

FLASCO BRIEF

Survivor Newsletter



MARCH 2020

Coronavirus 2019: What People with Cancer Need to Know

The Florida Society of Clinical Oncology (FLASCO) is aware that people with cancer and cancer survivors, particularly those with compromised immune systems, are likely worried about the potential impact of coronavirus on their health. Patients should talk with their oncologists and health care teams to discuss their options to protect themselves from infection. This is an unprecedented time, but as Floridians, we are experts at *weathering the storm* and knowing that *preparation works*.

[Click here to read more about:](#)

- What is coronavirus 2019?
- What can I do to avoid getting this coronavirus?
- Are there special precautions that people with cancer should take?
- What should I do if I think I may have this coronavirus?
- Are there any treatments available for COVID-19?
- Where can I get the latest information about COVID-19?



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Julie Newberry

The Florida Society of Clinical Oncology (FLASCO) is a member supported state society that focuses on providing general support to the Florida professionals who have chosen the challenging medical discipline of oncology.



Our general membership consists of over 3,500 medical, radiation, surgical, gynecologic, pediatric oncologists, oncology pharmacists and oncologists in training, along with their support teams which include physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, office managers and other supporting staff that are currently serving in the oncology field.

As champions of cancer patients in Florida, our members are bona fide heroes. Our passionate work revolves around providing the very best treatments and advancing best practices to bring healing and hope to patients and their families. Our noble fight will be won as a team – by seeing our peers as allies rather than competitors. Our members across various disciplines benefit from sharing knowledge and mutual consultation, as this offers the greatest hope for patients. FLASCO provides a united platform to encourage, enhance and empower collaboration.

In 2015, FLASCO expanded our mission to provide education to the cancer warriors and survivors that our members so passionately serve. 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 launch our next 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

NAVIGATING CANCER

Understanding Cancer

All cancers begin in cells. Our bodies are made up of more than a hundred million (100,000,000,000,000) cells. Cancer starts with changes in one cell or a small group of cells. Usually, we have just the right number of each type of cell. This is because cells produce signals to control how much and how often the cells divide. If any of these signals are faulty or missing, cells may start to grow and multiply too much and form a lump called a tumor. A primary tumor is where the cancer starts.

Some types of cancer, called leukemia, start from blood cells. They don't form solid tumors. Instead, the cancer cells build up in the blood and sometimes the bone marrow. For a cancer to start, certain changes take place within the genes of a cell or a group of cells.

Symptoms & Warning Signs of Cancer

- Change in bowel or bladder habits.
- A sore that does not heal.
- Unusual bleeding or discharge.
- Thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere.
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing.
- Obvious change in a wart or mole.
- Nagging cough or hoarseness.

Malignant Tumors Vs. Benign Tumors

A tumor is an abnormal mass of cells. Tumors can either be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

Benign Tumors: Benign tumors grow locally and do not spread. As a result, benign tumors are not considered cancer. They can still be dangerous, especially if they press against vital organs like the brain.

Malignant Tumors: Malignant tumors have the ability to spread and invade other tissues. This process, known as metastasis, is a key feature of cancer. There are many different types of malignancy based on where a cancer tumor originates.

4 Major Classifications of Cancer

The major types of cancer are carcinoma, sarcoma, melanoma, lymphoma, and leukemia. Carcinomas -- the most commonly diagnosed cancers -- originate in the skin, lungs, breasts, pancreas, and other organs and glands. Lymphomas are cancers of lymphocytes. Leukemia is cancer of the blood. It does not usually form solid tumors. Sarcomas arise in bone, muscle, fat, blood vessels, cartilage, or other soft or connective tissues of the body. They are relatively uncommon. Melanomas are cancers that arise in the cells that make the pigment in skin.

To learn more cancer basics, check out the American Cancer Society:

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-basics.html>

LIVING WELL

Diet and Nutrition

Nutrition is an important part of cancer treatment. Eating the right kinds of foods before, during, and after treatment can help you feel better and stay stronger. But cancer and its treatment can cause problems that can make it hard to eat. Not everyone with cancer has nutrition-related side effects, but this information can help you address them if and when they come up.

Nutrition During Cancer Treatment (American Cancer Society)

Learn about nutrition needs during treatment and how to manage treatment side effects that could affect how well you eat.

- [Benefits of Good Nutrition During Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Preparing for Treatment With Good Nutrition](#)
- [Eating Well During Treatment](#)
- [Food Safety During Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Low-Fiber Foods](#)
- [Managing Eating Problems Caused by Cancer Treatments](#)
- [Eating Well After Treatment](#)

Where to find help

If you have any questions or concerns about nutrition, you should talk to a doctor, nurse, or dietitian. A registered dietitian can be one of your best sources of information. If you are going to meet with a dietitian, be sure to write down your questions before your meeting so you won't forget anything. And be sure to ask the dietitian to repeat or explain anything that's not clear. For more information or to find a registered dietitian, contact the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#).

How To Cope With The Impact Of Cancer On Your Mental Health

Mental numbness, exhaustion, and anxiety are all realities that those with cancer face. "Cancer, no matter the kind, is a devastating diagnosis. It can strip the world of its beauty and make you feel empty and hopeless. But it can also ignite a fire inside that will never be extinguished," shares Rebecca Segal. [Read more on ASCO's patient information website, Cancer.Net.](#)

FDA UPDATES

Select the headings below to learn more information about each of these latest oncology drug approvals.

- * **Bladder Cancer** – FDA Approves KEYTRUDA (Merck & Co. Inc.) for the treatment of patients with Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG)-unresponsive, high-risk, non-muscle invasive bladder cancer (NMIBC)
- * **GI Cancer** – FDA Approves AYVAKITTM (Blueprint Medicines Corporation) for Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor With A Rare Mutation
- * **Epithelioid Sarcoma** - TAZVERIK (Epizyme, Inc) approved for advanced epithelioid sarcoma
- * **Nonsquamous NSCLC** – Pemfexy(Eagle Pharmaceuticals) Approved for Nonsquamous NSCLC and Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma
- * **HER2-Positive Breast Cancer** – FDA Approved NERLYNX (Puma Biotechnology) in combination with capecitabine for adult patients with advanced or metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer
- * **Previously Treated Multiple Myeloma** - Sarclisa (Sanofi) in combination with pomalidomide and dexamethasone, for the treatment of adult patients with multiple myeloma who have received at least two prior therapies including lenalidomide and a proteasome inhibitor.

More FDA Information:

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

SUPPORT GROUP HIGHLIGHT

DDF Monthly Stomach Cancer Support Groups

Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer is proud to partner with Catholic Hospice, Inc. to bring patients and caregivers monthly support groups, with the option of attendance in-person and via teleconference. The monthly support groups are open to the stomach cancer community, where topics will vary by month and by group. Support groups will be held on the first Friday of every month. The patient group will begin at 1:30 p.m. EST and the caregiver group will begin at 2:30 p.m. EST, each at an hour long. Catholic Hospice Bereavement Counselor, Joshua Hernandez, LMFT will lead each monthly group. [Click here to learn more](#)



FEATURED RESOURCES

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is here for you!

Speak one-on-one with an Information Specialist who can assist you through cancer treatment, financial and social challenges and give accurate, up-to-date disease, treatment and support information. Our Information Specialists are master's level oncology social workers, nurses and health educators.

How to Contact an Information Specialist:

- * **Call:** (800) 955-4572 (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET)
- * **Leave a message 24/7 and we'll call back.** Call (800) 955-4572 to use the automated response system 24 hours a day, seven days a week. An Information Specialist will return your call the next business day. You can also listen to recorded information about LLS and our programs.
- * **Visit** www.lls.org/support/information-specialists to access the following:
- * **Chat live online:** [Click here to chat](#) (Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET)
- * **Email:** [Click Here](#) All email messages are answered within one business day.




Clinical Trial Information – National Cancer Institute

Deciding to Take Part in a Clinical Trial



Learn the reasons why you might want to join a cancer clinical trial. By looking closely at all options, including clinical trials, you are taking an active role in a decision that affects your life. When you need treatment for cancer, you may want to think about joining a clinical trial. Like all treatment options, clinical trials have possible benefits and risks. By looking closely at all options, including clinical trials, you are taking an active role in a decision that affects your life. This section has information you can use when making your decision. [Learn More](#)

MARCH CANCER AWARENESS

-  Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
-  Kidney Cancer Awareness Month
-  Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month

Florida Society of Clinical Oncology

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