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Chemo Comfort Kits – Dr Hidayatul Radziah Ismawi

by [Hidayah](#) • July 25, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)

Finding out that a friend or loved one received a cancer diagnosis is devastating. The worst thing is, you feel helpless and unsure how to fix it. Perhaps the first thing to understand is that there may not be a way to “fix” this. However, there are always ways to help make things better.

Picture source: SpicyIP

How to respond when someone shares bad news ?

1. **Acknowledge** – Sharing such important and grave news is something truly significant. Acknowledge this fact and appreciate this. Do not simply share the news with other people or post it on social media. Another person’s diagnosis is not yours to share, unless they have given you permission.
2. **Keep in touch** – Do not be a stranger after hearing the news. Drop in for visits and call or text to ask how the person is. Do not smother or force them to go into details if they do not want to. Ask when the most appropriate time for them is. Just be there for them.
3. **Positive affirmation** – Keep them motivated. Remind them how resilient and strong they are. Often. Because they are.

What are chemo comfort kits?

Chemo comfort kits are care packages that contain various different items intended both to comfort and

entertain your loved one during their chemotherapy sessions. It can be considered a long term version of simply sending flowers, card or fruit basket. Studies have proven that chemo comfort kits decrease pain

during treatment, help patients recover faster from chemotherapy sessions and helps improves nursing care. (Blackburn, Abel, Green, Johnson, & Panda, 2018)

What can be included in comfort kits?

The simple answer is, anything at all that can bring comfort or joy.

Here are some suggestions for comfort:

1. **Warm and Comfortable Clothing** – Appropriate clothing can help during chemotherapy sessions because hospitals are often cold. One of the side effects of chemotherapy includes neuropathy (a type of nerve damage) and this can cause an increased sensitivity to extreme temperatures.
 1. Headwear (scarves & caps)
 2. Accessible clothing – easy access to chest/arms for chemo ports and branulas
 3. Soft blankets
 4. Cosy socks or slippers
2. **Gentle Skin Moisturizers and Soaps** – One of the side effects of chemotherapy includes dry and sensitive skin. Hypoallergenic products are recommended.
3. **Lip Balm**
4. **BPA-Free Water Bottle** – Chemotherapy can cause nausea and vomiting. It is also important for the patient to stay well hydrated during sessions.
5. **Mouth Aids** – Many patients also complain of “metal mouth” which is a dry and metallic taste after chemotherapy. Things such as chewy candy and fruits can alleviate “metal mouth” and also nausea. Oral rinses and gels can help with mouth ulcers, which are also a side effect of chemotherapy.
6. **Unscented Wet Wipes and Hand Sanitizer** – Patients undergoing chemo have a lowered immunity so these will definitely come in handy (pun intended).
7. **Spa or Self-care Vouchers** – the ultimate in comfort and pampering.

Some item suggestions for entertainment and good cheer:

1. **Magazines and books**
2. **Puzzle books and colouring books**
3. **Journal** – this journey is a profound one. Many people find comfort in jotting down their thoughts and hopes. They may also want to write down questions they may have for their doctors.
4. **Music and movies** – Good music is relaxing and helps pass the time. Create a playlist of their

favourite songs or get them an iTunes Gift Card. Movies too.

Be creative! A chemo comfort kit is a way to bring a little cheer and comfort to a loved one going through a rough situation. So give from the heart.

This article is dedicated to one of the nicest and bravest persons this author knows, Zoe. She loves the chemo comfort kits from #zoesprincesssquad and is looking forward to finding out who they are. Both the author and Zoe hopes that this article and sharing will encourage others to bring joy and comfort to their loved ones too.

Dr Hidayatul Radziah is a medical doctor and lecturer currently pursuing her PhD in Pharmacology. She is also the Chief Editor of The Malaysian Medical Gazette.

Rujukan:

1. Blackburn, L. M., Abel, S., Green, L., Johnson, K., & Panda, S. (2018). The Use of Comfort Kits to Optimize Adult Cancer Pain Management. *Pain Management Nursing*. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmn.2018.01.004
2. Gift Ideas for a Patient Undergoing Chemotherapy – careandwear.com

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