



# Cancer Care

APRIL 2026

## Even with a Loving Partner, It's Hard

By D'Ann George

### Working Her Way Back to Sexual Intimacy

For 10 years, Lisa Gordon endured side effects from multiple treatments for her complex breast cancer diagnosis, her husband of 16 years by her side. Through everything, the couple managed to keep their romantic fire kindled. That is, until Gordon began taking a medication that blocks estrogen. Suddenly, she felt her flame flicker.

"Within a day and a half, the drug took away my entire libido," said Gordon. "And I'd always had a strong libido. And I can't explain it, other than it was like when I had a mastectomy: you are removing a part of your body — or in my case, both of my breasts — and that is traumatic enough. But now I was losing a part of me that has always been there — it's as good as having been cut out. And that's hard."

The change deeply affected her sense of self. "It felt like losing a part of my identity," she said. "You prepare yourself

for physical changes after surgery. But this was internal. It changed how I understood myself."

That loss also affected her marriage in quiet but profound ways. "How could it not?" Gordon said. "When you can't connect in the way you used to, there's distance. Even with a loving, patient partner, it's hard. We're still working our way back."

### A Road Map for Recovery Through the Sexual Health and Intimacy Program

A turning point for Gordon came when a medical family therapist with the [Duke Cancer Patient Support Program](#) referred her to the Sexual Health and Intimacy Program.

Working with Rebecca Shelby, PhD, a sex therapist with the Program, felt validating. "Rebecca makes you feel seen," Gordon said. "She listens without judgment and helps you

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# Cancer Support Services

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understand that you're not alone. Just hearing that this was real — and that other women were experiencing it too — was powerful.”

Rebecca helped Gordon sort through credible information, understand what was happening in her body, and explore supportive options at a pace that felt safe. “Nothing felt rushed or clinical,” Gordon said. “It felt like someone walking alongside you.”

Physical therapy with Jeni Thorton-Jones, CLT, PT, WCS, added another essential layer. “Jeni helped me understand muscles inside my body that I had never been taught about,” Gordon said. “I learned that my issue wasn't weakness — it was tension. I needed release, not more tightening.”

Through education and personalized care, Gordon began to feel more at ease in her body.

The Program's team approach — including a nurse practitioner who reviewed medications and side effects — made all the difference. “It wasn't one thing,” Gordon said. “It was the combination. Having people who understood the emotional, physical, and medical pieces together.”

Visit [duke.is/sexual-health](https://duke.is/sexual-health) to learn more or speak with your provider to request a referral.

Support services are offered both in-person and remotely. Please call 919.684.4497 for more information.

[dukecancerinstitute.org](https://dukecancerinstitute.org)

Duke Cancer Institute offers a variety of cancer support and survivorship services for patients and their loved ones to assist with navigating life during and after cancer treatment. Our goal is to shape the future of cancer survivorship and improve the quality of life throughout treatment.

## Patient and Nurse Navigation

Navigators support patients, families, and caregivers throughout cancer care — from diagnosis to the end of treatment. They provide information to guide decisions, advocate for your needs, identify barriers, and connect you with helpful resources. To learn more, ask your healthcare team about available Navigation services.

## Clinical Social Work

Oncology and palliative care social workers help patients and families manage emotional and practical challenges. They ease stress, address financial concerns, and connect you with resources like disability support, home health, hospice, and end-of-life planning. Ask your healthcare team about Clinical Social Work services.

## Cancer Nutrition

Our registered dietitians specialize in oncology and help to prevent and treat malnutrition, restore digestive health, and minimize the side effects of your cancer treatment. To learn more, contact your healthcare team and ask about cancer nutrition services.

## Chaplain Services & Education

Duke chaplains are on site seven days a week to offer spiritual support to you and your loved ones. When requested, they connect you with faith-specific representatives from the community. To learn more, contact Chaplain Services & Education at Duke Cancer Institute locations by visiting [dukehealth.org/support-services/pastoral-services](https://dukehealth.org/support-services/pastoral-services).

## Therapy and Counseling

Our medical family therapists provide individual, couples, and family therapy. They help you and your loved ones cope with the impact of cancer, all at no cost. Psychiatry and psychology services are also available and offered as part of our treatment for emotional, psychological, and relational issues associated with a cancer diagnosis. To learn more, visit [duke.is/c/b47z](https://duke.is/c/b47z).

## Sexual Health Services

Sexual health services explain the impact cancer treatments can have on sexual health and intimacy. They help you address concerns surrounding sexual function, sexual feelings, intimacy, and changes in sexual health. To learn more, contact your healthcare team and ask about sexual health services.

## Quit at Duke

Quit at Duke is a program designed to help people quit using tobacco products. Services are provided by tobacco treatment specialists and behavioral medicine clinicians. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 919.613.QUIT (7848). To learn more, visit [dukehealth.org/quit](http://dukehealth.org/quit).

## Survivorship Services

We partner with you and your loved ones to support healthy, fulfilling lives beyond cancer. Care includes physical and emotional assessments, screenings, and counseling for prevention and wellness. Learn more at [duke.is/survivorshippervices](http://duke.is/survivorshippervices) or call 919.668.2122.

## Teen and Young Adult Oncology Program

This program supports teens and young adults (ages 15–29) and their loved ones through cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Services include specialized medical care, individual and family therapy, peer support, and activity-based groups in both clinical and community settings. Learn more at [dukehealth.org/TYAO](http://dukehealth.org/TYAO).

## Palliative Care

This team helps manage symptoms like pain, fatigue, nausea, anxiety, and more — improving your comfort and quality of life. They work with you, your loved ones, and your doctors to ensure care aligns with your goals. To schedule, call 919.668.6688 (option #7) or visit [dukehealth.org/treatments/palliative-care](http://dukehealth.org/treatments/palliative-care).

## Self-Image Services

Our self-image consultants offer a variety of services and products to assist individuals with changes in body-image experienced during cancer treatment and survivorship. If you are interested in a self-image consultation, at one of our three locations, call 919.613.1906 or email [cancersupport@duke.edu](mailto:cancersupport@duke.edu). To learn more, visit [duke.is/self-image](http://duke.is/self-image).

## Child and Adolescent Life Services

They focus on supporting the emotional and developmental needs of children and teens in families who are facing cancer. They hold individual education sessions to support parents while they take the lead in helping their children understand a cancer diagnosis, treatment, side effects, and changes in their family life. To learn more, visit [duke.is/cals](http://duke.is/cals).

## Onco-Fertility Services

Cancer treatments can impact fertility. If you are interested in a fertility preservation consult, talk to your care team, and a nurse navigator will connect you with specialists — including fertility-trained providers, financial counselors, and therapists, and more. Services are available from diagnosis through survivorship, even if preservation wasn't completed. Call 919-613-4389 to speak with a nurse navigator. To learn more, visit [duke.is/fertpreservation](http://duke.is/fertpreservation).

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Scan to learn more or visit [duke.is/n8h92](http://duke.is/n8h92)

## Pets at Duke

Take a break, find some calm, and connect with a furry friend.

Check the calendar to plan your visit: [duke.is/PADCalendar](http://duke.is/PADCalendar)



# Support Gatherings

Duke Cancer Patient Support Program's support gatherings are professionally facilitated. Attendees have an opportunity to meet people in a similar situation, share their experience and get support, tips, and ideas from those who understand what they are going through. Registration is required. To learn more, call 919.684.4497. Scan the QR code to register for support groups. All times listed are in Eastern Standard Time.



## Art Therapy at Nasher

Wednesday :: April 8  
2 to 3:30 p.m.

[Second Wednesday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is open to patients and caregivers and is located at the Nasher Museum of Art in Durham. No art experience is needed. For more information and to register, visit [duke.is/nn4gr](http://duke.is/nn4gr).

## Blood and Marrow Transplant Survivorship Support Group

Wednesday :: April 15  
4 to 5:30 p.m.

[Third Wednesday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## Breast & GYN Cancers Support Group

Tuesday :: April 14  
5:30 to 7 p.m.

[Second Tuesday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for patients only. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## Caregiver Support Group

Thursday :: April 16  
6 to 7 p.m.

[Third Thursday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for caregivers only. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## General Cancer Support Group

Thursday :: April 16, 5 to 6 p.m.

[Third Thursday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for patients only. Topics include communicating, finding information, making decisions, solving problems negotiating, and standing up for your rights. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## Head and Neck Cancer Group

Monday :: April 13  
4 to 5 p.m.

[Second Monday of the month](#)

This [group](#) is open to patients and caregivers and is located at Duke Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine in the Center for Living Campus. For more information and to register, visit [duke.is/g/utqh](http://duke.is/g/utqh).

## LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group

Wednesday :: April 22  
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

[Fourth Wednesday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## Metastatic Cancer Support Group for Women

Wednesday :: April 15  
3 to 4:30 p.m.

[Third Wednesday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for patients only. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## Parenting with Cancer Meetup

Tuesday :: April 21, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

[Third Tuesday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for parents with cancer and their caregivers, who have young children and/or teens. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## Prostate Cancer Support Group

Monday :: April 27, 4 to 6 p.m.

[Fourth Monday of the month](#)

This virtual [group](#) is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit [duke.is/mhc7m](http://duke.is/mhc7m).

## KidsCAN!

**KidsCAN!** is a program designed to support children and teens, ages 4 to 18, who have a parent or significant caregiver living with a diagnosis of cancer. Monthly meetups focus on issues such as understanding cancer, changes in the family life, feelings, self-care, memories, cooperation, love and family. KidsCAN! (ages 4–10 years) meets virtually on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. KidsCAN! Tweens and Teens (ages 11–18 years) meets virtually on the third Monday of the month at 6:30



p.m. KidsCAN! will meet in-person for the month of April; this includes ages 4 years old thru middle school. The event will be held on Saturday, April 18th. Registration is required. For more information, contact us by visiting [duke.is/m/wv4y](http://duke.is/m/wv4y).

## TYAO

Teen and Young Adult Oncology Program

Join us for an in-person cooking demonstration for young adults (ages 18-39) on Tuesday, April 28 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. A Duke clinical dietician will lead the demonstration followed by an open and interactive discussion of nutrition-based topics. To learn more or register, email [TYAO@Duke.edu](mailto:TYAO@Duke.edu). Check out our Instagram for updates and upcoming events.



@duketyao

# Rest, Relax, Renew

The Duke Cancer Patient Support Program provides services and resources to help support patients and their loved ones. For a list of complimentary services, visit [dukehealth.org/cancersupport](http://dukehealth.org/cancersupport) or call 919.684.4497.



**Virtual Tai Chi**  
Fridays :: April 3 & 17,  
2:30 to 3:15 p.m.  
First and Third Friday of the month  
Join Dr. Jay Dunbar, founder and director of The Magic Tortoise Taijiquan School, for a virtual [Tai Chi class](#) for cancer patients and survivors. Visit [duke.is/8mues](http://duke.is/8mues) to learn more and to register.

**Virtual Yoga**  
Tuesdays :: APRIL 14 & 28,  
Noon to 1 p.m.

Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month  
Join certified Yoga for Cancer instructor Laura Woodall in a [class](#) designed specifically for cancer patients and survivors. Visit [duke.is/7jgt3](http://duke.is/7jgt3) to learn more and to register.

**Mind-Body Approaches to Coping with Cancer**  
Tuesdays :: April 7 & 21,  
Noon to 1 p.m.  
First and Third Tuesday of the month  
Mindfulness can be a powerful tool to manage the stress that can accompany living with and life after cancer. These [virtual sessions](#) teach mind and body approaches to coping with cancer. Through the focus on the breath and the present moment, patients and their caregivers will learn to discover how to respond rather than react to life's stressors. For more

information and to register, visit [duke.is/gzsvt](http://duke.is/gzsvt).

**Explore the Power of Your Voice for Healing**  
Wednesdays :: April 1 & 15, Noon to 1 p.m.  
First and Third Wednesday of the month  
In this virtual [workshop](#) you will explore breathing techniques, vocal toning, and chanting. These tools and techniques, when used daily, encourage mindful attention to one's heart and voice. Experience the health benefits of sound, vibration, and self-expression. Visit [duke.is/mn7m9](http://duke.is/mn7m9) to learn more and to register.

**Exercise Consultations**  
Mondays :: 2 to 4 p.m.  
Wednesdays :: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
Supportive Care & Survivorship Center offers [exercise consultations](#) by exercise physiologists. These personalized sessions

are available to oncology patients and survivors at no cost. Video chat or phone sessions are available on Mondays between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. and Wednesdays between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. To learn more or to register email [DHFCancerExercise@dm.duke.edu](mailto:DHFCancerExercise@dm.duke.edu) or visit [duke.is/82cne](http://duke.is/82cne).

**Salon Services**  
Mondays :: April 6 & 27  
Wednesday :: April 15  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
First and Fourth Monday of the month; Third Wednesday of the month  
Our volunteer team of expert hair stylists provide private consultations at the Belk Boutique in Durham at no cost. They offer dry cuts for your hair or a head shave. Our stylists can also assist with wig styling, cutting, and general wig care. To learn more, visit [duke.is/n/8mu6](http://duke.is/n/8mu6).

## Legal Resources Available

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS — Informational Zoom**  
Wednesday, April 8, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Duke Law School will provide a free legal informational session on three North Carolina health care planning documents: General Power of Attorney; Health Care Power of Attorney; and Advanced Directive for a Natural Death. These documents provide important protections in the event a person is unable to express their wishes or conduct business on their own behalf. Join us on Wednesday, April 8, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom to learn if these documents may be right for you and have the opportunity to ask questions. Register by visiting [duke.is/legal](http://duke.is/legal).



# APRIL 2026

Duke Cancer Institute Support and Activity Groups

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>For more information and to register, visit <a href="https://dukehealth.org/cancersupport">dukehealth.org/cancersupport</a> or call 919.684.4497</p> <p>To make a gift to support our no charge services, visit <a href="https://gifts.duke.edu/cancersupport">gifts.duke.edu/cancersupport</a></p>		<p><b>1</b> <a href="#">Explore the Power of Voice</a></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b> <a href="#">Tai Chi</a></p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b> <a href="#">Mind/Body Approaches   Coping with Cancer</a></p>	<p><b>8</b> <a href="#">Art Therapy at Nasher</a> <a href="#">Know Your Rights</a></p>	<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p>
<p><b>13</b> <a href="#">Head and Neck Cancer Group</a></p>	<p><b>14</b> <a href="#">Yoga</a> <a href="#">Breast &amp; GYN Cancer Support</a></p>	<p><b>15</b> <a href="#">Explore the Power of Voice</a> <a href="#">Women's Metastatic Cancer Support</a> <a href="#">BMT Survivorship Support</a></p>	<p><b>16</b> <a href="#">General Cancer Support Group</a> <a href="#">Caregiver Support Group</a></p>	<p><b>17</b> <a href="#">Tai Chi</a></p>
<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>21</b> <a href="#">Mind/Body Approaches   Coping with Cancer</a> <a href="#">Parenting with Cancer Meetup</a></p>	<p><b>22</b> <a href="#">LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group</a></p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>
<p><b>27</b> <a href="#">Prostate Cancer Support</a></p>	<p><b>28</b> <a href="#">Yoga</a> <a href="#">TYAO Young Adult Meetup</a></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>31</b></p>