

Cancer Patient Help Checklist

A practical checklist of assistance categories worth investigating after a cancer diagnosis.

Money & treatment costs

- ☐ **Financial assistance** - Ask about disease-specific grants and local charitable funds.
- ☐ **Medication and copay help** - Check foundations, manufacturer assistance and insurance appeals.
- ☐ **Insurance navigation** - Ask a navigator to review denials, benefits and out-of-pocket obligations.
- ☐ **Everyday bills** - Look for help with rent/mortgage, utilities, groceries and transportation.
- ☐ **Fundraising** - Decide whether family/community fundraising would help close remaining gaps.

Travel & lodging

- ☐ **Free medical flights** - Check nonprofit flight programs before purchasing airfare.
- ☐ **Ground transportation** - Ask about volunteer rides, gas cards, rail/bus support and local transportation.
- ☐ **Lodging** - Check Hope Lodge, medical hotel discounts, hospitality houses and hospital social-work referrals.
- ☐ **Caregiver travel** - Ask whether the program also assists one caregiver or companion.

Life outside treatment

- ☐ **Food and meal support** - Ask about medically tailored meals, local food programs and family meal support.
- ☐ **Home cleaning** - Check whether free cancer-patient cleaning is available in your area.
- ☐ **Work and disability** - Understand leave, accommodations and disability options before making employment changes.
- ☐ **Caregiver help** - Look for peer support, respite, family programs and practical support.
- ☐ **Wigs and appearance support** - Check free wig programs and free appearance workshops.
- ☐ **Fertility preservation** - If relevant, ask about fertility preservation before treatment begins.

Treatment information

- ☐ **Second opinion** - Gather pathology, imaging, treatment history and molecular results.
- ☐ **Clinical trials** - Search NCI and ClinicalTrials.gov and review options with your medical team.
- ☐ **Stage 4 / advanced cancer** - Ask about trials, molecular testing, symptom support and travel resources.
- ☐ **Records folder** - Keep digital and paper copies of pathology, imaging, labs, medication list and insurance information.

Who to ask for help

- ☐ **Oncology social worker** - Often knows hospital, local and disease-specific resources.
- ☐ **Patient navigator** - Can help identify barriers and coordinate referrals.
- ☐ **NCI Cancer Information Service** - A credible starting point for cancer information and trial-search help.
- ☐ **Resource directory** - Use the Sunridge Cancer Patient Resource Center to compare current programs.

Resource note: This worksheet is for organization and education only. Programs and eligibility change. Verify current information directly with each organization. Last reviewed August 17, 2026.