Tips for Living Well With Kidney Cancer

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Living With Kidney Cancer

Kidney cancer differs from other types of cancer in the large range of treatment options available, and the possible impact they have on future function.

Doctors treat renal cell carcinoma (the medical term for kidney cancer) with surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and drug treatments, but having two kidneys means that your experience and outcome will be dissimilar to another person with the diagnosis.

It is necessary to manage expectations of yourself and others appropriately while living with kidney cancer. Your mental health will suffer if you expect to complete the same activities to the same level as someone whose situation is unlike your own. Conversely, someone may have limitations that far exceed your own.

Evaluate your situation and expectations individually to make the most of you.

Living With Kidney Cancer and Expectations

When considering your own expectations or belief systems, remember *the three Ds:*

- Detect – Be aware of what your expectations are.
- Debate – Look at both sides of the argument and find other points-of-view to consider.
- Decide – Use the information you've gathered to make an informed decision based on logic.

You might also consider the following:

Work and Cancer

Can you work? Should you work? Do you have time to work? Dialysis often makes continuing to work very difficult, as it drains time and energy.

Work contributes positively to our mood and self-esteem, so explore the options. If your current position is not working out, perhaps another will. Always be flexible and open to change.

Evaluating Your Energy Levels

If you are used to walking a few miles, several times a week, you may now find even simple tasks exhausting. Don't expect miracles, or you will be disappointed; conversely, if your expectations are too low, you may give up entirely. Remember to work with what you've got to exercise in a manageable way.

Cancer and Your Relationships With Others

People may treat you differently after you have been diagnosed. They may start speaking to you solely about cancer, or they may speak of anything but cancer. Others will close the lines of communication altogether because they're uncomfortable.

Detect, debate and decide your expectations and communicate them to the people in your life. Your relationships will improve if you are assertive and communicate what you want and need.

Your Relationship With Yourself

Will you be kind to yourself? Will you allow yourself to experience sadness? If you have not left the house for weeks, will you be able to encourage and motivate yourself?

Preparing yourself for different scenarios is key; it allows you to establish expectations for yourself, as well as a concrete plan of action. Expectations are about balance, and finding balance means making small adjustments rather than sweeping changes.

Conclusion

Expectations of yourself and of the world around you shape your mood, self-image, and level of optimism. Realistic expectations and fairness can help you get the most out of life, and help you to feel better too.