

“Autumn carries more gold in its pocket than any of the other seasons.”

Jim Bishop

Supportive Services Update

November 2025

Welcome to the November issue of the Supportive Services Update.

Some may view November as a month of change and transition. Thanksgiving and Halloween are past and the bustle of the holidays will soon begin. The weather is constantly changing. It feels and looks like fall one day and like winter the next. Our rakes are out to clean up the leaves, but the shovel is close by.

November also brings Remembrance Day, a time to reflect, remember and honour all the veterans and their families who have made sacrifices and given their lives for our country.

This month we also acknowledge the various cancer awareness days, including Lung Cancer Awareness Month, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, World Neuroendocrine Cancer Day (November 10) and Stomach Cancer Awareness Day (November 30).

We always enjoy hearing from you. If you have suggestions for future Issues, contact:

Laura O'Brien at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre
306-766-2512

Lindsay Kostyniuk at the Saskatoon Cancer Centre
306-655-2672



What's Inside

Dignity Therapy

Androgen Deprivation Therapy Class

In the Library: 100 Questions and Answers Series

Clinical Oncology Social Workers

Meet Our Quality Care Coordinator

Nutrition Topic: Eating to Energize

Recipe: Easy Avocado Toast

Mind Body Connection: The Circuit Breaker Breathe Work

Community Spotlight: LiveWell with Cancer Workshops

Dignity Therapy

Dignity Therapy is a brief intervention designed for individuals with a life-limiting disease to help conserve an individual's sense of dignity by addressing sources of psychosocial and existential distress at the end of life. It gives individuals a chance to record the meaningful aspects of their lives and leave something behind that can benefit their loved ones in the future. During an approximately 60 minute session, a trained clinical oncology social worker asks a series of open-ended questions that encourage an individual to talk about their lives or what matters most to them. The conversation is recorded, transcribed, and then edited by the social worker before being returned to the individual, who is given the opportunity to read the transcript and make changes before a final version is produced. This therapy can be done at bedside, with or without the support of loved ones, and in multiple sessions if needed.

If you'd like to book a Dignity Therapy session or have more questions on Dignity Therapy, call (306) 655-6811 in Saskatoon or 306-766-2973 in Regina.

Information on Dignity in Care can also be found at www.dignityincare.ca.



Androgen Deprivation Therapy Class

For prostate cancer patients starting on ADT and their partners
Available in Regina, Saskatoon and virtually

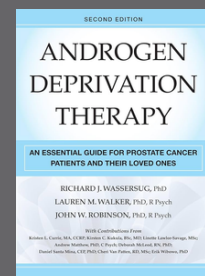
Participants will receive:

- An overview of what to expect from ADT
- Learn specific ways to manage side effects
- Get strategies to help them succeed in making lifestyle changes

Participants receive a free copy of the book, "Androgen Deprivation Therapy: An Essential Guide for Prostate Cancer Patients and their Loved Ones" by Richard J. Wassersug PhD, Lauren Walker PhD and John Robinson

Classes are held once a month in Regina and every second month in Saskatoon. Virtual options are also available at lifeonadt.com.

To register, call (306) 766-2973 (Regina) or (306) 655-6811 (Saskatoon)

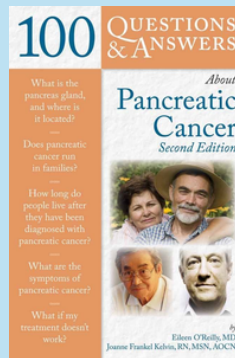
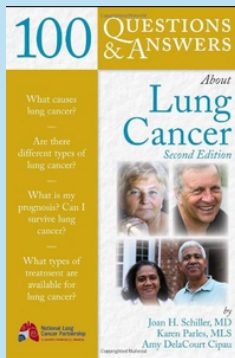


In the Library

100 Questions and Answers Series

Whether looking for information about a specific cancer type, cancer treatment, side effect or caring for someone diagnosed with cancer, there is sure to be a book available in the 100 Questions and Answers series. Written by cancer professionals and featuring comments from actual patients, each book provides answers to most commonly asked questions about cancer, treatment, supportive care and more.

Check out these books and others at the library at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and Saskatoon Cancer Centre.



Clinical Oncology Social Workers

Social workers at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and Saskatoon Cancer Centre follow a holistic approach. They support each patient's emotional, social and spiritual well-being throughout their entire cancer journey and beyond.

Clinical Oncology Social Workers help with:

- Individual counselling
- Practical support
- Navigating the health care system
- Creating and facilitating support groups
- Connecting patients and families to appropriate community services and resources
- Finding coping strategies for dealing with an illness
- Advocating for patients

Looking for social work support? Ask your healthcare provider for a referral. All social work services and groups are free for patients and their support people.

Meet our Quality of Care Coordinator (QCC)

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency's Quality of Care Coordinator (QCC), Nicole Protz, is putting patient concerns and safety first!

Nicole is available to support patients and families with concerns about their care. She works hard to find answers to your questions and help resolve your concerns to your satisfaction. Every call to the office receives quick, individual attention. Your information will remain strictly confidential, and she will only investigate with your consent.

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency encourages patients to speak to someone on their healthcare team if they have questions or concerns about their cancer care. Our healthcare teams are always ready to support you as much as possible. However, if you have concerns that need extra attention, our QCC will:

- Listen to your concerns.
- Work hard to find answers to your questions.
- Help resolve your concerns.
- Make recommendations for improvements where necessary.
- Explain your rights and responsibilities and the Cancer Agency's policies.
- Talk to staff on your behalf, if you wish.

If you have an opinion, concern or suggestion related to cancer care, please give Nicole a call at 639-625-2180 or toll-free at 1-866-577-6489, or via email qcc@saskcancer.ca.

It's important to note that all conversations with the Quality of Care Coordinator are private and kept confidential unless you give your permission to speak or act on your behalf.

The quality of your care will not be adversely affected if you raise a concern.

I truly enjoy making a difference in patients lives by ensuring they receive the best care each and every day. It's rewarding to collaborate with other teams to solve problems and continuously improve our standards of care.

-Nicole Protz



Nutrition Topic: Eating to Energize

Cancer-related fatigue is one of the most common and distressing side effects of cancer and its treatment—often described as a persistent, overwhelming exhaustion that rest doesn't fully relieve. Unlike everyday tiredness, this type of fatigue can affect every aspect of life, from physical function to emotional well-being. While it may feel difficult to manage, nutrition can play a meaningful role in supporting energy levels, enhancing recovery, and helping people feel more in control during or after cancer treatment.



In this article, we'll explore practical, evidence-informed nutrition strategies that can help ease fatigue and support overall vitality throughout the cancer journey.

Tips to Help Reduce Cancer- Related Fatigue

Fuel Up at Regular Intervals

Eating every few hours gives your body a constant source of energy

Include a Source of Carbohydrate and Protein with all Meals and Snacks

Eat energy-dense and protein-rich foods for longer lasting fuel for your body i.e. crackers or apple slices with cheese or nut butter

Stay Well Hydrated

Aim for at least 6-8 cups of fluid each day by sipping fluids regularly throughout the day i.e. water or sparkling water, broth or soup, milk or milk alternatives

Stay Active

It's been proven that exercising regularly is the best strategy to help reduce cancer related fatigue. It is important to start slowly and gradually build up time and intensity of your workouts - every little bit counts. It is recommended to talk to your doctor before starting any kind of exercise program.

Tips to Make Food Preparation Easier

Grocery Shopping

Organize your grocery list by aisle so you don't have to walk too far

Shop at less busy times to avoid line-ups

Arrange for home delivery if possible or order groceries online for pick up

Buy only what you can easily carry

Cooking

Use tools like a mandolin or dicer rather than cutting by hand

Choose recipes for one-pot meals

Make large batches of food when you have energy and freeze in portions

Ask for help in the kitchen, if possible

Eating to Energize: Quick Meals and Snacks

Consider meals that don't require cooking like:

- Canned fish, crackers and sliced vegetables
- Yogurt, fruit and granola
- Nut butter sandwich, homemade fruit and vegetable smoothie
- Leftover fish or chicken used in a sandwich with a side salad
- Peanut butter and jam sandwich with fruit salad and a cup of milk or milk alternatives
- Mashed canned chickpea sandwich made with whole grain bread, lettuce and tomato
- Packaged ready-to-eat tofu, hummus and pita, sliced vegetables, fruit smoothie

FOODS TO HAVE IN STOCK		
ITEMS TO KEEP IN YOUR FRIDGE	<input type="checkbox"/> Frozen meals	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt	<input type="checkbox"/> Frozen fruit	
<input type="checkbox"/> Avocado	<input type="checkbox"/> Batch cooking leftovers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs		
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheese	ITEMS TO KEEP IN YOUR PANTRY	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cottage cheese	<input type="checkbox"/> Rice Cakes/ Crackers	<input type="checkbox"/> Protein bars
<input type="checkbox"/> Tofu	<input type="checkbox"/> Bread	<input type="checkbox"/> Hemp Hearts
<input type="checkbox"/> Packaged ready-to-eat tofu	<input type="checkbox"/> Pasta	<input type="checkbox"/> Canned beans
<input type="checkbox"/> Fruits and Vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/> Cereal	<input type="checkbox"/> Canned fish
<input type="checkbox"/> Milk/Non-dairy beverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Quinoa/ Buckwheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Bread, pita, naan
<input type="checkbox"/> Nut butter	<input type="checkbox"/> Nuts and seeds	

Photo and Info Source: <https://www.nourishonline.ca/spotlight/quick-meals-and-snacks/>

Recipe: Easy Avocado Toast

Ingredients

- ½ avocado, ripe
- 2 slices whole grain toast
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Cayenne or garlic, to taste (optional)
- Squeeze of lime (optional)
- 1 hard-boiled egg, sliced



Directions

- Scoop out the avocado flesh and spread it onto the toast by mashing it with the back of a fork.
- Sprinkle salt, pepper, cayenne and squeeze of lime. Then layer hard-boiled egg slices on top of the avocado mash, and sprinkle with a little more salt and pepper.

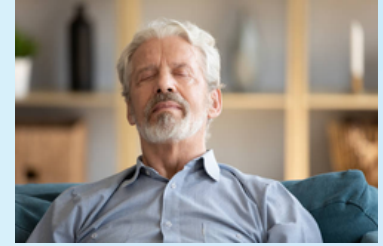
Recipe Source: <https://www.cookforyourlife.org/recipes/avocado-and-egg-toast/>

Have you been unintentionally losing weight or eating less than usual? Do you have specific questions about food and nutrition during or after cancer treatments? Ask your health care team to refer you to a cancer center dietitian for personalized nutrition advice.

Mind Body Connection



The Circuit Breaker (Breath Work)



Managing our own anxiety or negative thoughts can be difficult when we do not have the skills to flip the narrative. One helpful proven way is through the use of our own breath. Learning how to use our bodies to help our mind relax or heal gives us a sense of personal control. Let's learn a new skill.

Sitting in a comfortable position:

1. The Breath In:

Through the nose, take a deep breath, through your nose until your lungs feel full. Using your fingers count how long it took to take that breath. Be aware of how long this has taken. 3 seconds, 4 seconds, 5 seconds? Remember that time frame. This breath is a slow and deliberate intake.

2. The Hold:

Remember how long it took to take that breath? Now using your fingers again to count, hold that breath for the same amount of time that it took for you to fill your lungs.

3. The Release:

Do you remember how long it took to take in the breath? To hold it? Now.....

Purse your lips like you are blowing a kiss and guide that breath out to the same count, again use your fingers to count it out. This is a slow deliberate release.

Now reflect back on your original thought when you started the breath work. Was it there while you were learning/practicing this new skill? If not, you broke the circuit. If you need to, do it again until you feel calm and your mind is clear.

This skill takes practice. It doesn't guarantee that the anxiety or negative thought won't come back, but what it does do, is give you and your mind a pause. This pause helps us to regroup, then to challenge the negative idea, it helps us to be present and to be mindful.

To Pause
To Challenge
To be Present
To be Mindful

Well done, you just learned a new skill in moving yourself forward and building on your personal toolbox to maintain good mental health.

Allan Blair Cancer Centre Groups and Services

Cancer Transitions Program

A 6 week program for patients who have completed cancer treatment. Issues of survivorship, emotional wellness, nutrition, exercise and moving forward after treatment are addressed.

Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT) Class

For prostate cancer patients starting on ADT and their partners.

Offered on the 4th Friday of the month.

Dignity Therapy Service

A brief intervention designed to help conserve the dying patient's sense of dignity. It gives patients a chance to record the meaningful aspects of their lives and leave something behind that can benefit their loved ones in the future.

Body Image Group

A 6 week course offered once a week which provides you with insight, support, and the tools necessary to guide you on your way to a healthier you.

Walk and Talk

The "Walk and Talk" group for cancer patients meets weekly on Wednesday mornings from May 7-October 29, combining light exercise with emotional support. The group provides a safe space to connect with others, share experiences and build supportive relationships.

Wig Studio

Wigs, headwear, and books are available free of charge to cancer patients. Location: Level 1. Monday-Friday 8:00 am-4:00 pm. A volunteer must be present to assist.

Contact Laura O'Brien at 306-766-2512.

One Breath

A five week anticipatory grief group offered to patients and/or loved ones. The group will allow participants to discuss and share their thoughts and feelings surrounding a terminal illness. We will reflect on topics such as coping strategies, legacy work, self care, forgiveness, and creating moments of connection.

A Life Worth Writing

This 4 week virtual expressive writing group provides patients with the opportunity to reflect, process and express their individual and/or collective experiences, which may or may not be directly impacted by their cancer experience.

Expressive Art Therapy

Expressive art therapy is a multimodal approach that integrates various forms of creative expression, such as visual arts, music and writing to promote emotional healing and personal growth.

For more information or to register for groups, please call 306-766-2973.



**Support Services and Programs are made possible
thanks to our generous donors**

Saskatoon Cancer Centre Groups and Services

Cancer Transitions Program

New program details coming soon.

Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT)

Class

For prostate cancer patients starting on ADT and their support persons.

Dignity Therapy Service

A brief intervention designed to help conserve the dying patient's sense of dignity by addressing sources of psychosocial and existential distress. It gives patients a chance to record the meaningful aspects of their lives and leave something behind that can benefit their loved ones in the future. Referrals accepted anytime. Ask to speak with a social worker for more information.

Creative Journeys: Exploring Healing through Art, Writing, Music & Drama

Creative Journeys is designed to nurture self-expression through the creative process. Each week, participants are invited to explore a different art modality- visual art, writing, music and drama- guided by our social work team and a music therapist who bring their own unique approach. Rather than relying on talk therapy, this program opens space for alternative pathways by allowing participants to express emotions, discover resilience and connect with others through creativity.

For more information or to register for groups, please call 306-655-6811

Volunteer Room/Wig Boutique

Wigs, headwear, and books are available free of charge to cancer patients. Location: CG202. Monday-Friday 9:00 am-3:00 pm. A volunteer must be present to assist you. Contact Cindy Beaulé at 306-655-2688.

Walk and Talk

The "Walk and Talk" group for cancer patients meets weekly in the fall and spring months, combining light exercise with emotional support. The group provides a safe space to connect with others, share experiences and build supportive relationships.

Restorative Yoga

Virtual class for patients/support people. Restoration to body, mind, and spirit. Held Saturday mornings throughout the year.

iRest® Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is a research-based, guided meditation based on the ancient practice of Yoga Nidra (yoga sleep). This meditation uses a clinically proven 10 step protocol effective in reducing stress and anxiety while improving sleep and overall resilience. Each session will begin with Marie helping you find a restful position for relaxation followed by a guided meditation that will be approximately 45 minutes long. Held Monday evenings throughout the year.

Saskatoon Cancer Centre Physiotherapy Group

The SCC and Mackie Physiotherapy have joined together to provide a 6 week physio group for our cancer patients. The group is facilitated by physio therapist Melissa Doerksen. This group is for any individual in cancer remission or undergoing cancer treatment. The group will help provide you with strategies and education that can help improve function and quality of life. The group is held on Wednesday afternoons at Mackie Physiotherapy in Saskatoon.



Support Services and Programs are made possible
thanks to our generous donors

Community Spotlight

LiveWell with Cancer Workshops



November 13-December 18 (Thursdays)

1:30pm–2:30pm

Held over the Telephone

An SMRC Evidence-Based Self-Management Program originally developed at Stanford University.

What is it?

2.5 hour self-management workshops that meet once per week for 6 weeks– led by trained peer leaders. Currently offered virtually. Classes are highly participatory. The focus is on building skills for managing your health and maintaining an active and fulfilling life. There is no cost for this program. Each participant receives a free copy of the companion book, *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions*.

Who is it for?

People who are living with and/or have been affected by cancer.

Workshop topics include:

- Techniques to deal with symptoms of cancer and its treatments such as fatigue, pain, sleeplessness, shortness of breath, stress and emotional problems
- Fear of recurrence
- Changes in body image
- Appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength and endurance
- Healthy eating
- Making decisions about treatment and complementary therapy
- Working more effectively with health care providers
- Communicating with friends and family
- Action planning
- Problem solving
- Decision making

The LiveWell with Cancer Workshops do not interfere with current medical treatment and are designed to complement a persons' health care regime by teaching participants self-management skills.

To learn more or to register, call (306) 510-1599 in Regina or (306) 655-5483 in Saskatoon. Or, for additional community workshops, go to their website at <https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/your-health/conditions-illnesses-services-wellness/all-z/chronic-disease-management/livewell-saskatchewan>.