



FLASCO BRIEF

Survivor Newsletter

APRIL 2020

Common Questions About COVID-19 And Cancer: Answers For Patients And Survivors

ASCO and the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS) are working together to provide information about how COVID-19 could potentially affect the health and cancer care of people diagnosed with cancer. ASCO Chief Medical Officer and Executive Vice President Dr. Richard L. Schilsky answers cancer survivors' frequently asked clinical questions about COVID-19.

[Read more on ASCO's patient information website, Cancer.Net.](#)



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Julie Newberry

COVID-19 is top of mind for us here at the Florida Society of Clinical Oncology. For cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers, this time of uncertainty can be especially worrisome. The CDC is now recommending that health care facilities and doctors prioritize urgent and emergency visits and procedures for the coming several weeks. In these circumstances, it is not life as usual and we are all working together to adjust. It requires patience on everyone's part as we go through this pandemic. It is important to maintain contact with your cancer care team to determine the best course of action for you. We, along with other health organizations, are monitoring the situation as this pandemic unfolds, and will continue to keep our community updated.



Since 2015, FLASCO has been providing education to the cancer warriors and survivors of Florida. The 'Living with' Cancer Educational Series was launched in February 2015 with Living with Myeloma in Tampa, FL. Since that first educational dinner program, FLASCO has hosted 24 Living with programs serving 1,450 cancer survivors and their caregivers across many cancer types. In 2017, FLASCO created a "one-stop" resource for cancer patients to access the important info they need regarding their cancer treatment.

www.patients.flasco.org We are excited to share our newest service to Florida's cancer patients and caregivers, FLASCO Brief, a resource for survivors and patients on their cancer journey.

Existing for a powerful mission, FLASCO is proud to be "The Voice of Oncology in Florida" If you would like to contribute a personal story about your cancer journey, support group news, or other article to be considered for this newsletter please email info@flasco.org

MARCH CANCER AWARENESS

National Cancer Control Month

Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month

Minority Cancer Awareness Month

Minority Health Month

National Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Awareness Week

Testicular Cancer Awareness Month

NAVIGATING CANCER

Clinical Trials

What is A Clinical Trial?

A clinical trial is a research study to find out if a new treatment provides better outcomes than the existing standard of care--the best available known treatment. Clinical trials establish the effectiveness and safety of new cancer treatments.

Clinical trials are the final step in a long process that begins with research in a lab. Before any new treatment is used with people in clinical trials, researchers work for many years to understand its effects on cancer cells in the lab and in animals. They also try to figure out the side effects it may cause.

Any time you or a loved one needs treatment for cancer, clinical trials are an option to think about. Trials are available for all stages of cancer. It is a myth that they are only for people who have advanced cancer that is not responding to treatment.

Why Are Clinical Trials Important?

Today, people are living longer lives from successful cancer treatments that are the results of past clinical trials. Through clinical trials, doctors determine whether new treatments are safe and effective and work better than current treatments. Clinical trials also help us find new ways to prevent and detect cancer. And they help us improve the quality of life for people during and after treatment. When you take part in a clinical trial, you add to our knowledge about cancer and help improve cancer care for future patients. Clinical trials are the key to making progress against cancer.

For more information visit: <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/clinical-trials>

Biosimilar and Generic Drugs

Generic Drugs: A generic drug is a medication created to be the same as an already marketed brand-name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics, and intended use. These similarities help to demonstrate bioequivalence, which means that a generic medicine works in the same way and provides the same clinical benefit as its brand-name version. In other words, you can take a generic medicine as an equal substitute for its brand-name counterpart.

Biosimilar: A biosimilar is a copy version of a biologic drug. If the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approves a drug as a biosimilar, they say it is as safe and effective as the original “reference” drug that was copied. The biosimilar is a medical product highly similar to another already approved biological medicine. Biosimilars are approved according to the same standards of pharmaceutical quality, safety and efficacy that apply to all biological medicines.

How are biosimilars different from generics?

Biosimilars are like generics in some ways, in that, both types of medications are compared to a reference (original) product for approval. Biosimilars and generics are both versions of previously FDA approved medications and may offer more affordable treatment options to patients.

Biosimilars and generics are approved through different abbreviated pathways that avoid duplicating certain costly clinical trials.

Both biosimilar and generics go through a rigorous review process. Once FDA-approved, these medications are just as safe and effective as the reference products they are compared to. But, there are differences between biosimilars and generic drugs. For example, biosimilars are generally made from natural and living ingredients and generics are often made from chemical ingredients.

In contrast to a chemical, which is synthesized and can be generally copied, a biologic medication is made from natural and living sources and cannot be exactly copied. So, the information needed to demonstrate that a biologic is biosimilar to another biologic can be much more extensive than what is needed for a generic.

Check out these links for more information about generics and biosimilars:

- * [Do generic medicines work the same as brand-name medicines?](#)
- * [Why do brand-name medicines look different from their generic versions?](#)
- * [Why do generic medicines cost less than brand-name medicines?](#)
- * [What standards must generic medicines meet to receive FDA approval?](#)
- * [Is a generic version of my brand-name medicine available?](#)
- * [Does FDA monitor side effects or safety issues with generic medicines?](#)
- * [Where can I find more information about generic medicines?](#)
- * <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/biosimilars/patient-materials>

Biosimilar Drugs in Oncology: What Has the FDA Approved So Far?

According to the FDA, a biosimilar is a biologic that is shown to be highly similar to, and have no clinically meaningful differences from, a reference drug that has already been approved by the FDA.

Since early 2015, there have been 14 biosimilars approved by the FDA for use in patients in the United States, 9 oncology and oncology supportive care drugs.²⁻⁸

On the heels of a year in which the FDA approved upwards of 25 cancer drugs, Oncology Learning Network provides a brief overview of oncology and oncology supportive biosimilars that have been approved to date. [Click here to read more](#)

Exercise and Fitness

Source: <https://www.cancer.net/survivorship/healthy-living/exercise-during-cancer-treatment>

Exercise is an important part of a cancer treatment plan. A growing amount of research shows that regular exercise can greatly improve physical and mental health during every phase of treatment. Even if you were not active before your cancer diagnosis, an exercise program that meets your unique needs can help you get moving safely and successfully. Always talk with your doctor before you start an exercise program during or after cancer treatment.

Benefits of exercise

Following a well-designed exercise plan during and after treatment may be able to:

- * Lower the chance of having physical side effects, such as fatigue, neuropathy, lymphedema, osteoporosis, and nausea
- * Reduce the risk of [depression](#) and [anxiety](#)
- * Keep you as mobile and independent as possible
- * Improve your balance to reduce fall injuries
- * Prevent muscle loss and build strength
- * Prevent [weight gain and obesity](#), which are linked to increased cancer risk
- * Improve [sleep](#)
- * Decrease the amount of time you need to stay in the hospital
- * Make your treatment more effective at destroying tumor cells
- * Improve survival rates for certain cancers, such as breast cancer and colorectal cancer
- * [Reduce the risk of other cancers](#)
- * Prevent other chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes
- * Improve quality of life

If you were physically active before treatment, you may not be able to follow the same exercise routine as before. After treatment, it will take time to return to your pre-cancer fitness level. Ask your doctor to recommend a qualified cancer exercise specialist who can design the best exercise program for your unique situation. You may be able to follow the plan independently. Or you may need to work with the exercise specialist for some time.

There are also group fitness programs, such as [LIVESTRONG at the YMCA](#), designed to help people living with or beyond cancer stay physically active. Learn more about [how cancer survivors can get exercise support](#).

Related Resources:

[The Importance of Exercise](#)

[An Exercise Program for You: 5 Tips for People With Cancer](#)

[Exercise During Treatment: An Expert Q&A](#)

[Physical Activity Tips for Survivors](#)

[National Cancer Institute: Physical Activity and Cancer](#)

[National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: Guide to Physical Activity](#)

Latest Oncology Drug Approvals

Small Cell Lung Cancer

FDA approves AstraZeneca's durvalumab for extensive-stage small cell lung cancer
Food and Drug Administration approved durvalumab (IMFINZI, AstraZeneca) in combination with etoposide and either carboplatin or cisplatin as first-line treatment of patients with extensive-stage small cell lung cancer (ES-SCLC). [Read More HERE>>](#)

Metastatic Colorectal Cancer (CRC)

FDA approved Array BioPharma's encorafenib in combination with cetuximab
Food and Drug Administration approved encorafenib (BRAFTOVI, Array BioPharma Inc.) in combination with cetuximab for the treatment of adult patients with metastatic colorectal cancer (CRC) with a BRAF V600E mutation, detected by an FDA-approved test, after prior therapy. [Read More HERE>>](#)

Anemia In Adults With MDS

FDA approves BMS/Celgene's luspatercept-aamt for anemia in adults with MDS
Food and Drug Administration approved luspatercept-aamt (REBLOZYL, Celgene Corporation) for the treatment of anemia failing an erythropoiesis stimulating agent and requiring 2 or more red blood cell (RBC) units over 8 weeks in adult patients with very low- to intermediate-risk myelodysplastic syndromes with ring sideroblasts (MDS-RS) or with myelodysplastic/myeloproliferative neoplasm with ring sideroblasts and thrombocytosis (MDS/MPN-RS-T). [Read More HERE>>](#)

Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC)

On March 10, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration granted accelerated approval to the combination of nivolumab and ipilimumab (OPDIVO and YERVOY, Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.) for patients with hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) who have been previously treated with sorafenib. [Read more](#)

More FDA Information:

- * [FDA: Office of Hematology and Oncology Products](#)
- * [FDA: Approved Drugs: Questions and Answers](#)

SUPPORT GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

Support Groups for Oral, Head and Neck Cancer

- * American Head & Neck Society. 310-437-0559, ahns.info.
- * Head and Neck Cancer Alliance. 866-792-4622, headandneck.org.
- * Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer (SPOHNC) 800-377-0928, spohnc.org.
- * The Oral Cancer Foundation. 949-723-4400, oralcancerfoundation.org.



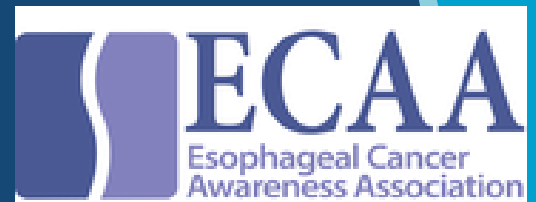
TESTICULAR
CANCER SOCIETY

Testicular Cancer Society

The Testicular Cancer Society is a 501 ©3 non-profit organization committed to raise awareness for the most common form of cancer in men age 15-35, to provide education about the disease and give support for fighters, survivors, and caregivers.

Esophageal Cancer Awareness Association

The Esophageal Cancer Awareness Association (ECAA) is dedicated to helping patients, caregivers, survivors, family members, and anyone at-risk of the disease. Their site offers easy-to-read information on Esophageal Cancer (EC) – descriptions of the disease, its diagnosis, staging, treatments, and other factors. <https://www.ecaware.org/>



FEATURED RESOURCES

[Patient Resources](#) *from Cancer.Net, ASCO's patient information site*

[Improve Quality of Life With Palliative Care Education Resource](#) →

[Cancer in my Community: Advancing Cancer Care in Romania](#) →

[Education Video: Prevention and Healthy Living, With Dr. Mark A. O'Rourke](#) →

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