



July is UV Safety
Month!

To learn more about
UV safety and skin
cancer, visit:

[http://www2.epa.gov/
sunwise/action-steps-
sun-safety](http://www2.epa.gov/sunwise/action-steps-sun-safety)

Or

[http://www.cdc.gov/
cancer/skin/basic_info/
prevention.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm)

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July, 2018

Chronic Stress Can Make Us Sick

Stress is the mental tension or worry caused by either demands in daily life or by unprecedented traumatic events. Coping with a cancer diagnosis or the loss of a loved one due to cancer are the types of traumatic events that can lead to long-term or chronic stress which, over time, can compromise your health.

It is common for stress to increase when you or someone in your family is diagnosed with cancer. Additional physical and emotional stress can come from the disease itself or

from the additional physical strain that the treatments put on your body. It can also result from changes in family, work or social relationships. Trying to cope with all of these new stressors can leave you vulnerable to a state of chronic stress and stress-related illnesses.

We all experience a certain amount of temporary stress in day-to-day living. When we feel threatened or in danger, our bodies naturally prompt hormones, like epinephrine and cortisol, to be released so that we can react to a

situation quickly.

These stress hormones generally produce increased heart and breathing rates, decreased digestive activity and increased liver-released glucose. Once the stressor is no longer a threat, the body quickly returns to its normal state.

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What do you know about research and clinical trials?

Test your knowledge about research and clinical trials studies! The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center is asking people living all across Alabama to complete our knowledge and experience survey. It takes 5 minutes or less.

To complete the survey,
click [here!](#)



Stress and Cancer, cont.

But with chronic stress, the body stays in a constant state of fight or flight. After a while, this has harmful effects on our hormone levels, immune systems and emotional states, leaving us more vulnerable to infections and serious diseases like diabetes, heart disease, cancer recurrence or depression.

Constant stress can also make us more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors that increase the risk of the cancer returning or of other chronic diseases developing. Unhealthy coping behaviors include smoking, overeating, not getting enough exercise, consuming alcohol beyond the recommended daily limit and drug addiction.

The good news is that there are tools available to help dramatically reduce the impact stress and anxiety has on our health. By regularly practicing these new skills, we can re-process stressful situations and put space between us and the stressors. To learn more, make an appointment with our Integrative Medicine Clinic by calling (205) 801-8139.

Source: National Cancer Institute

Natural & Safe Ways to Reduce Stress

- Eat well; make healthy, nutritious decisions.
- Develop good sleeping habits.
- Exercise regularly.
- Allow yourself private time and space.
- Focus on what you can change to gain a greater sense of control over your situation.
- Learn to use mindfulness-based meditation, yoga and other mind/body techniques.
- Ask for spiritual/ religious guidance.
- Communicate openly with friends and family to encourage a strong support system.
- Seek counseling or talk therapy.
- Attend support groups or cancer information sessions.
- Keep a journal or blog.
- Incorporate the arts, such as music, painting or dance, into daily living.

Sleep and Cancer

Contributing Author: Carolina Salvador M.D., UAB Division of Hematology and Oncology. Dr. Salvador's research interests include preventative medicine, integrative medicine and minority health-related issues. She answers questions related to the critical importance of sleep for good health.

Q: *What role does sleep play when it comes to being stressed?*

Dr. Salvador: Stress usually causes a person to lose sleep. The less sleep, the more fatigue. The more fatigued the patient is, the less ability he or she has to cope with stress. So, this cycle ends up being difficult to treat unless interrupted early. Cancer patients need to make their oncologist aware of stress and how it is affecting their quality of life. Then the oncologist can refer them to get the care they need.

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Q: *Why do cancer patients tend to need more sleep than non-cancer patients?*

Dr. Salvador: Everyone needs sleep to maintain good health but cancer patients need sleep more to help their bodies fight the cancer and deal with the added stress of the disease and the treatment. Sleep allows the body to restore its energy, repair damaged tissues and keep the immune system balanced. Thus, with a lack of sleep, fatigue sets in, the immune system becomes more vulnerable and activities become more difficult. It also increases the risk of depression. Therefore, good sleep habits help the body recover from illnesses as well as from cancer and its treatment.

Q: *Is there a certain number of hours cancer patients should sleep?*

Dr. Salvador: For a healthy patient 6 to 8 hours of sleep would suffice. A person with cancer would need to sleep at least as much, taking into account how much they slept before the diagnosis as well as their age. However, if a person feels he/she is sleeping too much, mentioning it to your doctor is a good idea.

Q: *Do cancer survivors' bodies ever return to "normal" or will they typically need more sleep than average?*

Dr. Salvador: Some survivors continue to have sleep problems but we don't understand why. And, though there is evidence that suggests that a good sleep routine may increase survival, researchers are still trying to understand this relationship and what is "normal".

Q: *What should someone do if they have trouble staying asleep or cannot stay asleep?*

Dr. Salvador: There are some basic things they can do to improve sleep hygiene. The first thing is to address the problem with their physicians/oncologists who can prescribe the treatments that may work best. The physician can refer the patient to a psychologist, an integrative oncologist or physical therapist.



How to get a good night's sleep

- Limit or discontinue caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.
- Limit naps to 15-20 minutes.
- Avoid activities late in the evening that can stimulate you like exercising, watching stressful movies or spending time on the computer.
- Use restful music, sounds or smells along with complementary therapies like mindfulness-based meditation, yoga, guided imagery, hypnosis or muscle relaxation exercises.
- Train your body to know that your bed is for rest. Go to bed and get up around the same time. If you can't fall asleep within 20 minutes, get up and try another form of relaxation.
- Some herbs and supplements can be helpful. However, consult an integrative medicine oncologist who can recommend those that will work best for you without interfering with your treatment. He or she can advise you on the correct dosage.

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We're on the Web!



We would like your
suggestions

Please let us know the
topics you would like us to
include in our newsletter
and programs you would
like for us to offer.

Email your suggestions
to:

tgw318@uab.edu

Programs in July to Support !

Free, 2-day retreat for metastatic breast cancer survivors!

A Journey of Courage and Hope

Please join us for a retreat designed for women living with metastatic (Stage IV) breast cancer and their adult daughters, mothers, friends, partners or colleagues who have supported them along their cancer journey. Guest speaker will be Lillie Shockney, RN, administrative director of the Johns Hopkins Breast Center and Cancer Survivorship Program.

The free retreat includes 2 nights of lodging, all meals, use of the facility and program.

When: Saturday & Sunday
July 21-22

Where: Benedictine Sisters
Retreat Center
Cullman, AL

Information: info@forgeon.org or call (205) 838-6159

Men at Risk for Prostate Cancer Symposium

Did you know that nearly 29,000 men will die of prostate cancer in 2018? And most will be American Veterans and African Americans because their risk of developing the disease is much higher?

Please plan to attend this free seminar in collaboration with US Too, UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, Bruno Cancer Center, Brookwood Baptist Health, Alabama Oncology, Prostate Health Education Network, Urology Centers of Alabama, ZERO, South Park Baptist Church and Oak Mountain Presbyterian Church to learn more. A free lunch will be provided.

When: Saturday, July 28, 9:00 am – Noon

Where: South Park Baptist Church, 2341 Pearson Avenue,
Birmingham, AL

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/prostate-cancer-risk-for-african-american-and-veteran-men-tickets-46976127863>