

## Supportive Services Update

### February 2026

Welcome to the February edition of the Supportive Services Update, a monthly newsletter that provides updates on upcoming groups, information about supportive care services available at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre, Saskatoon Cancer Centre or in the community and tips for coping with cancer.

In February, many people think about Valentine's Day. It is a day often dedicated to expressing our love for others. However, this year we also encourage you to pamper yourself with the same love and kindness that you give to others. Make an effort to do something that you enjoy such as eating your favourite meal, watching a favourite movie or having a long relaxing bath.

We have several new groups starting in the next couple of months. Keep reading to learn about some of those groups here and be sure to ask your healthcare team about other groups available to you.

We always love to hear from you so don't hesitate to connect with us at any time:

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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# Group Spotlight

## The Next Chapter

Available in Regina

The Next Chapter Program is a six-week series designed to help cancer survivors transition from treatment back to daily life with confidence and purpose. Structured around four key areas—Physical, Connected, Creative, and Contributing—each session offers tools and guidance to rebuild strength, reconnect with relationships, explore creative expression, and find meaningful ways to give back. This holistic approach empowers participants to honor their healing journey and embrace the next chapter with resilience and hope.

The next group will be held on Tuesdays afternoons, March 3 - April 7. To register, please call (306) 766-2973.



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

Available in Saskatoon

Creative Journeys is a group for cancer patients 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. Whether painting, journaling, making music, or engaging in dramatic expression, each session offers new ways to explore experiences, fostering insight, hope and community along the way.

Program Information:

Offered in Person at 1804 McOrmond Drive, Saskatoon

Dates: Wednesday's from 1-330 pm: March 4, 11, 18 & 25

Call: 306-655-6811 to register



# Group Spotlight

## Growing Forward: A Reflective Journey Using the Enneagram

### Available in Saskatoon

Finishing cancer treatment often brings relief – and unexpected questions. As appointments slow down, many people find themselves wondering, Who am I now? Roles, routines, and priorities may have shifted, leaving a sense of uncertainty about how to move forward.

This reflective group is designed for people who have completed active treatment and are navigating life beyond cancer.

Using the Enneagram as a gentle map of self-awareness, the group offers space to notice how we've learned to cope, what has sustained us, and what may be asking to change. This is not about fixing yourself or striving to be different. It's about understanding your inner responses, strengthening self-compassion, and re-imagining wholeness in this next season of life.

In this group, you can expect to:

- Explore emotional responses and coping patterns after treatment
- Reconnect with values, strengths, and inner resilience
- Feel less stuck and more grounded moving forward
- Connect with others who understand life after cancer
- Reclaim parts of yourself beyond illness, roles, or expectations

This is not therapy. It is a welcoming, reflective group focused on learning, connection, and personal growth. Sharing is always optional.

You are more than your diagnosis. Treatment may be over – but your story continues. Let's explore what comes next, together.

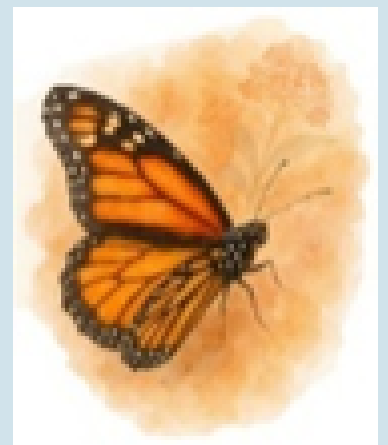
Next Session:

March 12, 19, 26, April 16, 23, 30

Time: 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Location: Horizon College - 604 Webster Street Saskatoon, SK

To register or learn more call 306-655-6811



# Gentle Nutrition Tips: Managing Taste Changes & Low Appetite During Cancer Treatment

During cancer treatment, eating can feel frustrating or unpredictable for some. Foods may taste different, smell stronger, or feel harder to tolerate. Appetite may be low or inconsistent, and hunger cues aren't always reliable.

If this is happening to you, you're not alone. Gentle nutrition focuses on supporting your body with flexibility and compassion, rather than following strict food rules. Here are some strategies to help you stay nourished while experiencing these challenges.

## Gentle Strategies to Optimize Nutrition

### Eat small and watch the clock

During treatment, your body may not give clear hunger signals. Setting gentle reminders to eat every few hours can help support your energy and healing – even if you're not hungry. A few bites still count.

### Temperature matters

Cold or room-temperature foods may be easier to tolerate, especially if smells or nausea are an issue. For example, yogurt with granola and fruit or trail mix.

### Add neutral foods

Choose foods that naturally provide protein and calories without feeling heavy, such as yogurt, milk, cheese, eggs, nut butters, smoothies, or soups.

### Adjust flavours to what works

If food tastes metallic or bland, mild tart or sweet flavours (like berries, citrus, or vanilla) may help. If flavours feel overwhelming, simple and familiar foods are just as nourishing.

### Comfort counts

During treatment, the “best” food is often the one that feels comforting and manageable. Nourishment does not need to be perfect to be helpful- it can help to try a comfort food.



*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 centre Dietitian for personalized nutrition advice*

# Recipe: Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter Energy Bites

## Ingredients

- 1 cup Prunes
- ½ cup Peanut Butter (or use other nut butters)
- ¾ cup Rolled Oats
- ¼ cup Dark Chocolate (at least 70%)
- 2 tbsp Cocoa Powder
- 2 tbsp Maple Syrup
- 1/8 tsp Salt



## Directions

1. Add dark chocolate, oats and prunes to a food processor and pulse until broken down into small crumbs.
2. Add remaining ingredients. Pulse until everything is broken down and combined evenly. The mixture should hold its shape if squeeze a small piece in your hands.
3. Turn out mixture onto a large sheet of parchment paper. Fold one end of the parchment over the mixture and use it to gently flatten the mixture into a flat rectangle. Use rolling pin or bottle to help smoothen in out. Try to flatten it to about a 1/2 inch thick.
4. Place the flattened sheet in the freezer. Freeze for about 30 minutes before cutting into squares with your knife. Place squares into a freezer bag and store in the freezer.

Source: [https://www.ellicsr.ca/en/clinics\\_programs/ellicsr\\_kitchen/Pages/Dark\\_Chocolate\\_PeanutButter\\_Energy\\_Bites.aspx](https://www.ellicsr.ca/en/clinics_programs/ellicsr_kitchen/Pages/Dark_Chocolate_PeanutButter_Energy_Bites.aspx)

# For the Love of Chocolate: Mindful Eating Meditation

Make a date this Valentine's Day to savor the gift of cocoa. Mindful eating encourages us to fully experience our food—its aroma, flavor, texture—and how it makes us feel. Eating chocolate is proven to calm nerves and promote happiness (it releases dopamine), and when we practice mindfulness as we consume it, we're offered a window into our mind and its long-held associations with this food. With practice, mindful eating can help you be more present in other areas of your life—making you better equipped to handle anything that comes your way.

**Observe** – Hold the chocolate in your hand. Mindfully take in what you see: What color is the wrapper? Is light reflecting off of it? Can you smell the candy? Feel its texture and its weight in your hand. Study it with curiosity.

**Unwrap** – Listen as you remove the candy from its wrapper. What sounds does it make? Do you smell anything? Keep focusing on shape, color, and texture. Does it feel soft or hard? Smooth or rough? Bring the chocolate toward your mouth, but don't bite into it yet. How does your body react? Are you salivating? Can you feel anticipation arising elsewhere for the bite you're about to take? What thoughts can you identify? Do you feel excited? Impatient? Hesitant? Observe your thoughts and feelings as though you're watching them move through your mind like clouds in the sky.

**Taste** – Now, take a small bite, and let it linger on your tongue, slowly rolling the creamy morsel around in your mouth. Is it sweet? Salty? Bitter? Fruity? Nutty? Try not to judge the flavor or categorize it as good or bad—simply experience it. Slowly begin to chew, keeping mindful of the texture you experience. Continue eating, slowly taking bites and immersing yourself in the experience—the aroma, the textures, the taste. When you've finished, sit for a few moments and reflect.

**Repeat** – Do it all again—tomorrow!

Source: <https://www.yogajournal.com/meditation/for-the-love-of-chocolate/>



# Creating a Self-Love List

On Valentine's Day, and all year round, we tend to focus on the things we love about others rather than think about the things we love about ourselves. This month, we encourage you to do just that by starting to create a self-love list. A self-love list is exactly what it sounds like: it's a list of things that you love about yourself.

Creating a self-love list is truly as simple as writing down everything you love about yourself. Make your list an ongoing list. It can be surprisingly hard to remember the things you love about yourself. Start with just one idea, then add to your list every time you think of something new.

## Things To Include In Your Self-Love List

### Accomplishments

What have you achieved? What are you proud of? Think about projects you've completed or goals you've reached. These can be in any area of your life: career, home, physical health, mental health, education, etc. Knowing that you can achieve things is a helpful reminder when you're working toward goals.

### Ways You've Helped Others

How have you helped others? Do you volunteer? Do you lend an hand to your neighbours? Are you fully present with your friends? Do you do the best you can to provide for your family? Does your work benefit the lives of others? You probably help people in more ways than you think!

### Obstacles You've Overcome

Think about adversity you've overcome or how you've succeeded despite the opinion of others. Think about tough times you've got through or the physical or mental struggles you've overcome. When facing obstacles in your life, it can be helpful to remember that you've already overcome so much.

### Personality Traits

What are some of your favorite things about yourself? Maybe you always see the bright side of any situation. Maybe you love that you are kind or that you are adventurous and like to try new things. We are all so unique and amazing, and there's so much to love about each of us.

### Physical Traits

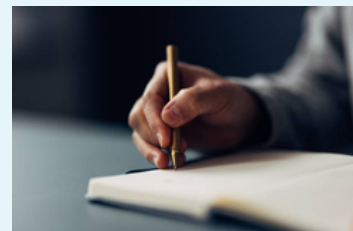
Finding physical traits that you love about yourself can be a sore spot for many people. Cancer may have also changed how you feel about your body. But with practice, it gets a little easier. If you have a hard time loving your physical appearance, try starting by loving the way your body provides for you.

### Affirmations

Finally, include some affirmations in your self-love list. The idea is to use these affirmations as reminders to affirm to yourself that you're amazing. Here are some ideas to get you started:



I am resilient  
I am strong  
I am lovable  
I am enough  
I am capable  
I am worthy  
I am smart



We hope this helps you create your own self-love list and, in turn, helps you love yourself a little more.

# Sex, Sexuality, Intimacy and Cancer

Sex, sexuality, and intimacy are an important part of life. Having cancer doesn't change this. But cancer and cancer treatment can affect how you express your sexuality. You might have changes to your sex organs, sex drive, sexual function, or body image.

There are ways to learn about, manage, and adapt to these changes.

It's important to ask your cancer care team how your cancer and treatment might affect sex and intimacy. Ask them what you can expect with your treatment. Continue to talk with them about what's changing with your sexual life as you go through procedures, treatments, and follow-up care.

**Don't assume your doctor or nurse will ask you about sex or intimacy problems. You might have to start the conversation.**

**Be as honest and open as possible.**

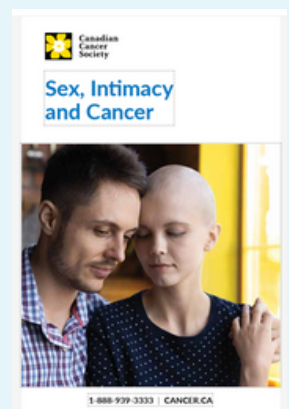
While you might feel embarrassed, know that sexuality is a normal part of life and any information you share with your cancer care team will be kept confidential. Once a conversation is started, it's easier to continue it and to bring it up again during your future visits.

**Ask for referrals if needed.**

Your doctor may refer you to an oncology social worker to help you deal with some fears and worries about the effects of cancer. If physical problems are interfering with your sexuality or sexual function, you might also get referred to a professional who can help with this.

## Access Written Resources

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency also has a number of written materials available, including books in our patient and family libraries, and brochures in our brochure racks such those shown below. Don't hesitate to ask a member of your healthcare team for helping finding these and other resources.



# Allan Blair Cancer Centre Groups and Services

**Body Image & Wellness Group** - A six-week guided series crafted to rebuild trust and deepen their connection with their bodies as they heal.

Participants gently explore practices like mindful self-compassion, movement attuned to your pace, nourishing reflection, and insights on healthy, body-kind routines.

- 2 x a year, in-person

**One Breath Anticipatory Grief Group** - This five-week series offers a compassionate space for patients and loved ones to share and navigate anticipatory grief together—expressing emotions, finding solace in connection, and gently learning tools such as self-care, forgiveness, legacy work, and ways to hold meaningful moments even in uncertainty.

- 3 x a year, in-person

**The Next Chapter** - A six-week series designed to help cancer survivors transition from treatment back to daily life. Structured around four key areas—Physical, Connected, Creative, and Contributing—each session offers tools and guidance to rebuild strength, reconnect with relationships, explore creative expression, and find meaningful ways to give back.

- 2 x a year, in-person

**The Empowered View (Mindful Photography)** -

Explore mindfulness through photography. Capture moments that resonate with your cancer journey, fostering self-expression and emotional healing. No prior experience needed.

- 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of Month

**What Words Can't Say (Art Therapy)** - A safe and supportive space for cancer patients to explore and express emotions that are often difficult to articulate. Through guided art-making, participants can process complex feelings, reduce anxiety, and enhance overall well-being. No artistic experience is necessary.

- All year, alternating Tuesdays

**The Invisible Thread (Caregiver Group)** - A supportive space for caregivers of cancer patients to connect, share experiences, and find strength in community. This group offers emotional support, practical advice, and a sense of belonging, helping caregivers navigate their unique challenges with compassion and resilience.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of Month, in-person

**Walk and Talk** - Experience the healing power of movement and connection in our weekly Walk and Talk group. This circle combines light exercise with emotional support, providing a safe space to share experiences and build relationships.

- bi-weekly, Wednesdays, in-person

**Iron Will** - a monthly support circle tailored for male cancer patients seeking a space to connect, share, and find strength together. This circle offers a supportive environment where men can openly discuss their unique experiences, challenges, and triumphs related to cancer.

- once a month, in-person

**Wig Studio** - Wigs, headwear and books are available free of charge to cancer patients. Located on Level 1. Contact Laura O'Brien at 306-766-2512.

**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.

**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



## The Friendly Calls Program



The Friendly Calls program matches people over the age of 18 with trained Red Cross personnel who connect with them regularly to check-in, provide emotional support, encourage healthy coping strategies, and suggest well-being resources and community connections to other existing services.

It is available to residents across the province of Saskatchewan.

To learn more about the Friendly Calls program:

Call 1-833-979-9779 toll-free from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays,

Call 306-721-1600 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. CST on weekdays,

Or visit [www.redcross.ca/friendlycalls](http://www.redcross.ca/friendlycalls)

**Want to read past editions of  
our Supportive Care Update?**

All of our newsletters can be found on  
the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency  
website at

[www.saskcancer.ca/SupportiveCare](http://www.saskcancer.ca/SupportiveCare)