

PARTICIPATING IN AN ONLINE HEALTH SUPPORT COMMUNITY: RESOURCE GUIDE

ONLINE SUPPORT FOR CANCER PATIENTS

These groups include discussion boards, virtual support group meetings, and private groups on social media platforms, such as Facebook, and focus on:

- Specific disease concerns.
- General cancer and cancer survivorship.
- Caregivers and family members.

FINDING ONLINE SUPPORT FOR YOU



- Ask your healthcare provider, many medical centers have resources on their website.
- Facebook provides a number of online support communities. Log in to Facebook and use the search feature.
- A number of advocacy organizations often have online support for patients.

Examples of such online support are:

- Cancer Support Community's MyLifeLine: [CancerSupportCommunity.org](https://www.cancersupportcommunity.org).
- CancerCare: [CancerCare.org](https://www.cancercaresupport.org).

PRIVACY AND SECURITY



- Groups that have password-protected sites will be more likely to have policies to protect your privacy and confidentiality.
- When setting up a profile for an online community, be sure to adjust your privacy settings so that you can control what is shared online.
- Facebook has disease-focused "Groups" and "Pages." Pages tend to be more public.
- To provide more privacy for health-related topics, groups are recommended.

ONLINE SUPPORT COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS



- You don't have to post or share. You can just read and observe and still gain positive benefits. Only post when you feel comfortable.
- Visiting these online support communities is your choice, and you can choose if and when to return.
- Check with your doctor about any medical advice you receive. Every patient's situation is unique.