

Coping With Prostate Cancer

Facing a prostate cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming. Your stress levels may skyrocket. You may worry about finances. And you may be asking yourself hard questions, such as whether to write a will or to complete advance directives. With education and supportive care, you will be able to deal with the many issues and emotions you're facing.

The most important step you can take is to seek help as soon as you feel you are having trouble coping. Taking action early will enable you to understand and deal with the many effects of your

Some tips to get you started:

- Do not hesitate to ask your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider to repeat any instructions or medical terms you don't understand. Your medical team should always be available to answer your questions and address your concerns.
- Make use of resources and support services offered by your hospital and in the community. Learning more about your disease will help you feel more at ease with your treatment.
- Ask your family and friends to help you sort through the information you receive.
- Talk with other patients and families about prostate cancer and its treatment.

Many sources of help are available to provide support for patients and their families. These include:

- **Social workers.** These professionals can help diminish any concerns you and your family may have about your diagnosis, treatment, or your personal situation. Social workers can also provide education, counseling about lifestyle changes, and referrals to community or national agencies and support groups.

Your social worker can also help your family find temporary lodging, provide information about community resources, and help you with other needs.

- **Individual counseling.** Sometimes people have problems that are better addressed in a one-on-one setting. By doing individual counseling, you may be better able to express sensitive or private feelings you have about your illness and its impact on your life. Mental health professionals can help you regain a sense of control over your life. At times, if depression is present, medicines other than those treating the physical illness may be prescribed.

Palliative care specialists, or those trained in pain management, are also available to create a treatment plan to meet your specific needs.

- **Support groups.** Support groups are a very useful sharing experience. They provide an environment where you can learn new ways of dealing with your illness. Sometimes, others who have been through similar experiences can explain things differently than your health care providers. You may also want to share approaches you have discovered

with others. And you will gain strength in knowing that you are not facing hardships alone.

Remember that others may share information or experiences that do not apply to you. Never replace your doctor's advice with that given by another patient.

- **Financial counselors.** Financial counselors are available through your hospital and can help answer questions you may have about financial issues related to your medical care.

Source: WebMD