

How to Maintain Friendships When You Have Cancer

Health & wellness • Social connection • Patient support

My role: Research • Content strategy • SEO • Writing

- Ghostwritten; published under client byline

At a glance: A compassionate, practical guide to navigating friendships after a cancer diagnosis. The article explores why relationships may change during cancer and offers concrete strategies for staying connected. These tips also respect the patient's changing energy, needs, boundaries, and emotional capacity.

Below the excerpt, see [SEO elements](#) and [Sources](#).

Excerpt

In some cases, it may seem that your friends are distancing themselves. You might wonder if this means they don't care. But it often comes out of love or uncertainty. The reason might be something simple, like not knowing what to say. Or they may expect you're overwhelmed and not want to add to that.

For many people, cancer can also bring up difficult memories and feelings. For instance, your friend may have lost a loved one to cancer. Emotions from that loss might be resurfacing for them. Or they may feel guilty about their good health while you're living with cancer. They might also be scared to see if cancer has begun affecting you physically and emotionally.

Six Tips for Staying Close With Friends During Cancer

1. **Decide how much about your diagnosis you want to share with friends.** You don't have to tell everyone everything. With some friends, you may want to. But with others, you might simply say you have cancer and are keeping the details private.
2. **Tell your friends what you need from them.** You might want frequent contact and check-ins, or you might need space. Being honest about what you need helps friends know how to support you. It can also alleviate any guilt you feel if you need some space.
3. **Choose activities you have energy and availability for.** These might not be the same activities you did in the past with friends. For example, you and a friend may have met up for long runs every week. Maybe now you can meet for shorter walks instead.
4. **Ask friends to keep inviting you to events.** Even if you can't attend, an invitation can make you feel included. Or if you don't like saying no, explain when they shouldn't invite you to something. For instance, dinners in crowded restaurants may not be an option if you're receiving immunosuppressive treatments, like chemotherapy.
5. **Ask friends to visit you at home or in the hospital.** There may be times when you have no energy to go out but would still like company. In these cases, you can ask someone to visit you at home or the hospital. If you're nervous about their reaction to physical changes, you

might ask a loved one to give them a heads-up. They might also want to bring food or entertainment.

6. **Stay in touch via text messages, phone calls or emails.** Depending on factors like your treatment schedule and symptoms, you may prefer to connect virtually with friends. You can schedule regular phone calls or ask friends to check in periodically over text. This can help you stay connected without too much effort.

SEO Elements

Title Tag: How To Maintain Friendships When You Have Cancer

Meta Description: Maintaining friendships after a cancer diagnosis can be difficult. Learn why this happens and how you can stay connected with the people you love.

Sources

- American Psychological Association. [The science of why friendships keep us healthy.](#)
- American Society of Clinical Oncology. [Cancer and Friendships.](#)
- Little T. [Maintaining Friendships During Cancer.](#)
- UVAHealth. [Dealing With Cancer and Disappearing Friends.](#)