



What is an AYA? And Help Being One!

Online at: <http://cancer-help.me/AYA>

Being diagnosed with cancer at this young age can disrupt some of life's biggest milestones. Below are tips to help you during your cancer treatment and resources that may make this disruption more manageable.

Navigating cancer care info and communication as an AYA:



- There is a lot of information thrown at you. It is normal to feel overwhelmed...often. It is helpful to have someone with you at appointments to hear things you may not and to take notes for future reference. Follow up on things that are not clear or you don't understand. [Abridge App](#) may be helpful.
- Be engaged in your care by being an active part of all discussions, conversations, and decisions. Be comfortable advocating for yourself and asking questions of your care team. You, and perhaps your caregiver also, are your best advocate.
- You may want others to be part of the conversation (partner, parent, friend) and you may not. Be clear with your care team who they should talk with about you and your needs, who you want included or not included in any discussions / decisions. For help see CancerCare's Communicating With Your Health Care Team. [English](#) [Español](#)

Accept that you will need people to help you

- Cancer can be challenging. Bringing someone with you to appointments is helpful for listening, transportation, and providing emotional support. Think about people you know that you can count on and ask them to be there with you. It might be helpful to create a calendar of your appointments and treatments. Share with people you trust so they can help. [Caregather App](#) may be helpful.
- Do not isolate yourself. Find ways to connect with your friends.
- Remember to do things that you enjoy.



You will be experiencing many emotions, and you need not be alone experiencing them.

- Ask for, find support if you need it.
- See a counselor or therapist, join a support group.
- **Connecting to other AYAs can be very helpful, especially for emotional support.** Find ways to connect [HERE](#)
- Find specific cancer type support resources at [Cancer.Net](#).



Need help, have questions, or want other resources?



- Ask your Social Worker or Patient Navigator to help!
- [Connect to other AYAs.](#)
- *And drink water...keeping hydrated is SO overall helpful!*

AYA is short for: Adolescent and Young Adult

Defined as anyone 15-39 years old diagnosed with cancer.

The more you understand about being a young person with cancer, the better you can take charge and work effectively with your team to provide you with the care you need and want.

There are many support resources created for people your age and where you are in life. Included here is information and links to support resources to help you manage and start to find help if you want it.

As an AYA, you may be feeling out of place having little to nothing in common with other people being treated for their cancer where you are being treated. You may be receiving treatment at a children's hospital yet be a young adult. Some cancers are best addressed with pediatric cancer treatment therapies given by pediatric providers that have that expertise. You may alternatively be receiving care by an adult oncologist in a setting where many patients may be decades older than you.

You are not alone.

Connecting with other young adults facing cancer or who have had this experience before you, can be very, very helpful!

According to the American Cancer Society, more than 89,000 young people/year are diagnosed with cancer in the U.S.

Resources for Additional Information:

- ▶ [NCI, What AYAs Need to Know After a Diagnosis](#)
- ▶ [Stupid Cancer](#)
- ▶ [AYA USC](#)
- ▶ [AYA Cancer Chat: Life Interrupted](#)
- [Connecting to Other AYAs](#)
- [NCCN, Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Being a Young Adult or Teen With Cancer, Español](#)
- [NIH, Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer, Español](#)
- [American Cancer Society, AYA Facts & Figures 2020](#)