

introduction



CANCER101 Inc. was inspired by my experience with breast cancer and the experience of countless other cancer patients I met along the way through my treatments and recovery. In addition to cancer, we all shared the frustration of finding ourselves thrown into a strange new world of medical information and confusing terms. Suddenly we had to make choices about doctors, cancer trials and treatments while managing our daily responsibilities of work and family. Selecting trustworthy research from the thousands of Web sites, books, nonprofits and institutions only increased our anxiety. After I recovered from my treatments, I knew there had to be an easier way for cancer patients and caregivers to manage this difficult time. Having a plan of attack, getting access to the best information and having a way to stay organized is half the battle for patients and their caregivers.

Get Organized

Getting organized helps keep you calm. And staying calm will help you focus on what is important: treatment and recovery. Use the planner to manage and track your doctor conversations, appointments, medications, symptoms, medical history, test results, billing, insurance reimbursements, important telephone numbers and paperwork. This organizer is designed for you to use for as long as you need to see your doctors for follow-up appointments. And if you move someday or your doctor retires, you'll have everything you need in one place to share with your new doctors.

Get Informed

Knowledge is power. Learn about treatment choices and discover cancer studies that are available to you. Get a second opinion if time allows. Learn a new medical language and ask your medical team any and all questions you have. There are lots of people just like you with whom to share this experience. You are not alone! Seek emotional support from professionals or support groups at your cancer center, local community centers, churches or synagogues. Just ask a healthcare professional for a list of local resources. If you need information about your cancer or other practical advice, use the recommended list of resources inside this planner.

CANCER101 Will Help Empower You

A cancer diagnosis can bring a major change in your life. I consider mine a lifestyle change. And for some of us – it's the wake-up call we need to take better care of ourselves. It is important to take responsibility for your

continued health and well-being. This means you should stay on your oral medication if prescribed by your doctor and go to all your doctor appointments. Eat well and exercise. Take charge of your health for yourself, for your loved ones and for all those who depend on you. Our planner is designed to empower you to stay in control of your new lifestyle which now includes your medications, medical bills and years of follow-up appointments. The reality is that for some of us, cancer does come back. So, when you are finished with your treatments, remember it's up to you to make sure that if it does, your doctor can catch it early!

My Story – Before CANCER101

At 36 I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and my experience included taking the gene test, testing positive for the BRCA 1 gene, surgery, eight rounds of chemotherapy, six weeks of radiation, and reconstructive surgery. I also participated in a clinical trial. With my family living in Chicago and working for a company that was less than supportive of my cancer, I know a little something about managing a cancer diagnosis and all that goes with it.

My Story – With CANCER101

Six years after my breast cancer and just when I was about to send the planner to the printer, I learned that I had a new primary cancer. This time it was ovarian. I grabbed a sample planner and ran to my first appointment. I can say first-hand that my caregiver and I had a much easier time fighting my cancer using the CANCER101 Planner. Having one place to find essential life-saving information made this experience far less emotionally taxing. You would think that having cancer a second time might be easier than the first, but as it turns out, the fears, emotional feelings and the need to get informed are the same as with the first diagnosis.

With both cancers, I used humor to get me through. It was my way of dealing with the scary news, the hours and sometimes days of waiting for test results. Everyone deals with his or her experiences differently. I hope my sense of humor puts a smile on your face and the tools and suggestions in this planner help you to take control of your diagnosis. Most importantly, try not to panic about what you don't know (like test results). Stay focused. Stay positive. Stay organized and informed. You'll get through it. I did (twice) and so will you!

Healthy wishes,

Monica Knoll
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