

# Cancer Creates...

STRENGTH • COURAGE • HOPE



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## Cancer During the Holidays: Ways to Cope

It's completely normal to feel mixed emotions during the holiday season. Suddenly, holiday celebrations are replaced with treatment sessions; coping with your diagnosis can cast a shadow over happy traditions; and spending time with family and friends may bring more anxiety than joy. Brooke Laster, LCSW, an oncology social worker at Valley-Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care, offers the following holiday survival tips for cancer patients and caregivers:

### Handling Your Treatment

Talk with your healthcare team about upcoming holidays or events and you or your loved one's treatment schedule. Treatment schedules sometimes can be modified to allow you or your loved one to feel your best for a given date. Your treatment isn't just about your health; it's about your quality of life, too.

### Managing Your Emotions

Recognize and share your thoughts and fears that the holidays elicit for you with someone who can listen. It is OK to not want to do certain things, and not feel excited about what once made you excited. The merriment and cheer may rub you the wrong way now, and that is normal. Be gentle with yourself. You are going through a lot; do what is going to make YOU the happiest.

### Working Within Your Limitations

Adjust your expectations. You may not be able to attend every function you once did, nor may you be able to enjoy it in the same way. You can, however, still be a part of the events that you've always loved, just in a different way. Talk with your family about your wishes or what is realistic for you. Acknowledge that you are doing your best.

### Reducing Stress

Accept help. If family wants to cook for you, let them! If they want to shop for you, let them!

### Enjoying Yourself

Enjoy any special moments and give yourself permission to celebrate. You don't have to dwell on cancer 365 days a year. Give yourself a break and enjoy spending time with family and friends.

### Discussing Your Condition

Anticipate reactions from others by having a basic response prepared ahead of time for when you get those "sad" looks and questions about you or your loved one's situation. Don't feel bad about not talking about it. A simple response – "I'm fine, thank you for asking, but I do not wish to talk about that here at this lovely event." – is enough. Then follow up with a question to take the focus off of yourself, such as, "How was your vacation?" or "How are your grandchildren?"

### Planning For the Future

Set goals for the new year! Whatever your situation is, having goals, both large and small, is important and gives you something positive to look forward to.

## We're Here to Help

For more information about cancer support services for patients and caregivers, please call Valley's oncology social workers at **201-634-5787**.



COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CARE

## Introducing the Valley-Mount Sinai Head and Neck Institute

Valley-Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care is now providing patients with access to advanced head and neck cancer care with the opening of the Valley-Mount Sinai Head and Neck Institute. The Institute's multispecialty team excels in providing outstanding and personalized clinical care for the treatment of patients with cancers of the mouth, throat, head and neck.

The Valley-Mount Sinai Head and Neck Institute is backed by Mount Sinai's Head and Neck Cancer team, which features 35 specialists from 12 different disciplines who come together to provide every patient with the benefit of a multidisciplinary approach. Valley patients will also have access to the latest clinical trials through Mount Sinai's Head and Neck Research Program.

"Now patients can see Mount Sinai specialists who are offering breakthrough treatments for head and neck cancers, as well as the expert team of Valley medical and radiation oncologists, right here in Paramus," said Ephraim Casper, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, Valley-Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care.

Specialists at Mount Sinai have accomplished what was once unthinkable in treating head and neck cancer — achieving an optimal outlook while preserving function. This includes using minimally invasive robotic surgery and organ-preserving therapeutics to not only treat the disease, but also to allow patients to continue their normal lives.

The Institute also offers a unique Patients First Program, which provides unparalleled service to meet each patient's unique needs to help that patient access a provider as quickly as possible.

For more information, or to schedule a consultation, please call **201-634-5656** or talk to your doctor or nurse.

### Share Your Story with Us!

Have an inspiring story or helpful tip to share? Let us know, and it may appear in our next edition of *Cancer Creates!* Please contact **Joy Dolan**, Communications & Marketing Associate for Valley Health System, at **201-291-6392** or **jdolan@valleyhealth.com**.

## Diagnostic Imaging, Laboratory and Pharmacy Services Now Offered at Valley's Center for Health and Wellness

Residents of Mahwah and the surrounding towns can save time and effort by going to the Valley Center for Health and Wellness in Mahwah to receive Diagnostic Imaging and Laboratory services or to visit our newest pharmacy. Equipped with brand new, state-of-the-art technology, our new facility offers patients high-quality service in a comfortable, quiet atmosphere. These new services offer convenient in-and-out services and plenty of free parking.

### Diagnostic Imaging (located on the 2nd Floor)

*Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*

The Center's brand new, comprehensive diagnostic imaging suite is equipped with X-ray, MRI, CT Scan, ultrasound and mammography machines operated by experienced, certified technicians. To learn more about these services only, please call **201-316-8452**. To schedule an appointment, please call ext. **447-8200** and choose **option 2**. Online appointment booking will be available in the near future.

### Laboratory (located on the 2nd Floor)

*Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*

Our highly skilled laboratory team offers a wide range of laboratory testing services, including pre-admission testing, routine lab work and a variety of other specialized testing, such as glucose tolerance tests. Walk-ins are welcome. Most major insurance plans are accepted. To schedule an appointment for specialized testing, please call the lab at **201-316-8452**.

### Pharmacy (located on the 1st Floor)

*Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m.; Saturdays from 8 a.m.–4 p.m.; Closed Sundays*

Like the locations at the Luckow Pavilion and The Valley Hospital, the Valley Health Pharmacy at the Center for Health and Wellness is a full-service retail establishment, accepting prescriptions from the public, employees and all who frequent any of the other services offered at the facility. The pharmacy will also feature health-related merchandise, such as walkers, canes and other accessories. To pick-up or refill a prescription at this Mahwah location, the pharmacy may be reached at **201-316-8444**. The pharmacy's fax number is **201-316-8445**.

## Make Your Voice Heard!

### Join the Patient and Family Advisory Council

At Valley Mount-Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care, providing the best possible patient care isn't just about clinical excellence – it's also about making sure the patient's needs and comfort are considered at every stage of their healthcare journey. And who better to help meet that goal than the patients themselves? The healthcare providers and employees at Valley Mount-Sinai frequently turn to an important group of patients, survivors and caregivers to help them make decisions about patient care and services – the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC)!

The Valley Mount-Sinai PFAC draws on the unique experiences of patients and their family members to ensure that Valley's services are created with the patient and family perspective in mind. PFAC members provide input on everything from clinical programs and educational materials to signage, furniture, décor, this quarterly newsletter and much more. Their invaluable advice and suggestions have led to numerous improvements and new programs throughout Valley-Mount Sinai.

We are always looking for new voices. The Valley-Mount Sinai PFAC meets monthly at Valley-Mount Sinai at the Luckow Pavilion in Paramus. Members are asked to make a three-year commitment to the group. If you or a family member is interested in joining the Valley Mount-Sinai PFAC, please contact **Pam Bell**, Director of Patient and Family Centered Care, at **revbell@valleyhealth.com** for more information and an application.



### There's More Online

Visit **ValleyHealthCancerCenter.com** to:

- Learn more about Valley-Mount Sinai cancer services
- View upcoming events, classes and support groups
- Find more issues of *Cancer Creates*

