such as:**

- ◆ Bleeding gums
- ◆ Increased, unexplained bruising
- ◆ Blood in urine, vomit, or stool (including black, tarry stools)

**Practice good mouth care:**

- ◆ Use a soft-bristled toothbrush
- ◆ Use a mild toothpaste
- ◆ Use a saline-based mouthwash 4 times a day

**Report any problems with mouth sores:**

- ◆ White patchy areas (Thrush)
- ◆ Open sores or painful areas in your mouth or on your lips
- ◆ Any cavities or loose teeth

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## Labs

- ◆ Due to the effects of the treatment on your bone marrow, you will need to have your blood checked **prior to the beginning of each treatment cycle.**
- ◆ If you have a port, you may come to the Infusion Center to have your blood drawn from your port. Please call ahead for an appointment.
- ◆ If you do not have a port, please use the lab slip and the instructions given to you by the nurse, and go to the lab to have your blood drawn prior to your scheduled appointment. After you have had your blood drawn, come to your chemotherapy/doctor's appointment as scheduled.
- ◆ Preferably, labs are done the day of treatment or the day before treatment.

### What is a blood count?

A blood count is the measurement of the amounts and types of blood cells in your body.

### How many types of blood cells do I have?

Your body has three main types of blood cells:

- ◆ **Red Blood Cells**, which help carry oxygen and nutrients to the other cells in your body
- ◆ **Platelets**, which help clot blood whenever you have a cut or a bruise
- ◆ **White Blood Cells**, which help prevent and fight infection

### How does my illness affect my blood cells?

Cancer treatment is the most common cause of alteration of blood counts. Your physician/RN will talk with you about in any changes in your blood cells

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## **NUTRITION**

### **What is the link between Cancer and nutrition?**

Some of the treatment which you may be in can affect your mouth, stomach, and bowels so that it is difficult for you to eat enough to meet your daily nutritional needs.

Eating enough food can help you maintain your weight and will also make you feel stronger. When your body receives enough nutrition, your immune system will be able to handle the treatments better.

### **Why is eating right so important?**

Eating correctly is vitally important not only to your overall health, but also to your ability to handle your chemotherapy. Even though you may have some of the symptoms listed above, talk with your doctor to be sure that you are eating as much as you can or as much as you can tolerate.

You will be able to help yourself eat better in many ways. There are special diets to help alleviate diarrhea or constipation. Nutritional supplements can be used to increase your daily caloric intake. Additionally, there are tips you can use to help make food taste better or help cut down the smells that might bother you.

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## When Things Aren't Tasting Right

*from the American Cancer Society*

### What to Do

- ◆ Try using plastic utensils if you have a metallic taste while eating
- ◆ Season food with tart flavors such as lemon wedges, lemonade, citrus fruits, vinegar, and pickled foods (if your mouth or throat is sore, do not do this)
- ◆ Chew lemon drops, mints, or gum, which can help get rid of unpleasant tastes that linger after eating (if you have diarrhea, avoid sugarless candies and gums)
- ◆ Flavor foods with onion, garlic, chili powder, basil, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, barbecue sauce, mustard, catsup, or mint
- ◆ Increase the sugar in foods to increase their pleasant tastes and decrease salty, bitter, or acid tastes
- ◆ Rinse your mouth with tea, ginger ale, salted water, or water with baking soda before eating to help clear your taste buds
- ◆ Serve foods cold or at room temperature. This can decrease the foods' tastes and smells, making them easier to tolerate

*Adapted from Walker MS, Masino K, Editors, Oncology Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group. Oncology Nutrition; Patient Education Materials. Chicago, IL. American Dietetic Association: 1998.*

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## Poor Appetite

*from the American Cancer Society*

Changes in your eating habits as well as a loss of appetite may occur as a result of cancer and its treatments. If this happens to you, try eating small, frequent meals and snacks every one to two hours. Keep high-protein, high-calorie snacks and foods handy to eat when you are hungry. Avoid food smells caused by food preparation.

### What to Do

- ◆ Eat small meals or snacks every one to two hours
- ◆ Avoid liquids with meals (unless needed to help swallow or for dry mouth) to keep from feeling full early
- ◆ Make eating more enjoyable by setting the table with pretty dishes and flowers and playing your favorite music or watching television or visiting with friends
- ◆ Keep high-calorie, high-protein snacks on hand. Try hard-cooked eggs, luncheon meats, peanut butter, cheese, ice cream, granola bars, nutritional supplements, puddings, chips, crackers, and pretzels
- ◆ Review the tips on adding calories and protein to foods and include these in meals and snacks all during the day
- ◆ Ask your doctor about medications to help relieve constipation, nausea, pain, or other side effects you have

### What to Eat (High-protein foods) for a Poor Appetite

**Milk products:** Eat cheese on toast or with crackers. Add grated cheddar cheese to baked potatoes, vegetables, soups, noodles, meat, and fruit. Use milk for cooking in place of water for cereal and cream soups. Include cream sauces on vegetables and pasta. Add powdered milk to cream soups and mashed potatoes.

**Eggs:** Keep hard-boiled eggs in the refrigerator. Chop and add to salads, casseroles, soups, and vegetables. Make a quick egg salad. All eggs should be well cooked to avoid the risk of harmful bacteria.

**Meats, poultry, and fish:** Add leftover cooked meats to soups, casseroles, salads, and omelets. Mix diced and flaked meat with sour cream and spices to make dips.

**Beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds:** Sprinkle seeds on desserts such as fruit, ice cream, pudding, and custard. Also serve on vegetables, salads, and pasta. Spread peanut butter on toast and fruit or blend in a milkshake.

*Adapted from Walker MS, Masino K, Editors, Oncology Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group. Oncology Nutrition: Patient Education Materials. Chicago IL: American Dietetic Association. 1998.*

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## Nutrition and Constipation

*The following is adapted from:  
Eating Well Through Cancer*

Constipation will decrease your appetite and make you feel bad.

Foods high in fiber, such as bran, should be a part of your diet every day. You should drink six to eight glass of water every day.

Try making muffins with prune juice instead of water. Fruit salads, vegetable dishes, beans, grains, bread, fruit drinks, figs, raisins, apples, brown rice, puddings, and stewed prunes are some of the foods which can help in keeping you regular.

*Note: You should not go over seventy-two hours without a bowel movement. If a healthy diet, laxatives, and stool softeners fail, notify your physician.*

The following hints, foods, and recipes may be helpful to you.

- ◆ Drink lots and lots of fluid.
- ◆ Try drinking a warm beverage 30 minutes before the usual time for a bowel movement
- ◆ Increase intake of high fiber foods
- ◆ Try adding shredded vegetables into other casseroles or recipes
- ◆ Add oat or wheat bran to casseroles
- ◆ When you increase bran intake, increase your intake of water as well
- ◆ Eat more vegetables; raw or cooked; broccoli, carrots, and celery
- ◆ Try eating whole grain cereals and breads
- ◆ Do light exercise

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## NUTRITION AND DIARRHEA

*The following has been adapted  
from Eating Well Through Cancer*

You may suffer from diarrhea following some chemotherapy and/or radiation treatments.

When diarrhea starts, immediately stop taking all high-fiber foods, stool softeners, and laxatives. Follow your doctor's orders regarding taking Lomotil, Immodium, or Pepto Bismol. After you have fasted for two to four hours, start taking clear liquids. Be sure not to get dehydrated, so drink eight to ten glasses of liquid each day. Water, clear soup, broth, flat soda, or a sports drink are excellent replacements for fluid lost by diarrhea. Avoid dairy products because they may make the diarrhea worse. Hot and cold beverages, alcohol, coffee, and cigarettes tend to make diarrhea worse.

Once your diarrhea has decreased, you may want to eat bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast. If you are able to tolerate these foods, try eating bland, low-fiber foods, such as chicken without the skin, scrambled eggs, and canned or cooked skinless fruits. Crackers, pasta without sauce, white bread or gelatins are also good choices.

Try to avoid foods that are high in fiber such as grains, raw vegetables, whole wheat, raw fruit, oatmeal, and brown rice. Nuts, beans, and milk may also make the diarrhea worse. Avoiding caffeine and spicy foods is also a good idea. Once your diarrhea has subsided, adjust your diet...but remember that foods that are low in fiber and fat will be helpful in decreasing diarrhea.

If your rectum becomes red or sore, use a commercial wet towel without alcohol, and avoid dry toilet paper. Desitin or a combination of Aquaphor and Questran in a 9 to 1 ration, will act as a protective barrier to your perirectal area. Ask your physician to prescribe these medications.

***If your diarrhea continues without relief for greater than twenty-four hours, please notify your physician.***

Following are some hints and foods which we hope will be helpful.

- ◆ Eat chicken soup or dissolve bouillon cubes in water.
- ◆ Eat bland, high-protein foods.
- ◆ Eat smaller meals throughout the day to see what you can tolerate.
- ◆ Eat high-calorie, low-fiber foods.
- ◆ Avoid citrus juices and carbonated beverages. Mineral water with a splash of fruit juice is a great alternative to a carbonated beverage – it's both bubbly and tasty!

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- ◆ Avoid raw vegetables and fruits, and high fiber foods, nuts, onions, garlic, and gaseous vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, beans, etc.).
- ◆ Avoid spicy foods.
- ◆ Avoid greasy, fatty, or fried foods.
- ◆ Drink small amounts of room temperature beverages frequently.
- ◆ Limit caffeine intake.
- ◆ Choose low fiber light foods such as fish, chicken, eggs, bananas, potatoes, low fiber cereals, crackers, refined bread, and flour products.
- ◆ Crackers with cheese or peanut butter may be a good choice.
- ◆ Keep your activities after meals to a minimum.
- ◆ Ginger can be soothing to the stomach: ginger snaps and ginger candy.

Some foods to include:

- ◆ Toast, crackers, or pretzels
- ◆ Flavored gelatin
- ◆ Applesauce
- ◆ Skinless chicken
- ◆ Clear liquids
- ◆ Bananas
- ◆ Rice
- ◆ Plums, peaches, watermelon, cantaloupe
- ◆ Squash, eggplant
- ◆ Baked French Toast (recipe included)
- ◆ Plain turkey sandwich
- ◆ Banana Bread
- ◆ Cinnamon Rolls without raisins and nuts
- ◆ Grits
- ◆ Baked potato
- ◆ Mashed potato
- ◆ Pasta
- ◆ Roasted Turkey Breast
- ◆ Saltine crackers

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## NUTRITION AND SORE MOUTH

*The following has been adapted  
from Eating Well Through Cancer*

If you find one food that you can tolerate, do not hesitate to eat it repeatedly. The mouth soreness is often associated with a low white blood cell count, and as soon as your counts rise, the soreness will probably resolve.

Follow your physician's advice concerning mouth care.

Following are some helpful hints:

- ◆ Try sucking on ice chips
- ◆ Popsicles or frozen juices are soothing (no citrus juice)
- ◆ Use a straw for liquids
- ◆ Cut food into small pieces
- ◆ Eat food that is cold or at room temperature
- ◆ Let hot soups come to room temperature before eating
- ◆ Softer and easy to swallow foods include soups, pastas, dairy dishes, and breakfast type recipes
- ◆ Dunk dry foods in a soup or beverage before eating
- ◆ Practice good oral hygiene
- ◆ Drink your meals with nutritious liquids
- ◆ Avoid mouth irritants such as citrus fruits and juices, and spicy, salty, or rough foods
- ◆ Ask your doctor for a "sore mouth cocktail"

Some soft foods to include:

- ◆ Applesauce, bananas, watermelon, and other soft fruits
- ◆ Cottage cheese
- ◆ Puddings, flavored gelatins
- ◆ Mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, or mashed sweet potatoes
- ◆ Milk shakes or smoothies
- ◆ Scrambled eggs
- ◆ Cooked cereals such as oatmeal or cream of wheat
- ◆ Mashed veggies
- ◆ Baby or junior foods are good too

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When people have cancer, those who love and care for them are affected too.

It is quite possible, that you as a caregiver, may neglect yourself or feel isolated and unsupported by your family, friends, and neighbors, because you are focusing so intently on your loved ones needs and desires. We hope that you will find the following topics, hints, and suggestions to be informative and helpful. We welcome your suggestions for future additions to this section of the manual.

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

In order to take proper care of your loved one who has cancer, you must take care of yourself. This means simply, that you will look after your health and go to the doctor and dentist regularly, get proper rest, eat well, exercise frequently, and find some time to spend on yourself.

Taking care of someone who is ill may be an around the clock job, and fatigue and burnout may be the result of the physical and emotional aspects of care giving.

### Take Time for Yourself

Be aware of the signs of stress in your life, so that you can take steps to alleviate them.

Signs of stress

- ◆ Impatience
- ◆ Loss of appetite
- ◆ Difficulty sleeping
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating
- ◆ Difficulty remembering
- ◆ Changes in mood
- ◆ Decreased interest in usual activities
- ◆ Inability to accomplish usual tasks

Additionally, it is very important that you eat a well-balanced diet. While you are encouraging your loved one to eat properly, you need to do the same!

Well-balanced diet

- ◆ Drink plenty of water and juice every day
- ◆ Energy foods:
  - Fresh fruits
  - Vegetables
  - Grains
  - Rice
  - Pasta
  - Meats
  - Cheeses

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- ◆ Multi-vitamins
- ◆ Decrease or avoid
  - Caffeine
  - Sugar
  - Concentrated sweets
  - Alcohol

Exercise helps alleviate tiredness and depression and will give you a new lease on life as well!

## Exercise

- ◆ One of the best and easiest methods to reduce stress
- ◆ Continue types of exercise you have used in the past
- ◆ Try a short walk, walk in place, or walk stairs
- ◆ Check local shopping malls for a place to walk
- ◆ Try to get some exercise every day

While you may feel that you never get a chance to relax, it is important that you do so as often as possible. Relaxation combined with exercise can do a lot to relieve stress and help you feel rejuvenated!

## Relax

- ◆ Listen to relaxation tapes
- ◆ Listen to music
- ◆ Listen to books on tape
- ◆ Do progressive muscle relaxation exercises
- ◆ Mini relaxation tips:
  - Take a break
  - Find a comfortable place
  - Sit down
  - Close your eyes
  - Create a quiet scene in your mind
  - Enjoy the peace
- ◆ Take a warm bath
- ◆ Meditate or pray
- ◆ Breathe deeply and slowly
- ◆ A quick relaxation tip:
  - Breathe deeply and slowly three times

Being a manager of your time will assist you in relieving stress and will help you get through the day in a more efficient manner. Family, friends, and neighbors are usually willing to help you, but they usually do not know what you may need. Take advantage of them, and ask them to help you out whenever you need it.

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## Good Time-Management

- ◆ Make a list every day
- ◆ Prioritize your list
- ◆ Delegate everything possible to people who have offered to help
- ◆ Try not to over-schedule
- ◆ Take time for yourself
- ◆ Space activities with short rest periods
- ◆ Be realistic
- ◆ Don't overload yourself with daily "to-do" lists
- ◆ Realize that your old schedules probably will not work now as a large amount of time will be taken up with caregiving activities

Try not to do everything for your patient. Allow your loved one to be as self-sufficient as possible and set limits with the patient.

## Setting Limits

- ◆ Determine which self-care tasks the patient can perform
- ◆ Encourage independence when appropriate
- ◆ Create a climate that encourages and supports the sharing of feelings
- ◆ Let the patient make as many personal decisions as possible

Remember that your life continues! Be sure to set aside time to do the things that you enjoy and that bring you pleasure.

## Being Kind to Yourself

- ◆ Find time for enjoyable activities several times a week
- ◆ Visit friends
- ◆ Participate in your hobbies
- ◆ Do gardening or yard work
- ◆ Look for humor in daily activities
- ◆ Try to simplify your life
- ◆ Tend to your spiritual needs
- ◆ Talk to others if and when you experience stress or feelings of anxiety, anger, guilt, etc.
- ◆ *Share* your feelings
- ◆ Find a support group

Ask family and friends to help. Most of them want to be engaged in caring for the patient too, and they can be a big help to you.

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Ask family friends and neighbors to:

- ◆ Do household chores
  - Housecleaning
  - Lawn care
- ◆ Make meals
- ◆ Provide childcare
- ◆ Go shopping
- ◆ Run errands
- ◆ Drive to doctor appointments
- ◆ Pick up medications

Remember:

- ◆ The care you give makes a difference
- ◆ Realize that your role as a caregiver is important
- ◆ Do the best job you can do
- ◆ **Look around for help and keep looking until you find it!**

*adapted from the American Cancer Society  
Information and Support for Caregivers  
www.cancer.org*

## WHAT PEOPLE HAVING TREATMENT WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW

Since people who are undergoing treatment are often feeling a lot of stress, and they are tired from the effects of their treatment, they may act irritable and have short fuses. They may be more emotional than usual, and often, they feel as though they are burdens on the people who love and care for them.

Additionally, they may dread the days that they will go in for treatment and may say that they do not want to go. Most usually, they *do* keep their treatment appointments, but sometimes getting there is hard work as they anticipate the side effects of their medications. Frequently, patients say that they are grateful for the drugs that are helping them, but at the same time, they are not happy with the side effects.

They may have little or no appetite and food often “tastes funny.” Therefore, trying to feed a chemo or radiation patient, may be frustrating and difficult. In the section on Chemotherapy and Nutrition, we have included some hints and recipes which we hope will be helpful to you. Foods that are wholesome and easy to eat are generally the foods that are tolerated most easily.

Oftentimes, they would like to continue with their normal schedule and continue their normal chores around the house; however, since their energy may be depleted, they may be unable to do as much as usual. Try to include them in as much as they feel like doing – but remember that some days will be better than others. On one day, they may feel like

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taking out the trash, and on the next, the thought of walking so far may seem like an overwhelming task.

Remember to continue to include them in daily decisions – treat them as you normally would, but with just a little more tender loving care and understanding. Occasionally, making decisions is too difficult, therefore, try and be sensitive to them when that happens. When people have cancer and are undergoing treatment, they may feel very much out of control, so let them continue to have as much control over their lives as possible.

They would like you to know that they do not intend to upset those who care for them – but sometimes they just cannot help it!

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While undergoing treatment here at the MIMA Cancer Center it is important to develop a support system. Your support system can consist of anyone that you feel comfortable sharing with and someone that you can rely on. At times you may need help with transportation, running errands, light housework, or just someone to listen. This is the time to tell friends and family how they can help.

Here at MIMA we have developed an Oncology Social Work program to provide additional support to both you and your family. Social workers will:

- Provide emotional support to both patients and families
- Coordinate efficient scheduling of appointments
- Assist patients in accessing resources in the community, pharmaceutical and professional agencies
- Aide patients and families in assessing needs and making appropriate referrals
- Provide ongoing educational and therapeutic support groups for both patients and family members

We have also listed a number of resources that might be a benefit to you. Please take the time to look over the information here and please remember if you need anything please contact one of our social workers at 725-4500 ext's 747 and 301.

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## **CANCER-RELATED RESOURCES**

MIMA Cancer Center  
www.mimacancercenter.com

### **MIMA (Melbourne Internal Medical Associates)**

Medical Oncology  
200 E. Sheridan Rd. Suite A  
Melbourne, FL 32901  
(321) 725-4500

Radiation Oncology  
1130A South Hickory St  
Melbourne, Fl 32901  
(321) 409-1956

### **American Cancer Society**

Brevard Office  
1260 US 1 Highway, Suite 201  
Rockledge, FL 32955  
Phone: (321) 433-3109  
Fax: (321) 631-8015  
Patient Service Center: 1-800-227-9954

### **The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society**

Telephone: 1-800-955-4572  
Internet Address: [www.leukemia-lymphoma.org](http://www.leukemia-lymphoma.org)  
THE CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER  
3319 Maguire Blvd.  
Suite 101  
Orlando, FL 32803  
(407) 898-0733  
(407) 896-8645 (Fax)

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## Professional Organizations which may be helpful to you:

### Senior Assistance Program

- (Senior Helpline 321-631-2747)
- Advocacy                      Homemaking
  - Respite                      Home Improvement
  - Legal Assistance              Homemaking
  - Information                      Transportation @ lunch

### Brevard Senior Nutrition Programs

Meals on Wheels 321-639-8770

- Homebound Seniors
- Hot Nutritious Meal @ Noon
- Fellowship dining @ 15 locations in Brevard

Food with Care Inc. 877-578-9938

### Caregiver Support Center

To identify the services you or a family member qualify for:

Call 321-631-2746

Be prepared for:

- A 20 minute telephone interview
- Have income & asset information on hand (this will help determine which services you qualify for)

### **Transportation Assistance:**

**Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT)**

(321)952-4672

**Volunteers In Motion**

(321) 635-7999

**Curb to Curb**

(321) 952-4672

**American Cancer Society (Road to Recovery)**

1-800-227-9954

### **2-1-1**

2-1-1 is the national abbreviated dialing code for free access to health and human services information and referral (I&R). They can answer or direct you to your social service needs in Brevard County

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## **Co-payment Assistance with Medications**

- The Healthwell Foundation  
1-800-675-8416
- Chronic Disease Fund  
877-968-7233
- Patient Advocate Foundation  
1-866-512-3861
- Patient Access Network  
1-866-316-7263

## **Cancer Assistance Program: CAPS (Health First)**

(321) 434-5454

## **Local Hospice Organizations:**

- Brevard Hospice and Palliative Care  
(321) 253-2222
- Hospice of Health First  
(321) 952-0494
- Hospice of St. Francis  
(321) 269-4240
- Vitas Innovative Hospice Care  
(321) 751-6671

## **Clinical Trials**

Clinical trials are research studies in which people help doctors find ways to improve health and cancer care. Each study tries to answer scientific questions and to find better ways to prevent, diagnose, or treat cancer.

For more information about clinical trials @ MIMA contact:

Laura Bryan, RN, BSN, CCRC  
Oncology Research Coordinator  
MIMA.

65 E. Nasa Blvd. Suite 106  
Melbourne, FL 32901  
Phone: 723-1203 ext 19  
Fax: 725-3602

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## The Internet

**MIMA does not endorse any website.**

**MIMA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of information contained in these sites. These websites are provided as an informational tool only.**

Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support, and Education

1-800-298-2436

[www.lungcanceralliance.org](http://www.lungcanceralliance.org)

American Brain Tumor Association

1-847-827-9918

[www.abta.org](http://www.abta.org)

American Cancer Society

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

American Lung Association

[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

The American Society of Clinical Oncology--People Living with Cancer

<http://plwc.org/>

American Society for Therapeutic Radiology And Oncology

[www.astro.org](http://www.astro.org)

Association of Cancer Online Resources

[www.acor.org](http://www.acor.org)

Cancer Care

[www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)

Cancer Information Service of the Nation Cancer Society

[www.nci.nih.gov](http://www.nci.nih.gov)

Cancer Information, Diagnosis, and Treatment

[www.caring4cancer.com](http://www.caring4cancer.com)

The *Cancer Survival Toolbox*®

A free audio program designed to help cancer survivors and caregivers develop practical skills to deal with the diagnosis, treatment and challenges of cancer.

For a free copy visit:

<http://www.cancersurvivaltoolbox.org>

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International Myeloma Foundation

800-452-2873

[www.myeloma.org](http://www.myeloma.org)

Florida Department of Elder Affairs'

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us>Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF)

<http://www.livestrong.org>

Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

1-800-785-0733

[www.LLS.org](http://www.LLS.org)

Living Beyond Breast Cancer

1-610-645-4567

[www.lbbc.org](http://www.lbbc.org)

Lung Cancer Awareness

1-877-646-5864

[www.lungcancer.org](http://www.lungcancer.org)

Lymphoma Research Foundation of America

[www.lymphoma.org](http://www.lymphoma.org)

National Cancer Institute

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

<http://www.canceradvocacy.org>

National Hospice and Palliative Care Association

707-837-1500

[www.nhpco.org](http://www.nhpco.org)

The Oley Foundation

This foundation helps people whose daily survival depends on home intravenous or tube-fed nutrition.

[www.oley.org](http://www.oley.org)

Prostate Cancer

[www.nih.gov/cancertopics.types/cancer](http://www.nih.gov/cancertopics.types/cancer)

Radiation Therapy Answers

[www.rtanswers.org](http://www.rtanswers.org)

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Social Security Administration

Manages social security, supplemental security income, Medicare, and parts of Medicaid

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancers

[www.sphonc.org](http://www.sphonc.org)

United Ostomy Association

1-800-826-0826

[www.uoaa.org](http://www.uoaa.org)

The Wellness Community

<http://www.thewellnesscommunity.org/default.asp>

Well Spouse Foundation

[www.wellspouse.org](http://www.wellspouse.org)

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