How Do I Tell
You have legal rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Many patients have to navigate their cancer diagnosis and treatment. Your medical care, from high medical bills, loss of income, and other expenses.

A cancer diagnosis is overwhelming, and it will impact every aspect of your life, including your emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Facing cancer is traumatic, so feeling sad, angry, scared, or depressed is completely understandable.

Cancer isn’t cheap. Financial toxicity refers to the stress of paying for your care, from high medical bills, loss of income, and other expenses.

Ask your health care team if there is a financial navigator who can assist you. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, there are resources that can help.

How you choose to talk to your kids about your cancer is up to you. You know your children best.

Here’s some encouragement: You know your children best.

What if I Don’t Survive? It’s never easy to think about end-of-life care. But it’s important to fill out these key documents when you are ready, and as early as possible, even if you feel you won’t need them.

Advance Directive: This legal document outlines your wishes regarding medical treatment and end-of-life care if you become unable to make decisions. It allows you to appoint a health care proxy or power of attorney to make medical decisions on your behalf.

Living Will: This outlines your wishes regarding medical treatment if you are unable to communicate. It typically includes instructions on life-sustaining treatments, such as artificial respiration, hydration, and nutrition.

Know Your Rights
Many patients have to navigate their careers, their education, or both while undergoing treatment. Your medical diagnosis is private and does not have to be disclosed to your employer or educational institution.

Here are a few tips:

* It’s important to talk to your kids about what’s happening. Tell them when you are ready. You need to be prepared emotionally first.
* Let your kids know they can always talk to you. Designate a family member or friend to do something with your kids when you are undergoing treatment.
* Tell your teachers about your diagnosis. Their teachers can help keep you posted if your child’s behavior changes at school.
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How to Do Tell My Kids? Here’s some encouragement: You know your children best. How you choose to talk to your kids about your cancer is up to you.

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Work Tip: Contact your institution’s student disability services or human resources for academic accommodations, such as extra time or lecture notes.

School Tip: Ask your health care team if there is a financial navigator who can assist you. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, there are resources that can help.

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Checklist for Coping with Depression:

- Ask your health care team about treatments that can help (which may include antidepressants, acupuncture, massage, cannabis, and more).
- Take time each day for deep breathing and relaxation.
- Make plans with a supportive family member or friend to do something you enjoy or to experience a new activity.
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco products.
- Do not ignore signs of depression and anxiety—the first step in treating these conditions is through acknowledgment. Depressive disorders, anxiety, and cancer-related PTSD add excess stress to the body, which is trying to heal and fight cancer.

Adulting

Bills, Bills, Bills
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Being a young cancer patient can feel isolating. While everyone facing cancer is fighting for their lives, studies show that young people with colorectal cancer tend to be treated at later stages of the disease (stage III or IV), which means their outcomes are worse.

Here’s what we mean:

Preparing for chemotherapy or targeted therapies
Ask your doctor what to expect for your treatment. This will last so long, so you can plan for time off work or work from home options. Also, learn how to stay safe when you have your treatments. Your oncologist can prepare you for procedures, such as online games and setting up fast chains. Ask your doctor about common side effects of your specific treatment, if there is anything you can do in advance to reduce them, and how to re-evaluate them.

Preparing for radiation
You may experience skin burns and urinary dysfunction, which may limit your mobility and daily activities. Look for ways to move that won’t cause pain. Ask your doctor for a list of tips. Be aware that radiation can also cause sexual dysfunction, so read up to determine how other patients have dealt with this. As always, a strong support system in place, as daily treatments and side effects for a full month can dominate your schedule.

Preparing for surgery
You may experience stomatitis (permanent or temporary), so it’s important to educate yourself on stoma and ostomy care, and insurance avoidance. Avoid lifting anything for several weeks after surgery. Also, ask your doctor if you have children or need to make adjustments to your work. Additionally, you may have dietary restrictions, so learn how to maintain proper nutrition and hydration during this time.

In all of these scenarios, topics like fertility, career, mental health, and finances may arise. Make it a priority to set up a strong support system in place, as daily treatments and side effects for a full month can dominate your schedule.

Survivorship Care Plans
After you finish treatment, it can feel like your safety net is gone. But don’t worry, that’s normal and things will improve. To help you out, ask your oncologist’s office for a Survivorship Care Plan (SCP). Some offices may not offer it automatically, so don’t be afraid to speak up and ask for one. SCPs are a great way to make sure you’re getting the best care, especially if you’re young. Plus, if your doctors retire, move, or sell their practice, you’ll still have the SCPs to access if online or get a printed copy. Having a plan is empowering and feels comforting as you forge ahead.

Your Survivorship Care Plan should include:

- Medical History: A record of your cancer diagnosis, pathology, bloodwork, biomarkers, genetic testing results, surgeries, and treatment history. Detail the treatments, side effects, and how they affected your health. Note the name of your physician and/or facility. Also note any allergies, intolerances, or intolerances.
- Follow-up care: A schedule for checkups and follow-up tests, scans, and biopsies.
- Symptoms to watch for — A list of possible side effects from your treatments. This includes everything from signs of recurrence to things like skin cancer risks and changes in your health. Ask your doctor to write down a list of symptoms to watch for in the future.
- Lifestyle tips — Ideas for ways to stay healthy — everything from diet to exercise.

Thinking About Your Future
When you’re a young patient with cancer, saving your life is the goal of your treatment. But think about what else you want to achieve in your life and how you can be empowered.

However, as a young patient, it’s important to ask questions about preserving fertility. If you think you might want kids in the future, because this may require additional procedures that may need to be done. You may be an at age where having children is not considered, but we’ve considered you and your choice. We’re happy to talk to your care team if you think it’s important to ask these questions.

Once fertility is a medical field that helps patients and their partners potentially preserve the ability to have children in the future. All forms of cancer treatments threaten your ability to conceive and may lower your fertility. Infertility is a side effect for some—but not all—young survivors.

Some women experience problems with ovulation, hormones, ovaries, or begin early menopause, and some men experience low sperm counts, decreased sperm count, and early infertility. You can take steps to preserve your fertility. Ask your team about options and potential fertility preservation procedures.

Sex Tips
For men, depending on treatment plans, explore penile stimulation.
For women, after radiation, ask about vaginoplasty; elevates, or other contére and prescription treatment options. For some patients who undergo physical therapy: you may shift your new or existing sexual practices. For some patients, prior plans focus on improving sexual function, such as in treatment, and learn more about vaginal dilators, over-the-counter and prescription.

Remember To Ask Your Treatment Team:

- Will have genetic testing?
- Will have biomarker testing?
- Can consider clinical trials?
- Can get a second opinion?

Can I Afford This?

If you have private insurance, you may want to ask if your insurance will cover the SCP. If you have insurance, you may want to ask your insurance provider if your insurance will cover the SCP. If you have insurance, you may want to ask your insurance provider if your insurance will cover the SCP. If you have insurance, you may want to ask your insurance provider if your insurance will cover the SCP.

The Colon Club raises awareness, educates, and supports those with colorectal cancer, especially those diagnosed between 15 and 49. Camp, a annual retreat, brings survivors and caregivers together to have, laugh, learn, and support each other’s experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

Learn more at ColonClub.com.