

TOGETHER

A newsletter for patients and families from the Comprehensive Cancer Support Program and the Patient and Family Advisory Council at the N.C. Cancer Hospital

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COVID-19 UPDATE

All adults are now eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine. Most cancer patients can be vaccinated. **To schedule your vaccine, visit [YourShot.org](https://yourshot.org), call us at 984-215-5485, or contact your local health department.** Even after you get a Covid-19 vaccine, you should continue to wear a mask, wash your hands regularly, and stay 6 feet apart. Just like other vaccines, the Covid-19 vaccines can cause minor side effects. If you are worried about potential side effects, contact your doctor. See next page for more vaccine information.

PATIENT AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Navigating through a cancer journey can be confusing and exhausting and we are here to help.

The Mary Anne Long Patient and Family Resource Center (PFRC) is in the lobby on the ground floor of the N.C. Cancer Hospital and is the home base for the Comprehensive Cancer Support Program. Here you will find support, education, and resource connections.

Our staff will help with your specific needs. We can speak with you about a range of issues. Staff is also available to discuss advance directives such as living wills and health care power of attorney.



Patient and Family Resource Center
<https://unclineberger.org/pfrc/>

In our library you can learn more about your diagnosis, treatment side effects, relaxation, exercise, nutrition, and caregiver support. We offer internet access as well as printer, fax, and copier service.

Our relaxation services include quiet areas for resting or watching a movie. The PFRC also has a relaxation therapy room

with massage chairs and relaxing audios and videos. Many other items are available for your comfort.

The Mary Anne Long Brighter Image Boutique is in the PFRC. The Boutique has many types of head coverings for patients receiving chemotherapy at the

N.C. Cancer Hospital, Chapel Hill. Staff can also refer you to other resources online or closer to your home.

Call us at (984) 974-8100 for more information. You only need an appointment to visit the boutique. We look forward to seeing you during our regular hours on Monday–Friday from 7:30AM–4:00PM.

For most up-to-date information check: <https://unclineberger.org/ccsp/>

PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Since 2009, the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) has worked alongside the staff of the N.C. Cancer Hospital to enhance patient- and family-centered care. You, too, can become a member of the PFAC.

We invite you to:

- **Partner** with our health care team

- **Develop programs** that benefit patients, staff, and caregivers
- **Teach, advocate, and participate in** committees and share your point of view

Want to learn more about the advisory council? Please contact Loretta Muss at loretta_muss@med.unc.edu.

“Our Council’s primary goal is to look for opportunities to improve the patient/caregiver experience. PFAC members participate in many important healthcare projects and are recognized for their valued input. We strive to represent our patient/caregiver population in gender, ethnicity, race, and age, as well as passion and commitment.”

Larry Hutchison
PFAC President



LETTER FROM DR. BASCH

I am gratified to write you in appreciation of our patients and their families and loved ones. At UNC, we recognize how challenging it is to be a patient or caregiver during these times. I also want to express my gratitude to the wonderful UNC doctors, nurses, and staff who have shown deep commitment over the last year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Patient and Family Resource Center is a central part of our community, now more than ever. The Center provides education and outreach for patients, and also serves as an essential voice that ensures the North Carolina Cancer Hospital and the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center (see page 4) remain patient-centered in our planning and processes. We

don't always get it right, but we are always trying.

We are at the height of our Covid-19 vaccine efforts in North Carolina. People with cancer are at an increased risk for sickness and death from Covid-19. Our Cancer Hospital recommends that most patients with cancer, including those receiving cancer treatment, be vaccinated. Vaccine supplies have been limited in the past but we are hopeful that moving forward there will be increasing supply.

Scientists found that vaccines could help prevent people from getting sick with Covid-19. The Covid-19 vaccines went through every stage of clinical trials and more than 70,000 people of all different races and ethnicities participated in the trials. Health professionals will continue to monitor the vaccines' safety and effectiveness.

This year, we are working in many areas to increase patient-centered care in our Cancer Hospital. We aim to increase the number of staff members who help coordinate visits. We plan to improve the efficiency and communication throughout a visit day. We have worked to

make video and telephone visits smoother during the pandemic and while we have come very far, we strive to keep improving the "virtual visit" experience. We anticipate that even when Covid is over we will continue some virtual visits when that is better for patients.

We have formed committees that focus on equity, inclusiveness, and diversity in everything we do. Like so many of you, we have been touched by events these past years. We need to meet the needs of each of our patients with compassion and professionalism no matter what their circumstances or background.

In closing, I want to express to you our commitment to the people of our state, to offering the best science and knowledge to our patients, and to providing thoughtful and compassionate care.

Sincerely,

Ethan Basch, MD,
MSc Distinguished Professor
and Chief of Oncology
Physician-in-Chief, North
Carolina Cancer Hospital

"We need to meet the needs of each of our patients with compassion and professionalism no matter what their circumstances or background."

COVID VACCINE AND CANCER

- Some patients with specific cancers or those receiving certain treatments may have a low platelet count (part of the blood that helps with clotting). If this is your situation, talk with your care team prior to getting vaccinated.
- Patients who have undergone a stem cell transplant (SCT) or Car-T/Cellular Therapy (CT) will need to wait at least 3 months after their transplant to receive a vaccine.
- People who have serious allergies and/or are pregnant, breastfeeding, or immunocompromised should talk with their doctor before receiving a Covid-19 vaccine.



NUTRITION

We talked with Oncology Dietitian Jennifer Spring, RD, CSO, LDN, who shared key nutrition messages:

Focus on being consistent, not perfect

Spring recommends eating as normal as possible during treatment. “The goal during treatment is to maintain your weight. Eat small, frequent meals so you can nourish your body and have the energy to get through treatment,” she says. However, don’t pressure yourself to be perfect.

Sometimes it is fine to eat a burger or a cookie!

2. Plant-based eating is important for everyone

A plant-based diet is good for patients, survivors, and caregivers. Spring explains, “plants provide phytochemicals, which can decrease inflammation, help boost your immune system, and help reduce the risk of cancer cell growth.” Try to eat at least 5-7 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables a day.

3. Look at reliable resources

Do you want to learn more? It’s important to check trusted resources. A great place to start is the UNC Lineberger’s Nutrition Program website (<https://unclineberger.org/nutrition/>). You can get recipes, tips on managing symptoms, and more.

Remember that if you need specific help nutrition counselling is available for all cancer patients at the N.C. Cancer Hospital.

“The goal during treatment is to maintain your weight. Eat small, frequent meals so you can nourish your body and have the energy to get through treatment.”

WELLNESS

Movement and exercise can help everyone. Exercise is especially important during and after cancer treatment, and for caregivers.

According to Carly Bailey, Program Director of Physical Activity and Integrative Oncology at UNC Lineberger, exercise:

- Helps with stress
- Helps manage depression
- Increases physical fitness
- Improves strength
- Improves quality of life
- Improves tiredness
- Helps with focus

Research has found exercise is safe for most people. Before starting a new exercise program you should always check with your doctor. Remember to start small. Doing something each day is better than doing nothing!

“Making choices to prioritize your health and wellbeing during Covid-19 (and in non-Covid times!) is a victory that is worth celebrating. As an exercise physiologist, I suggest to start with walking. The distance and time is totally up to you, and then build slowly over time as you get stronger. Enlisting a buddy to help support you in a Covid-safe and doctor-approved way can also help you get moving if you’re feeling stuck.”

The Cancer Center has tools to help during Covid and beyond. These are four free remote programs:

- **Get Real and Heel** offers daily live exercise classes. These classes focus on cardio, strength and balance training. All workouts are recorded if you can’t make the live classes. This program requires your doctor’s clearance.

- **Yoga** is offered daily via zoom. Classes are appropriate for beginners and those more experienced.

- **HealthScore** Health Coaching Program is a research study. Participants are paired with a health coach for 6 months. Participants are asked to wear a fitbit and complete weekly surveys.

- **Mindful Moments** offers meditation, visualization, and guided relaxation.

You can also have a remote Integrative Oncology visit. They can help manage your symptoms and focus on your overall well-being. This visit is billed to your insurance.

Contact Carly Bailey for information on any of these programs.
Email: carly_bailey@med.unc.edu
Phone: (919) 445-4255



COMPREHENSIVE CANCER SUPPORT PROGRAM (CCSP)



The Comprehensive Cancer Support Program (CCSP) provides a wide range of educational and clinical services for cancer patients and their families. We are here to help you and your family.

Where: N.C. Cancer Hospital, Ground Floor Tony Williams Lobby
Phone: (984) 974-8100
Website: www.unclineberger.org/ccsp
Email: ccsp@med.unc.edu to join the monthly listserv

THE MARY ANNE LONG PATIENT AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER (PFRC)

The PFRC is the home base for your support, education, referrals and resource connections including an education center, relaxation room, and boutique for head coverings.

ADOLESCENT & YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM (AYA)

The AYA Program offers support, resources, events and connections with other young people coping with cancer. www.uncaya.org or email ayacancer@med.unc.edu

COUNSELING & PSYCHIATRY

Services are offered by our psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors and include compassionate support and symptom management for the challenges that often come with a cancer diagnosis. Open to patients and caregivers. To schedule an appointment: 919.966.3494

DIETITIANS

Dietitians from the Outpatient Oncology Team provide nutrition counseling and work with patients undergoing surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

FINANCIAL & LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The UNC Pro Bono Legal Clinic helps prepare future health care planning documents. Patient Assistance Coordinators, along with your nurse navigator & social worker, can help you find resources that may lessen the financial burden of a cancer diagnosis. 984.974.8112

INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY CONSULTS

Consults offer personal health strategies by combining complementary therapies that are safe and effective with conventional medical approaches. 919.966.3494

HEALTH COACHING/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, MASSAGE THERAPY & YOGA

These services are available to help you include physical activity and relaxation into your lives, including yoga, massage therapy, Get Real and Heel (a 16-week free exercise program), Healthscore (a remote health coaching program), and individual consultations. 919.445.4255

CAREGIVERS

Caregivers play a huge role in the patient's recovery. We're here to help you every step of the way. <http://caregivers.web.unc.edu/>

SURVIVORSHIP

Survivorship care focuses on your needs from the time of diagnosis, through the balance of your life and offers survivorship clinics, care plans, educational programs that includes exercise, nutrition, and stress management. Join us for **Cancer Transitions:** A free wellness workshop for adult cancer survivors and their caregivers after treatment, offered virtually through UNC odd months and through Rex on even months.

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COUNSELING & PSYCHIATRY	919.966.3494
FINANCIAL & LEGAL ASSISTANCE	984.974.8112
HEALTH COACHING/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/YOGA/MASSAGE	919.445.4255
INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY CONSULTS	919.966.3494

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