

# What your doctor might not say when you are diagnosed

You've heard the dreaded words. Maybe they haven't sunk in yet. You need a moment to process. Time pauses. There is a flood of emotions, none of them positive. This is one of the worst days of your life.

The days and weeks that follow can be a blur.

We have put together this list for you, for this moment. Many of us wish we had done things differently in the beginning but we were in a state of shock and it was hard to function normally, never mind to plan how to deal with something so big and life-changing as a cancer diagnosis.

The very first step is to get all of your information about your diagnosis. Find out how serious your cancer is and how urgent the surgery and/or treatment needs to start. Some cancers can be aggressive and fast-growing, or the tumour may be pressing on some vital organs, but surprisingly most cancers are slow-growing. If you are in the fortunate position of having some time before your treatment plan starts, we advise you to use this as an opportunity to research all your options available. If you are in an emergency situation, call upon your team of loved ones to help you research all your options.

Researching options can be time-consuming and exhausting, reach out to your friends and family or to other cancer warriors or cancer charity organisations.

Do not hesitate to get a second medical opinion, or request further testing and scans, especially if you are feeling uncertain about your diagnosis or if your medical team doesn't feel like the right fit for you.

This is also the first part of your head space journey. You need to feel comfortable, and at peace with the decisions made around your healing treatment program - whatever direction you choose to go - conventional, alternative or a combination of both - believing in your choices positively impacts on how you experience your journey.

✳ Write everything down and keep records. If you are finding it hard to focus, ask a loved one to do this for you.

✳ Ask as many questions as you need to. And if you are belittled or ridiculed for asking questions then find another doctor.

✳ Broach difficult subjects like wills, finances and insurance. These are not easy to talk about but are hugely stress relieving to tackle and sort out. Your mind will feel at ease and free to focus on your healing.

✳ This is no time to be alone. Whether its leaning on loved ones for support, going to see a therapist, joining a cancer support group or hiring a health coach, whatever you do, be sure to find a safe space to be vulnerable and comfortable.

✳ Letting go of your pre-cancer life is like losing a loved one. There is grief, loss, sadness, regret and possibly resentment. This is natural to feel all of this. Process through these emotions, be gentle and kind on yourself, and know that you will move on.

✳ There is nothing like a life-threatening diagnosis to realign your goals and priorities. Take action to pursue things that make you happy.

#### ✳ THIS CAN INCLUDE THINGS LIKE

- ▶ learning relaxation techniques
- ▶ learning a new skill or hobby
- ▶ do things that you have always wished to do
- ▶ having quiet time-out moments
- ▶ spending time in the company of people who make your heart happy
- ▶ find something to believe in

✳ Take steps to work towards a healthier you. Research suggests that people who maintain some physical exercise during treatment manage to cope better, while focusing on how you nourish your body will help your immune system.

**BE AWARE OF THE 7 BEST HEALING PRACTICES:** ▶ move often ▶ sleep well ▶ manage stress ▶ share love and support ▶ eat well ▶ explore what matters most ▶ create a healing environment

#### **Chris Wark's words taken from his Facebook Page Christ Beat Cancer:**

In the 17 years since my cancer diagnosis, I've read about, met and interviewed many people who have healed all types and stages of cancer. And they all share the same belief. **They believed they could get well.**

This is the single most important factor - the linchpin in every successful healing story. And they had what I call the Beat Cancer Mindset, which has five components:

- ▶ Accept total responsibility for your health. *You are the driver of your healing journey.*
- ▶ Be willing to do whatever it takes. *This means changing everything.*
- ▶ Take massive action. *Massive action produces massive results.*
- ▶ Make plans for the future. *Plant to survive and thrive. See yourself well.*
- ▶ Enjoy your life and the process.

