

“Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.”

– Robert Brault

Supportive Services Update

December 2025

Welcome to the December issue of the Supportive Services Update.

As the holidays approach, we want to remind you that it's ok to feel and do things differently this year. Whether you have just been diagnosed with cancer, are undergoing treatment or recently completed treatment, your body and mind may not be feeling up to celebrating the same way that you have in the past. Be gentle with yourself; set boundaries and focus on the things that bring you joy.

In January, we have several support groups starting. Whether through group support or individually, we are here to support you. Don't hesitate to connect with your health care team to learn more about all the support available to you.

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



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Yoga

Available Virtually for Saskatoon Cancer Centre and Allan Blair Cancer Centre Patients

iRest® Yoga Nidra - Mondays: 7:30p.m.-8:30 p.m., starting January 5 (drop-in)

iRest® Yoga Nidra is a research-based, guided meditation that uses a clinically proven 10 step protocol effective in reducing stress and anxiety while improving sleep and overall resilience. In the practice we learn to meet and greet all functions of the mind from our authentic grounded being. Each class will begin with the mindful set-up of the body into a pose of rest suitable for meditation.

Restorative Yoga- Saturdays: 9:00a.m. - 10:15 a.m., starting January 3 (no drop-ins)

This is a classical restorative yoga class, where props are used to create postures of ease and opening in the body as a means to releasing tension, deepening awareness and restoring energy. Classes will be taught so that each participant can use the props they already have at home.

Both sessions are 12 weeks in length and are facilitated virtually over Zoom by yoga instructor Marie Brown Berg from *Marie Brown Berg Yoga* in Saskatoon. Registration is required for both. For more information or to register, call (306) 655-6811.



Marie Brown Berg

A Life Worth Writing

Available Virtually for Saskatoon Cancer Centre and Allan Blair Cancer Centre Patients

Held once monthly, this virtual writing group offers cancer patients a nurturing space to express emotions, reduce stress, and reflect deeply on their journey. Through guided prompts and shared reflection, participants tap into writing's powerful ability to foster resilience, enhance emotional healing, and improve quality of life - benefits supported by research showing expressive writing can boost psychological well-being and coping among cancer survivors.

To learn more or register, call (306) 766-2973.

Mondays 10:00-11:00am

January 12

February 9

March 9

April 13

May 11

June 8

July 13

August 10

September 14

October - stat

November 9

December 14

Princess Margaret Online Cancer Classes

Adult Cancer Survivor Series

In January 2025, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA) became one of the earliest provincial cancer programs in Canada to join the Princess Margaret (PM) Cancer Care Network. This collaboration will strengthen expertise, expand access to cancer services, and advance education and research, ultimately enhancing care and support for patients and their caregivers.

There are a variety of free online cancer classes that are available to all of our patients and their families and friends and can be accessed anytime and anywhere.

The Adult Cancer Survivor Series is designed to help patients and their families prepare for life after cancer treatment. It is made up of five courses:

- Life After Cancer
- Side Effects After Treatment
- Fear of Recurrence
- Prepare to Return to Work
- Changes to Sexual Function

The series is available on our website at <https://saskcancer.ca/treatments/life-after-treatment>.

To learn more and access all classes available through Princess Margaret, go to pmcancerclasses.ca.

Online Nutrition Education Series for Breast Cancer Survivors

Navigating nutrition during your cancer journey can be overwhelming. Our Registered Dietitians are available to help simplify the information and provide you with reliable resources and practical ideas to support your nutritional needs.

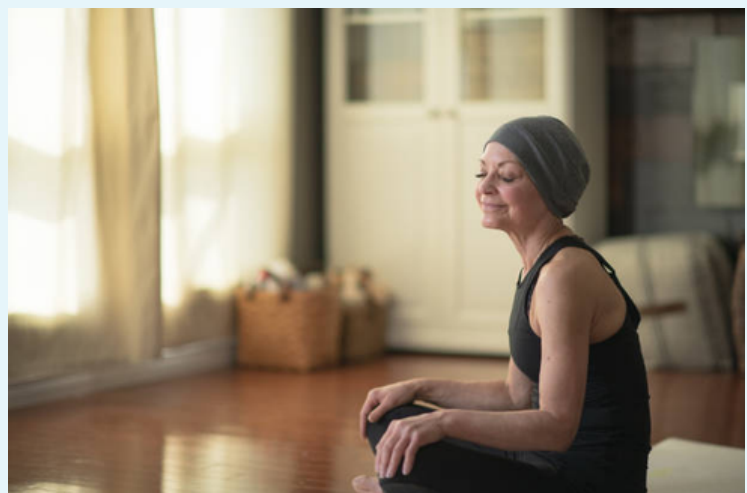
We offer free online nutrition education group sessions focused on hot topics related to breast cancer and nutrition. Check out some of these sessions available on our website at <https://saskcancer.ca/services-resources/nutrition>. And stay tuned for new online sessions available in 2026!

Whether you're newly diagnosed with breast cancer, in treatment, or navigating survivorship, these sessions are for you!

A Holiday Meditation for Cultivating Joy

The stress and exhaustion that you might be feeling can sometimes zap the joy that the holiday season is supposed to bring. For many, meditating can help you be more joyful and present. Try these simple steps to cultivate that joyful, jolly feeling:

- Find a quiet area where you can be alone.
- Sit in an upright position. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
- Continue with five deep breaths. Pay attention to how you are feeling, finding any discomfort or pain points and adjusting yourself to be more comfortable.
- Continue to breathe. Focus on the feeling of your chest rising and falling.
- Think of a holiday memory from your past when you felt deep joy. This could be a joyful holiday moment from your youth or from a recent memory. Focus on the details of that moment as you attempt to relive it in your mind, like you were watching a movie of that memory.
- Embrace the memory. As you bring that moment to the center of your consciousness, pay attention to the joyful emotions and sensations that you felt, the smells that you experienced (gingerbread and peppermint, perhaps?), and the rich tastes of the season. Stay with the memory for a while.
- Recreate those feelings in your life today. Perhaps this can be done with different people, a different location, and a different activity, but working to cultivate the same mood of joy for yourself and those you would like to share those feelings with.
- Release that visual and take 10 deep breaths, inhaling to fill yourself with the holiday spirit of joy, and exhaling to send joy out into the world.
- When you're finished, sit quietly for a few moments before gently opening your eyes.



Nutrition

Navigating the Season: Gentle Holiday Tips for Patients & Families

The holiday season can be joyful, but it may also feel overwhelming when you're living with cancer or adjusting to life after treatment.

Here are a few gentle reminders to help you navigate the season with care:

1) Prioritize energy and listen to your body—it's okay to say no to events or take breaks when needed. Taking time to yourself to recharge can help improve energy for those social events you want to attend. In addition, it can help to keep movement in your holiday toolbox - which can ultimately help ease any holiday stress that might surface. Research shows that exercise helps manage cancer-related fatigue, stress and reduces risk of cancer and/or cancer recurrence.

2) Be mindful with alcohol—research shows that alcohol can increase the risk of certain cancers and may interfere with medications or recovery. Consider festive non-alcoholic options like the mocktail recipe on the next page - and remember it's more than okay to say no to a toast or toast with a mocktail.

3) Choose nourishing foods that make you feel good but allow yourself to enjoy a few seasonal favourites without guilt. Part of celebrating the holidays can include enjoying your favorite holiday sweet treats. With this in mind- it's a good time to debunk that myth most have encountered on their cancer journey. You've probably heard the myth that "sugar feeds cancer," but the reality is more complex. All cells in the body—including cancer cells—use glucose (a form of sugar) for energy. However, there's no evidence that eating sugar directly causes cancer or makes it grow faster. What the research does show is that diets consistently high in added sugars may contribute to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and inflammation—all of which can increase the risk of developing certain cancers over time. That said, eliminating sugar isn't necessary or helpful. The key is to focus on a balanced diet rich in whole foods—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins—while being mindful of added sugars in processed foods and sweetened drinks. Enjoying a treat during the holidays or special occasions doesn't "feed" cancer—it's about the overall pattern of your eating, not one moment or one dessert.

4) Focus on moments, not perfection—nourishing your body includes more than just food; it also means feeding your spirit with connection, joy, and rest. The holidays don't have to be picture-perfect to be meaningful. Whether it's sharing a quiet cup of tea with a loved one or laughing over a simple meal, these small, fulfilling moments can be just as nourishing as the food on your plate. Let go of pressure and allow yourself to experience the season in whatever way feels right for you.

Information Source:

<https://www.aicr.org/resources/blog/alcohol-and-cancer-risk-what-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.aicr.org/resources/blog/top-questions-from-dietitians-about-diet-and-cancer/>



Recipe: Sparkling Rosemary and Cranberry Mocktail

Ingredients

Sparkling Rosemary & Cranberry Mocktail

- ¼ cup Fresh or Frozen Cranberries
- ¼ cup Fresh or Frozen Blackberries
- 4 tbsp (2 oz shot Fresh Clementine Juice, grapefruit or any orange juice)
- 1 cup Sparkling Water
- 2 tbsp Rosemary Simple Syrup
- 2 cups Ice

Rosemary Simple Syrup

- ½ cup Honey
- ¼ cup Boiling water
- 2 Rosemary Sprigs
- 2 tbsp Clementine or Orange Zest



Directions

1. Pour the honey, rosemary and orange zest in a small Mason jar or glass container with a lid. Pour in the boiling water, tighten the lid well and shake to combine. Store in the refrigerator to cool until ready to use.
2. Place cranberries, blackberries and clementine juice in a large glass or mason jar and muddle (crush) with a large wooden spoon. Add rosemary simple syrup and a few cubes of ice. Secure a lid on top and shake well.
3. Strain into glass filled with ice and top with sparkling water. Gently stir and garnish with clementine zest and a sprig of rosemary.

Recipe Source: https://www.ellicsr.ca/en/clinics_programs/ellicsr_kitchen/Pages/sparkling_rosemary_cranberry_mocktail.aspx

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.

Volunteers: Another Part of the Healthcare Team

Volunteers play an important role in the Allan Blair and Saskatoon Cancer Centres. Not only are they available to help staff, but more importantly, they are a source of support, information and encouragement for patients and their families. Volunteers can:

- Welcome and visit with patients coming into the cancer centre.
- Provide beverages and snacks free of cost to those having cancer treatment.
- Hand out warm blankets.
- Help people who lose their hair try on wigs and headwear.
- Guide and assist patients to where they need to go in the cancer centre and surrounding hospital.
- Help patients find written materials from the patient and family library or from the brochure racks.
- Talk about support groups and other support services available at the cancer centre.

Volunteers are happy to help! Don't hesitate to ask a volunteer for assistance. Or call the Coordinator of Volunteer Services for the Allan Blair Cancer Centre at (306) 766-2512 or the Saskatoon Cancer Centre at (306) 655-2688.



Wigs and Headwear

Did you know that the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and Saskatoon Cancer Centre have wigs and headwear available to those who have lost their hair due to cancer and its treatment?

For individuals who do not have personal health insurance that would cover the purchase of a new wig, a wig can be borrowed free of cost from the cancer centre.

An assortment of headwear is also available to all of our cancer patients at no cost.

Stop by the Wig Studio in Regina or the Boutique in Saskatoon or to book an appointment, call Laura in Regina at (306) 766-2512 or Cindy in Saskatoon at (306) 655-2688. Our volunteers will be happy to help you.

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, combining light exercise with emotional support. The group provides a safe space to connect with others, share experiences and build supportive relationships. The group meets outdoors in the warmer months and indoors in the winter.

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



Canadian
Cancer
Society

Volunteer Driving Program

The Canadian Cancer Society's Wheels of Hope Transportation Program provides people living with cancer rides to and from their cancer treatment appointments.

Dedicated volunteer drivers donate their time and use their own (or Society owned) vehicles to help people living with cancer get to the hospital or cancer centre.

New patients who register are required to pay an annual registration fee. Patients under the age of 18 are exempt.

Registration Eligibility

- Resides in Regina or Saskatoon
- Referred by a member of their healthcare team with permission
- Has received a cancer diagnosis
- Is receiving treatment for cancer
- Has no other means of transportation available
- Annual \$100 registration fee paid, with compassionate program available if they are unable

Please call 1-888-939-3333 for more information.