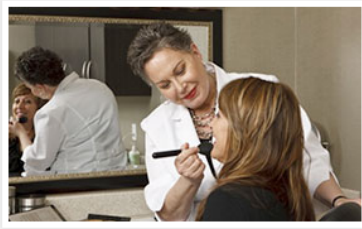


## Thoughtful cancer care packages comfort patients during treatment

CTCA

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"What can I do to help?" Cancer patients get this question all the time from family and friends who want to provide meaningful support but just don't know where to start. The question, though, can stump patients, too, especially as they struggle to come to terms with their diagnosis. Greeting cards, flowers and balloons can be a great way to brighten a patient's day. But a personalized cancer care package can take the understanding, empathy and support to the next level.

While every cancer patient's journey is unique, many have common experiences during [chemotherapy](#) and [radiation treatments](#). Here is a list of simple, affordable items that may boost patients' spirits:

**Salon gift cards:** For patients preparing for chemotherapy treatment, a hair salon gift card offers them the opportunity to gradually adjust to shorter hair. When their [hair does fall out](#), frequent trims can camouflage the change and ease the transition. Women may also explore fake eyelashes, or men and women can choose to shave their heads to prepare for the expected changes ahead.

**Headwear:** Colorful scarves may improve self-esteem, while also keeping patients' heads warm in air-conditioned hospitals and in colder climates and seasons. Caps and hats offer multiple benefits—as a style option, to help patients get comfortable while sleeping or lounging, or for sun protection during treatments that may leave patients vulnerable to UV damage. A gift card to a wig store may also help your loved ones get started on a new look that provides comfort throughout treatment.

**Makeup/jewelry:** Eyeliner pencils and eye makeup may help patients add extra touches to their look during chemotherapy treatment, and lipstick or earrings may help them feel pretty while accenting their features.

**Mouth aids:** Chemotherapy patients frequently complain about "metal mouth," or a [metallic taste](#) after treatment. Citrus candies and fruits are a popular way of counteracting this common side effect. For those with often-painful [dry mouth](#) or [mouth sores](#), over-the-counter toothpastes, oral rinses and gels may help alleviate the discomfort.

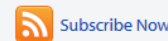
**Skin care:** [Dry and irritated skin](#) are common side effects of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Mild soaps and moisturizers are often recommended and may make thoughtful gifts. Loose-fitting clothing, such as soft pajamas or socks, may help patients with dry or irritated skin, while a monogrammed or personalized blanket or stuffed animal may afford them the comforts of home during their hospital stay.

**Mental stimulation:** Magazines or crossword and other puzzle books are often used as a diversion from treatments or hospital stays. Books written by cancer survivors may also prove both educational and encouraging. Journals, too, are an option to encourage patients to use writing as an outlet during treatment.

**File organizer:** Patients often don't think to buy organizing material, but these tools may help patients store voluminous medical records, receipts, prescriptions and other information. Pocket calendars or planners may also make it easier for patients to take notes, log symptoms and medications and track their appointments.

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