



## MAKING STRIDES AGAINST CANCER

"Why Me?" The Antigua & Barbuda Cancer Society

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### Liver Cancer

#### Definition:

Liver cancer is cancer that begins in the cells of your liver. Your liver is a football sized organ that sits in the upper right portion of your abdomen, beneath your diaphragm and above your stomach. Liver cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in the world, but liver cancer is uncommon. Rates of liver cancer diagnosed are however, increasing. Most cancer that occurs in the liver begins in another area of the body, such as the colon, lung or breast. Doctors call this metastatic cancer, rather than liver cancer. And this type of cancer is named after the organ in which it began—such as metastatic colon cancer to describe cancer that begin in the colon and spreads to the liver.

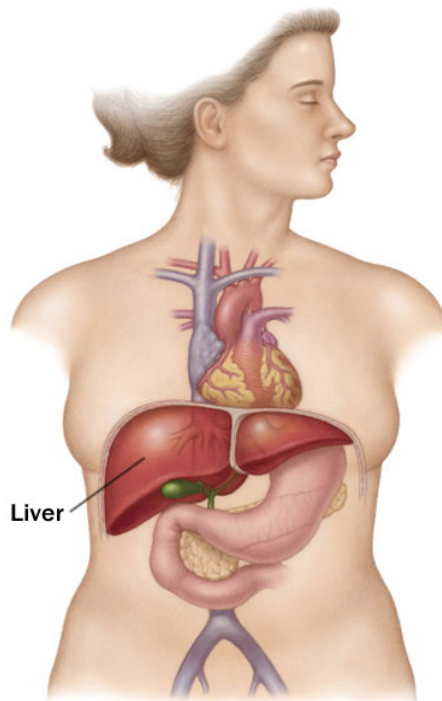
#### Symptoms:

- Losing weight without trying
- Loss of appetite
- Upper abdominal pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- General weakness and fatigue
- An enlarged liver
- Abdominal swelling
- Yellow discoloration of your skin and the whites of your eyes (jaundice)

#### When to see a doctor:

Make an appointment with your doctor if you experience any signs or symptoms that worry you.

#### Causes:



It's not clear what causes most cases of liver cancer, but in some cases, the cause is known. For instance, chronic infection with certain hepatitis viruses can cause liver cancer.

Liver cancer occurs when liver cells develop changes (mutations) in the DNA—the material that provides instructions for every chemical process in your body. One result is that cells may begin to grow out of control and

eventually form a tumor—a mass of malignant cells.

#### Types of liver cancer:

- **Primary liver cancer**, which begins in the cells of the liver is divided into types based on the kind of cells that become cancerous. Types include:
  1. **Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC).** This is the most common form of primary liver cancer in adults and children. It starts in the hepatocytes, the main type of liver cell.
  2. **Cholangiocarcinoma.** This type begins in the small tube like bile ducts within the liver. This is sometimes called bile duct cancer.
  3. **Hepatoblastoma.** This rare type of liver cancer affects children younger than age 4. Most children are successfully treated.
  4. **Angiosarcoma or hemangiosarcoma.** These rare cancers begin in the blood vessels of the liver and grow very quickly.

#### Risk Factors:

Factors that increase the risk of liver cancer include:

- **Your sex.** Men are more likely to develop liver cancer than are women.
- **Your age.** Liver cancer tends to occur between the ages of 20-50.

**Continue on page two**



**Don't Ignore Your Liver, many people do, even though 1 out of 10 people will be affected by this disease. Your Liver. Your Life!**



- **Chronic infection with HBV or HCV.** Chronic infection with Hepatitis B virus (HBV) or hepatitis C virus (HCV) increases your risk of liver cancer.
- **Cirrhosis.** This progressive and irreversible condition causes scar tissue to form in your liver and increases your risk.
- **Certain inherited liver diseases.** Liver disease that can increase the risk of liver cancer include hemochromatosis, autoimmune hepatitis and Wilson's disease.
- **Diabetes.** People with this blood sugar disorder have a greater risk of liver cancer than do people who don't have diabetes.
- **Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.** An accumulation of fat in the liver increases the risk of liver cancer.
- **Exposure to aflatoxins.** Consuming foods contaminated with fungi that produce aflatoxins greatly increases the risk of liver cancer. Crops such as corn and peanuts can become contaminated with aflatoxins.
- **Excessive alcohol consumption.** Consuming more than a moderate amount of alcohol can lead to irreversible liver damage and increase your risk.
- **Obesity.** Having an unhealthy body mass index increases your risk.

If you think you may have liver cancer, you're likely to start by first seeing your family doctor. If your doctor suspects you may have liver cancer, you may be referred to a doctor who specializes in diseases of the liver (hepatologist) or a doctor who specializes in treating cancer. (oncologist)

**Your time with the doctor is limited, so preparing a list of questions will help you make the most of your time together.** List your questions from most important to least important in case time runs out. For liver cancer, some basic questions to ask your doctor include:

- What type of liver cancer do I have?
- What is the stage of my liver cancer?
- What does my pathology report say? Can I have a copy of the pathology report?
- What are my treatment options?
- What are the potential side effects of each treatment option?
- Is there one treatment you recommend

over the others?

- What advice would you give a loved one in my same situation?
- How will my treatment affect my daily life?
- How much time can I take to make my decision about liver cancer treatment?
- Should I seek a second opinion?
- Should I see a liver cancer specialist? What will it cost and will my insurance cover it?
- Are there any brochures or other printed material that I can take with me? (Why Me? Information you need to make informed decisions)

Don't hesitate to ask questions during your appointment at any time that you don't understand something.

**Tests and diagnosis:**

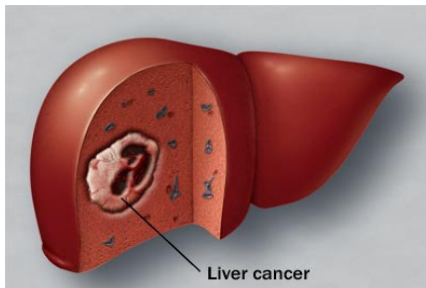
Test and procedures used to diagnosed liver cancer include:

- **Blood tests.** They reveal liver function abnormalities.
- **Imaging tests.** Your doctor may recommend imaging tests such as ultrasound, computerized tomography (CT) scan and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)
- **Removing a sample of liver tissue for testing.** During a liver biopsy, a sample of tissue is removed from your liver and examined under a microscope. Your doctor may insert a thin needle through your skin into your liver to obtain a tissue sample. Liver biopsy carries a risk of bleeding, bruising and infection.

#### **Determining the extent of the liver cancer:**

Once cancer is diagnosed, your doctor will work to determine the extent (stage) of the liver cancer. Staging tests help determine the size and location of cancer and whether it has spread.

**Treatment and drugs:** Treatments for primary liver cancer depends on the extent (stage) of the disease as well as your



age, overall health and personal preferences. The goal of any treatment is to eliminate the cancer completely. When that isn't possible, the focus may be on preventing the tumor from growing or spreading. In some cases, only comfort care is appropriate. In this situation, the goal of treatment is not to remove or slow the disease but to help relieve symptoms, making you as comfortable as possible.

Some of the treatment options are:

- Surgery to remove a portion of liver.
- Liver transplant surgery.
- Freezing cancer cells. (Extreme cold to destroy cancer cells) Cryoablation.
- Heating cancer cells. Radiofrequency — uses electric current to heat and destroy cancer cells.
- Injecting alcohol, chemotherapy are other ways.
- Radiation therapy and targeted drug therapy.

Alternative medicine may help control pain in people with advance cancer. But sometimes your pain may persist or you may want to avoid the side effects of pain medication. Ask your doctor about acupuncture, deep breathing and listening to music and massage.

#### **Coping and support:**

Learning you have any life threatening illness can be devastating. Each person finds his or her own ways of coping with a diagnosis of liver cancer. Although there are no easy answers for people dealing with liver cancer, some of the following suggestion may help:

- Learn all you can about liver cancer
- Keep friends and family close
- Find someone to talk to
- Make plans for the unknown

#### **Prevention:**

- Get vaccinated against hepatitis B
- Take measure to prevent hepatitis C.
- Know the health status of any sexual partner.
- Don't use IV drugs, but if you do, use a clean needle.
- Seek clean shops for tattoo



Here's a little Food Pyramid Chart that might help you to lose weight or maintain your weight.

The triangular shape shows you where to focus your attention when selecting healthy foods.

Eat more foods from the base of the pyramid and fewer from the top.

Give it try...looks pretty easy...let's give it a try!!



## Can energy drinks really boost my energy?

### QUESTION:

Energy Drinks: Do they really boost my energy?

### ANSWER:

Energy drinks may give you a temporary energy boost. However, this "boost" which may last as long as a few hours—typically results from the large amount of sugar and caffeine these drinks contain, (sugar free version of many energy drinks still contain large



amounts of caffeine).

Although the various sugars used to sweeten energy drinks can briefly increase energy, consuming large quantities of sugar is likely to cause weight gain. Caffeine is a stimulant, which also can temporarily perk you up. But too much caffeine can cause adverse side effects, such as nervousness, irritability, increased blood pressure

and insomnia. Caffeine can also make your heart beat faster and trigger abnormal heart rhythms, which is especially dangerous if you have any type of heart disease.

If you're consuming energy drinks because you're frequently tired or run down, consider a better—and healthier—way to boost your energy, get adequate sleep, exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet. It will help your overall physical and mental fitness in the long run.

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# WATER: HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU DRINK EVERY DAY?

Water is essential to good health, yet need vary by individual. These guidelines may help ensure you drink enough fluids.

How much water should you drink each day? A simple question with no easy answers. Studies have produced varying recommendations over the years, but in truth, your water needs depend on many factors, including your health, how active you are and where you live.

Though no single formula fits everyone, knowing more about your body's need for fluids will help you estimate how much water to drink each day.

## Health benefits of water.

Water is your body's principal chemical component, making up, on average, 60% of your body weight. Every system in your body depends on water. For example, water flushes toxins out of vital organs, carries nutrients to your cells and provides a moist environment for ear, nose and throat tissues.

Lack of water can lead to dehydration, a condition that occurs when you don't have enough water in your body to carry out normal functions. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired.

## How much water do you need?

Every day you lose water through your breath, perspiration, urine and bowel movements. For your body to function properly, you must replenish its water supply by consuming beverages and foods that contain water.

Several approaches attempt to approximate water needs for the average, healthy adult living in a temperate climate.

- **Replacement approach.** The average urine output for adults is about 1.5 liters (6.3 cups) a day. You lose close to an additional liter of water a day through breathing, sweating and bowel movements. Food usually accounts for 20% of your total fluid intake, so if you consume 2 liters of water or other beverages a day (a little more than 8 cups) along with your normal diet, you will typically replace the lost fluids.
- **Eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day.** Another approach to water intake is the "8 X 8"—drink eight 8 ounce glasses of fluid a day, as all fluids count toward the daily total. Though the approach isn't supported by scientific evidence, many people use this basic rule as a guideline for how

much water and other fluids to drink.

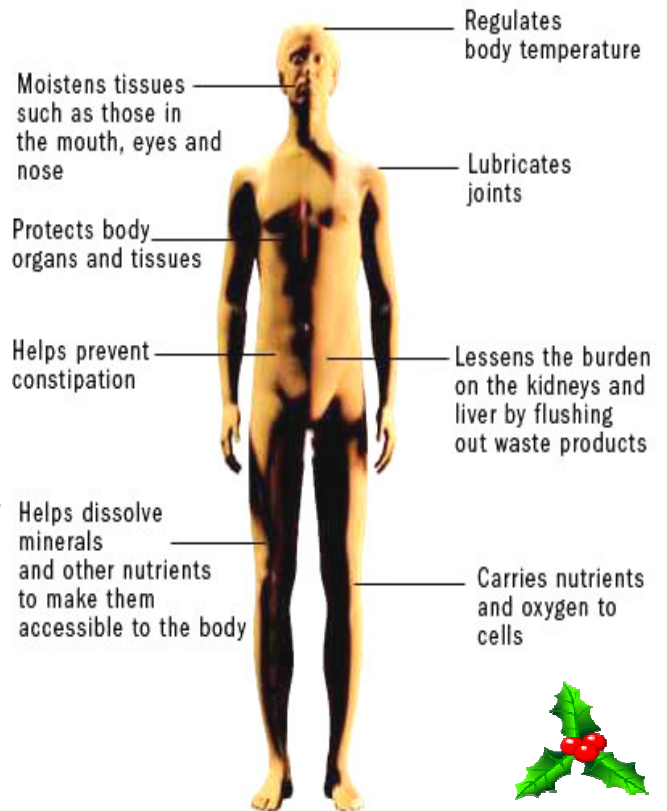
- **Dietary recommendations.** The Institute of Medicine advises that men consume roughly 3 liters (about 13 cups) of total beverages a day and women consume 2.2 liters (about 9 cups) of total beverages a day.

Even apart from the above approaches, if you drink enough fluid so that you rarely feel thirsty and produce 1.5 liters (6.3 cups) or more of colorless or slightly yellow urine a day, your fluid intake is probably adequate.

## Factors that influence water needs.

You may need to modify your total intake depending on how active you are, the climate you live in, your health status, and if you're pregnant or breast-feeding.

- **Exercise.** If you exercise or engage in any activity that makes you sweat, you need to drink extra water to compensate for the fluid loss. An extra 400 to 600 milliliters (about 1.5 to 2.5 cups) of water should suffice for short bouts of exercise, but intense exercise lasting more than an hour requires more fluid intake. How much additional fluid you need depends on how much you sweat during exercise, the duration of your exercise and the type of activity you're engaged in. In long bouts, it is best to use a sports drink that contains sodium, as this will help replace sodium lost in sweat and reduce the chances of developing hyponatremia, which can be life threatening.
- **Environment.** Hot or humid weather can make you sweat and requires additional intake of fluid.
- **Illnesses or health conditions.** Signs of illnesses, such as fever, vomiting and diarrhea, cause your body to lose additional fluids. In these cases you should drink more water and may even need oral rehydration solutions, such as Gatorade. You may need increased fluid intake if you develop certain conditions,



including bladder infections or urinary tract stones. On the other hand, some conditions such as heart failure and some types of kidney, liver and adrenal disease may impair excretion of water and even require that you limit your fluid intake.

- **Pregnancy or breast feeding.** Women who are expecting or breast feeding need additional fluids to stay hydrated. Large amounts of fluid are used especially when nursing. A pregnant woman should drink 2.3 liters (about 10 cups) of fluids daily and women who breast feed consume 3.1 liters (about 13 cups) a day.

**Beyond the tap:** Other sources of water. Although it's a great idea to keep water within reach at all times, you don't need to rely only on what you drink to satisfy your fluids needs. What you eat also provides a significant portion of your fluid needs. On average food provides about 20% of the total water intake, while the remaining 80% comes from water and beverages of all kinds.

**Some fruits and vegetables,** watermelon and tomatoes are 90 to 100% water by weight. Beverages such as milk and juice also composed mostly of water.

Even beer, wine and caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea or soda can contribute, but these should not be a major portion of your daily total fluid intake. Water is one of your best bets because it's calorie-free, inexpensive and readily available.

Stay safely hydrated.

It's generally not a good idea to use thirst alone as a guide for when to drink. By the time you become thirsty, it's possible to already be slightly dehydrated.

Further, be aware that as you get older your body is less able to sense dehydration and send your brain signals of thirst. Excessive thirst and increased urination can be signs of a more serious medical condition. Talk to your doctor if your experience either.

To ward off dehydration and make sure your body has the fluids it needs, make

water your beverage of choice. Nearly every healthy adult can consider the following:

- Drink a glass of water with each meal and between each meal.
- Hydrate before, during and after exercise.
- Substitute sparkling water for alcoholic drinks at social gatherings.

If you drink water from a bottle, thoroughly clean or replace the bottle often.

Though uncommon, it is possible to drink too much water. When your kidneys are unable to excrete the excess water, the electrolyte (mineral) content of the blood is diluted, resulting in low sodium levels in the blood, a condition called hyponatremia.

Endurance athletes, such as marathon run-

ners, who drink large amounts of water are at a higher risk of hyponatremia.

In general, though, drinking too much water is rare in healthy adults who consume an average diet.

If you're concerned about your fluid intake, check with your doctor, or a registered dietitian.

He or she can help you determine the amount of water that's best for you.



## MEDICAL HISTORY: Compiling your medical family tree

Your family medical history provides insight into the conditions that are common in your family. Use this history to give you clues about your risk of disease.

Your family medical history—also called a medical family tree or pedigree—is a record of illness and medical conditions affecting your family members. Similar to a family tree, a family medical history shows the relationships among members of your family, but it also includes relevant health information for each person.

How is a family medical history used?

You inherit half of your genetic profile from each parent. Along with the genetic information that determined your appearance, you inherited genes that may cause or increase your risk of certain medical conditions. A family medical history can help your doctor interpret the history of disease in your family and identify patterns that may be relevant to your own health. Your doctor may use your family medical history to:

- Assess your risk of certain diseases
- Recommend treatments or changes in diet or lifestyle habits to reduce the risk of disease
- Determine which diagnostic tests to order

- Determine the type and frequency of screening tests
- Determine whether you or your family members should get a specific genetic test
- Identify other family members who are at risk of developing a certain disease
- Assess your risk of passing conditions on to your children

A family medical history can't predict your future health—it only provides information about risk. Other factors, such as your diet, weight, exercise routine and exposure to environmental factors, also will raise or lower your risk of developing certain diseases.

### ***What is the best way to gather family medical information?***

Your family may want to work together on developing your family medical history. Holidays and reunions can provide a good opportunity for you and your relatives to gather information. Not everyone, however, may be comfortable disclosing personal medical information. A number of factors may contribute to a person's reluctance to discuss medical issues, including guilt, shame and painful memories. Consider the following strategies:

- Share your purpose. Explain that you're

creating a record to help you determine whether you and your relatives have a family history of a certain disease or health conditions. Offer to make the medical history available to other family members so that they can share the information with their doctors.



- Provide several ways to answer questions. Some people may be more willing to share health information in a face to face conversation. Others may prefer answering your questions by phone, mail or e-mail.
- Word questions carefully. Keep your questions short and to the point.
- Be a good listener. As your relatives talk about their health problems, listen without judgment or comment.
- Respect privacy. As you collect information about relatives, respect their right to confidentiality. Some people may not want to share any health information with you. Or they may not want this information revealed to anyone other than you and your doctor.

Continue on page 6

## Compiling your medical family tree continues

### **What other sources of information may be beneficial?**

You may want to consult family documents, such as existing family trees, bay books, old letters, obituaries or records from places of worship. Public records—birth certificates, marriage licenses and death certificates—are usually available in official record offices. If you or your family members maintain electronic personal health records, use them.

If you're adopted, ask your adoptive parents if they received any medical information about your biological parents at the time of your adoption. Adoption agencies also may have family medical information on file. If you were adopted through an open adoption process, you may be able to discuss your family's medical history directly with members of your biological family.

### **What information should be included in a family medical history?**

If possible, your family medical history should include a least three generations. Compile information about your grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, siblings, cousins, children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren. For each person, try to gather the following information:

- Sex
- Date of birth
- Ethnicity
- Disease or other medical conditions

- Age when disease was diagnosed
- Diet, exercise habits, smoking habits or history of weight problems
- For deceased relatives, age at the time of death and cause of death

Ask about the occurrence of the following and medical conditions often associated with genetic risk:

- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Dementia
- Asthma
- Arthritis
- Mental illness
- High blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Alcoholism or other substance abuse
- Vision or hearing loss
- Learning disabilities
- Mental retardation
- Miscarriage, stillbirth, birth defects or infertility

### **How should the information be compiled into a family tree?**

Once you've gathered information about your family, create a diagram that visually

depicts the relationships among family members. Record the medical information and other details about each person on your tree. If information about a disease or cause of death is unknown, don't guess at the answer. An incorrect guess can result in a poor interpretation of your medical history. Don't worry if some details are missing.

Give your doctor a copy of your family medical history and ask him or her to review it with you. Your doctor may ask you questions for clarification and can help you interpret the relevance of certain patterns in your medical history.

He or she may advise you immediately regarding preventive measure you can take or screening tests you should schedule.

Going forward, update your family medical history every couple of years.

Be sure to share updates with your doctor.

**ABII AND WHY ME?  
RELIABLE TOOLS FOR  
HEALTHIER LIVES**

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The Antigua Cancer Society



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## PREPARATION IS THE KEY TO QUITTING

Preparation is something we are constantly engaged in throughout our lives. We are all in a process of getting ready for our “next steps”, whether consciously aware of it or not.

It may be something as small as brushing out teeth to prepare to get to bed, or something as big as getting a baby’s room ready to prepare for a new member of the family.

We know from experience that in order to have the outcomes we want in life, we need to take responsibility for the results in advance through adequate preparation. The same is true for going tobacco-free.

When you think about quitting smoking, consider the preparation steps you’ll need to take to have the success you desire.

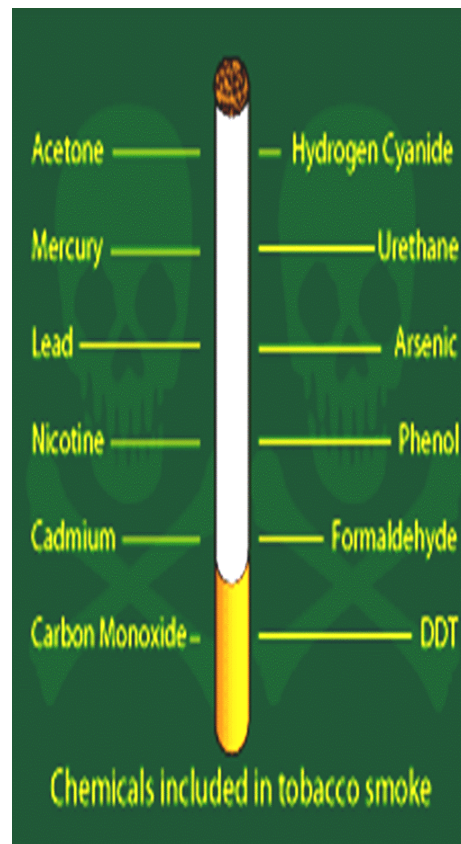
- Reflect on what has worked in the past and build on that.
- Practice not smoking in advance

and try out the coping tools you plan to use.

- Take the time to write out what you will do when you have the urge to smoke.
- Review medication options with your doctor or another health professional.
- Talk to a support person about how they can help you through situations that put you at risk of relapse.
- Spend a few minutes everyday visualizing what your life will like and how you will feel as a non-smoker.
- Add your own steps—ones that you know will work for you.

The more work you do up front, the better your “performance” will be once you reach your target smoke-free date.

When you prepare in advance for how you will live your life as a non-smoker, you set yourself up for success.



**Happy Holidays and our Warmest Wishes for a Healthy New Year.**

**ANGEL SQUAD**

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## Coping With Cancer During The Holidays

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ABI Terms & Conditions Apply

In general, people view the holidays as a time to celebrate, rejoice and renew connection with family and friends. However, the season can be a stressful time if you are coping with cancer. For example, you may have many complex feelings, both sad and joyous. At Why Me, we try to help people with cancer and their loved ones, all year long, and we recognize the holiday season can be particularly difficult.

Here are some tips for coping with cancer during the holidays:

- Plan to get together with friends, family or co-workers over the holidays. Trying to celebrate alone can be very difficult, so accept some invitations from others, or join an organized group activity through your local church or friends. Find the right balance between celebrating with family and friends and spending the time you need on your own. Give yourself permission to pace your activities and to decline an invitation or two so that you have the energy to enjoy the gatherings that are most important to you.
- Create a new holiday season tradition that makes the most of your energy. Change your usual holiday activities so you relieve yourself of some of the pressures of entertaining. Have a "pot luck", with family members each bringing a dish for the meal, have someone else host the meal, or suggest eating out at a favorite restaurant.
- Be an innovative shopper. Shop on line or use the telephone. You can also make a gift of sharing your thoughts and feelings. Write a short note or make a phone call to let others know that you are thinking of them.
- Express your feelings in ways that help you receive the support of the important people in your life. Tears can bring a sense of relief. Laughter can be relaxing. Sharing can be comforting. It is common to experience a mixture of anticipation, excitement and apprehension about the future.

Let your feelings breathe, and talk them over with a loved one, friend or professional counselor.

It is important to embrace the joy and happiness of the holidays—enjoying favorite meals, giving and receiving gifts, reuniting with family and friends, and celebrating religious traditions.

People with cancer and their loved ones can sometimes feel out of step from the rest of the world, and the holiday season can prompt new questions. How do I take care of the holiday rush and myself at the same time?

How can I celebrate when I have so many things on my mind?

What will my life be like next year?

Sharing these questions with people you love and who love you can help you feel more connected.



**FAITH...HOPE...AND CHARITY!**

**Healthy  
Holiday Season  
To All!**



Happy Holidays and our Warmest Wishes for a Healthy New Year.

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## The Purrrrrrrrrrrrrrrfect Doctor

Petting your can significantly cut your risk of dying from a heart attack, according to research presented at this year's American Stroke Association International Stroke Conference.

Investigators analyzed data on nearly 4,500 adults who took part in the U.S. government's second National Health and Nutrition Examination Study, which ran from 1970 to 1980.

Over the next 10 years, they tracked participants' death rates from all causes, including heart attack and stroke.

They found that cat owners were 30% less likely to die from heart attacks than were participants



who did not own cats.

They speculated that the act of petting a cat may trigger biological changes that bring down stress, heart, and blood pressure rates.

Go Fluffy!!



## WHY ME?

December is a time for remembrance. For those of us who have lost moms, dads, sisters, brothers, relatives, friends, husbands, wives—it is a time for remembering them—and thanking them for the influence they had on our lives.

We are sad, because they are no longer here to share the blessing with us, but many have the hope of seeing them again in a new Home.

Many have lost these precious ones to cancer, prostate, breast, lung, ovarian and others. Because of those we lost to cancer, we work to raise awareness and raise funds so that these diseases can be ended—so that treatments can be discovered in research, or educational programs that we support and lead them to get checked and get an early diagnosis.

We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go.

We are thankful for you, our supporters, friends, staff and volunteers—who help us get the word out—who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure the fund-raising programs are successful, the edu-

cational programs take place, and the word gets out about the work we actually do.

We are thankful for the wealth, wisdom and work you give us—we need to continue.

Grief hurts. It's a big open wound that you wonder: Is it too big to ever heal? Will I ever be the same? Will I ever feel joy again? How can I survive this? The answers to these questions may vary. I don't know that one is ever the same after they lose someone they love...but I believe that, if one chooses to, they can become someone that grows, that loves even deeper, that feels even deeper. Death reminds us that each day we have to treasure and love those around us deeply and passionately.

There are no magic answers and no diagrams to get through the maze of grief and loss. Each one of us is different and we each have our own journey. During the holidays, we encourage you to find some way to honor, love and touch the one you have lost. Honor them with candles, a special tree or a special present.

At this time of year when we start thinking about the holiday presents and gatherings of friends and family and neighbors, we would ask you to remember us.

Think about the loved one and donate in their honor.

Feel the pain of your loss but also feel the joy you felt with them alive. Try not to judge yourself or others. The most important thing is to honor the life they had while alive. By reaching out and honoring their life, you are helping others and yourself as well.

**REMEMBER—TOGETHER  
WE CAN END CANCER.**



## Antiguan Companies ARE more charitable

Antiguan companies are becoming more charitable.

Last year, for the first time, a little more than half of all of the donations received by Why Me were from corporations.

Non-profit organizations, charities and churches, especially those that offer assistance to the poor, all say we welcome the trend and all of our clients appreciate it.

Donating products, money, services, vol-

unteering, offers a significant value.

The motivation is not so much that you want to help the world, but there is a problem and if we can do some good while solving that problem it's a win, win for everyone.

A corporation can provide support by getting employees involved. When employees see that their company cares about the commu-

nity and its children, morale is boosted, thereby increasing productivity.

It takes everyone from our community for Why Me to really make a difference in the lives of people with cancer.

No matter how much you give, you will improve the lives of someone in our community and help them meet the challenges that they face with cancer.



**THANKS TO  
YOU ALL**



## Splitting BP meds may help

If you take medication for high blood pressure, it's best to take half your daily dose in the morning and half in the evening several hours before bed, new data show.

During sleep, BP should drop between 10% and 20%, allowing blood vessels to relax.

People with high blood pressure often don't experience this healthy dip, a problem that can contribute to heart and kidney problems over time.

A study done at the Cleveland Clinic found

that splitting BP medication into two doses caused 88% of patients to experience a healthy nighttime dip.

Before making any changes to your medication schedule, be sure to check with your doctor.

Source: *Journal of Kidney Diseases*

## About Your Diabetes

Living with a chronic disease like diabetes can be easier if your family and close friends really understand your illness and how it changes your daily life. You can open the lines of communication by sharing some basic information about your health. Feel free to personalize this information with details specific to your health.

- My diabetes. I have type 2 diabetes. That means my body doesn't make enough insulin. Or it can't use the insulin it makes. Think of insulin as a hormone that controls the amount of glucose (sugar) I have in my blood. Normally, the guard sends out just the right amount of glucose for my body to use as energy for my brain, muscles, and cells. As a person with diabetes, my guard no longer controls the glucose and my body can end up with too much (hyperglycemia) or too little (Hypoglycemia).
- My Treatment. I have to balance my diet, exercise, and medication so that my body gets the amount of glucose it needs. That means I can't be as spontaneous as I might like to be in terms of when I eat, what I eat, or how I exercise. I need to check my blood glucose often, and I may have to adjust my activities depending on my level that day. My doctor will check my hemoglobin A1C level

every few months, with a simple blood test to get an idea of how well I am managing by blood glucose levels over the long term. The doctor may change my treatment plan over time. Something as simple as a cold can affect my glucose levels. Stress is bad too.

- My Medications. I may manage my diabetes with medication and with diet, exercise and weight control. But diabetes is a disease that gets worst over time as the body's ability to make insulin declines. My treatment plan will probably change over time. I may eventually need insulin shots to manage my blood sugar.
- My nutrition. People may think if I avoid sugar my diabetes will take care of itself. I wish it were that simple. Over time, I keep learning more about how my body uses this fuel we call food and how by blood glucose levels affect what and when I need to eat. I feel better when I follow a daily diet plan.
- My Exercise. My doctor will help me decide what is exercise is best. Because exercise and dehydration can lower my blood sugar, I'll need to check my glucose before and after exercise. I have to be sure to drink plenty of water during exercise. I will need a lot of encouragement.

**ABI** ABI Insurance Company Ltd.  
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*"Some people spend half their lives creating wealth and ignoring their health and the other half using their wealth to restore their health"*

**Don't be one of them!**



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➤ Heart Surgery ➤ Kidney Failure

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**[www.abifinancial.com](http://www.abifinancial.com)**

ABI Terms & Conditions Apply

- My Symptoms. Despite my best efforts, my blood glucose levels can change suddenly. There are symptoms for hyperglycemia (high blood sugar) and hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) that I need to help me recognize. The signs of hyperglycemia are blurred vision, thirst, headache, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. If these happen, encourage me to check my blood sugar level immediately. Treatment could be as simple as drinking water or I may need to adjust my eating or medication plan. On the other hand, the symptoms of hypoglycemia are a ravenous appetite, sweating and trembling, and being confused or cranky. If you see this happening to me, remind me to check my blood sugar right away. If I'm low on glucose, I may need your help to quickly get sugar into my body.

Today people with diabetes can live long and relatively healthy lives. With support and encouragement from loved ones.



**"Why Me?" The Antigua  
& Barbuda Cancer**

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6295

## MAKING STRIDES AGAINST CANCER

When you have cancer, Christmas can remind you that you're not as healthy as you once were or wish you could be. You're too weak from the chemotherapy and/or radiation to do some of the activities you once loved.

On one hand, it's a time that you are grateful for the things you have in life, but long for the things you don't. We can make it through this holiday with all its activities, foods, that may make our stomach curl even though we once looked forward to them. There are ways we can make it through and even enjoy some of those things.

- **Communicate. Discuss how you feel. Spend time with those you love**
- **Don't take on more than you can handle**
- **Focus on the meaning of the holiday.**
- **Give yourself permission to bow out. You can't do it —don't.**
- **Seek physical and emotional comfort.**

During the best of times, the holiday season may feel like a mixed blessing. Traditionally, the holidays foster a time of togetherness with loved ones, in addition to giving, community spirit and perhaps a renewed devotion to faith. The holidays may also cause stress, too many commitments and feelings, however, the holidays may present a unique opportunity to establish a new tradition that will have a lasting impact on you and those you cherish.

We cancer Warriors need to find ways to lead as normal lives as we possibly can. It may be hard for us to enjoy the holidays—but we need to remember that simply because we have cancer doesn't mean that our lives are over. Go out and do things, go out and enjoy the holidays with friends and family. Granted be a little more careful, but the holiday doesn't have to be another reminder that you are sick in anyway.



**Making Strides...**

**ABII & WHY ME?**

*Why Me?*

**Happy Holidays and our  
Warmest Wishes for a  
Healthy New Year.**

**Mr. & Mrs. P. Corbin  
Mr. & Mrs. C. Pole  
Woodstock  
Leroy (Fixing the car)**

**ABII  
Sandals**

**Tradewinds  
Siboney Beach  
Coconut Grove  
Le Bistro**

**Touch Therapies  
Frances Trading**

**SeaBreeze Reception Hall**



**JCI: Ray of Hope  
It was the greatest!**

**Kooks (Wonderful folks)  
Townhouse Mega Store**

**My People: SPIRITED  
Richie, Curtly, Mr. Bridgewater  
Jason, Tamah, Courtney, Devon,  
Murphy & Tracy  
Itchyfeet (Paddy)  
Dr. Mansoor & family  
Cort & Cort  
Mrs. Elms**

**Destination DreamMakers:  
Adventure Antigua  
Stingray City  
Tony's Watersports  
The Beach Restaurant  
SubCats  
Caribbean Helicopters  
Subway Sandwich**

**Swallow**



**Remembering The Loved Ones...**



**Survivors of  
Every Age!!!  
Keep On/Keeping On!**