

# Talking with your teen about a cancer diagnosis

## Tips:

- Invite your teen to attend a medical appointment with you so that they can see where you get treatments, and have the opportunity to ask questions.
- Let them know that you are doing everything in your power to get better.
- It is okay **not** to be able to answer a question. Let your teen know you will try to find an answer and get back to them later.
- Let your teen know that they can talk to you about anything and you will listen to what they have to say.
- If your teen does not want to talk at some point they can always return to the conversation at another time.
- Your teen may not want to have long talks about the cancer diagnosis, keep them informed about what is happening with your cancer, treatment, and its side effects.
- Ask your teen if they would like to talk with a counsellor or another teen in a similar situation.
- Take a break from talking about cancer, set aside some time and do something fun. Try to keep routines as normal as possible. Tell your teen “it’s okay to have part of your life not be about cancer”.
- Your teen may not want to tell their friends, or he/she may not know what to say. It is important for him/her to let their friends know what they are and are not comfortable talking about. You could tell your teen: “your friends have their own lives or “they may not know what to say or might be curious and ask difficult questions” or “don’t feel like you must tell everyone everything”.

## Online Resources:

- [Facts4Teens](#) is a BC Cancer web resource just for teens that provides cancer facts and information on how to manage when cancer comes to the family
- [Getting Through: a guide for middle and high school students when cancer affects the family](#) is a handout found in the BC Cancer website under the section called [Talking to My Family](#)
- Scribble & Paste: A Creative Journal if Cancer Comes to Your Family (ask for a copy at your Cancer Centre, Patient & Family Counseling Services. To purchase a copy go to [Talking to My Family](#)
- [When your parent has cancer: a guide for teens](#) is a booklet by the National Cancer Institute
- [Mindshift App](#) is an app that is designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety