

Grief Due to Loss of Health

What is Grief?

Grief is mourning after any kind of loss. It is a normal, healthy response to the loss of your health or the health of a loved one through a disease such as cancer. Every person will experience grief at some time. We all feel it in our own way.

A person in grief may feel shock, disbelief, longing, anger, sadness, and acceptance. It can help to view grief as a process. Grief ebbs and flows. Moments of unexpected grief are normal. Grief may never go away completely, but the pain it causes will lessen over time as you work through your feelings.

Grief is a normal reaction to loss and an important part of working through it.

What Are Signs of Grief?

People experience grief differently—there is no right or wrong way. Grief can affect you physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Physical Signs

- Tiredness
- Trouble sleeping
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Fast breathing or shortness of breath
- Fast heartbeat or tightness in the chest
- Feeling a lump in your throat
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Nausea

Emotional Signs

- Anger
- Crying spells
- Loneliness
- Restlessness or depression

Mental Signs

- Disorganization and lack of concentration
- Self-blame
- Sense that what's happening isn't real

How Long Does Grief Last?

How long grief lasts is different for every person. Once you begin to accept your loss, you may start to feel better in small ways. For example, you may find it is a little easier to get up in the morning, or you may have small bursts of energy. You will begin to reorganize your life around your loss.

What Can I Do?

- Know that it is OK to grieve—to cry, to feel numb, to be angry, or to feel however you are feeling.
- Talk about how you are feeling with friends, family, clergy, a counselor or support group, or your health care provider.
- Ask for help if you need it

The social workers of Huntsman Cancer Institute's Patient and Family Support team are a resource for people with grief.

Our team is available Monday–Friday from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

To learn more or make an appointment, call 801-213-5699.

huntsmancancer.org/pfs