

13 Amazing Gift Ideas for Cancer Patients

Throw your loved one a party, help with daily tasks or give him or her a book or simple treat.



By Liwanag Ojala, Contributor Dec. 6, 2018, at 6:00 a.m.



Hospitals aren't the most exciting setting, and boredom can set in quickly – so bring your loved one a book (or two or three).

ALINA555/ISTOCK

WHEN YOU FIND OUT someone you love has cancer, you won't always know exactly what to say or do to make their experience easier.

Giving a thoughtful gift is one of the many ways you can show [support to a loved one going through cancer treatment](#). For inspiration, we asked members of the [CaringBridge](#) community who have been touched by cancer to share the best gifts they've ever given or received.

Check out the list and get inspired by these 13 awesome gift ideas for cancer patients:

1. Supply Meals

Offering meals is a gift-giving staple for a reason: It takes a huge burden off patients. Finding the time to cook regularly is a challenge even for those with no health issues, let alone someone struggling with cancer. A couple [CaringBridge](#) users who received meals during treatment shared their appreciation for this gift:

"We are an eat-at-the-table family ... when my daughter was doing chemo, it would have meant

MOST POPULAR

FOR BETTER
Gift Ideas for Cancer Patients

HEALTH CARE
ER Nurses Deal With Gun Violence

takeout dinner. For over two years, the people of our church (St. Mark's Episcopal in Irving, Texas) came weekly with homemade meals and sat down at the table with my other children while I was at treatment with Echo. I still tear up thinking of it." – Evan Jaeri Murphy

"A home-cooked, sit-down dinner and someone coming to clean my house were the two best gifts I ever received while undergoing chemo." – Nicole Nic Nizzi

[See: [10 Innovations in Cancer Therapy.](#)]

2. Throw Them a Party

What takes someone's mind off things better than a party? When a loved one has cancer, it can feel difficult to get in the party mood, but it's important to remember there are still so many positives to celebrate. Whether it's a birthday bash or an anniversary party, your loved one shouldn't have to miss out because of their illness.

Here's another unique party idea from a member of our community:

"A friend threw a hat and scarf party for me! I received hats, wigs, scarves, bandannas, headbands and pretty pink earrings and bracelets. I can't even remember everything I got! The whole church was there, plus my family and friends. I was so surprised. I cried (and) I was so happy!" – Debbie Wattlelet-McKee

3. Make a CaringBridge Site

CaringBridge is a personal health journal that lets you easily share your health journey with all your loved ones. Creating a site is a great way to help your loved one easily communicate and receive support, which makes it an awesome gift to give someone [battling cancer](#). Check out what a couple CaringBridge users had to say about creating a site:

"Doing a CaringBridge for my mother-in-law was the best thing I did for myself! My writings were priceless in the time – it saved me. I could then spend more time with her, rather than trying to keep everyone up-to-date, which would have been impossible." – Linda Winterfeldt

"Some of the best gifts my husband and I are receiving right now aren't 'physical' things, but support on our CaringBridge site from people we haven't heard from in a very long time. Another thing that was an amazing gift to me was the Loving Kindness Meditation connected with CaringBridge. It helped me focus every day, and I saved the link and still go back to it." – Carolyn Mijokovic

4. Help With Daily Tasks

One thing a cancer patient doesn't need any more of? [Stress](#). Offering to help out with chores like house cleaning, feeding pets or driving kids to school/sports will lift a huge weight off your loved one's shoulders. The less they focus on day-to-day chores, the more they can focus on getting better. Here are some specific ways you can help out with daily tasks:

"One of the best gifts I got when I had my cancer in 2001-02 was that a church friend would come pick up my three kids and drive them to three different schools each school day. She had two daughters who also went to school. It helped me tremendously, because a lot of times my cancer appointments were early and I could not drive my kids to their schools. Others gifts were gift baskets of things that I could use for different things during my cancer treatment sessions like

PATIENT ADVICE
Activities for Seniors in Long-term Care

FOR BETTER
A Basic Guide to Vertigo

PATIENT ADVICE
Is an X-Ray Safe for an Infant?

cards, money or gift cards, plus people praying for me all over the world while I had cancer treatments and appointments." – Debbie Worters Robertson

"Years ago a women in our town had TB and was staying in a special hospital. She had five small children. The Junior Women's Club took this on as a project. We took care of her children on a Friday – took turns feeding the family and whatever was needed." – Carol Leinberger

[See: [What Not to Say to a Breast Cancer Patient.](#)]

5. Simple Treats

The simplest of gestures can often speak volumes. Many times, cancer patients are so occupied with treatment that life's little pleasures get left to the wayside. Here are some ideas of simple gifts that are sure to bring a smile:

"My mother-in-law sent me flowers every single treatment day – beautiful, and felt like an indulgence, but the consistency of her thoughtfulness meant a lot to me." – Hanna Cooper

"Top favorites were chocolate-covered pink ribbon strawberries, a super soft prayer blanket and a [Good Wishes](#) head scarf/wrap." – Angela Kae Cooper

"When my 6-year-old daughter Alyssa was undergoing treatment, she received a red wagon that we used to transport her through the hospital and back to the car. She loved having her own wagon and her favorite blanket to comfort her during hospital stays." – Patricia Gallaher

6. Something to Look Forward To

Having [something positive to look forward to](#) is a great motivator for cancer patients to get through treatment. Here's a fun idea for inspiration:

"When my sister was very sick with ovarian cancer, her friends and family did a mini-makeover on her kitchen, living room and dining room, including paint, new decor and a new couch. She got to come home to a fabulous, clean and beautiful home to recuperate." – Renee Breitbach

7. Photos of Happy Memories

Giving pictures of friends and family from happy times are sure to brighten your loved one's day. Here's a sweet idea of how you can incorporate photos into an awesome gift:

"When my sister was diagnosed with [breast cancer](#), her nephews presented her with a blanket with pictures of them that she could use for her chemo treatments." – Kathy Jones

8. Monetary Gifts

Gifting money can sometimes be considered taking the easy route. That's simply not true. Offering financial support can be one of the most thoughtful (and needed) gifts you can give to a cancer patient. Many patients have to limit or give up working altogether due to their condition, and on top of that, [treatment is expensive](#). If you're still not convinced that money is a good gift, check out this heartfelt quote:

"I am our primary bread-earner and when my husband went through massive cancer/chemo in

2015, it was a struggle financially – a lot of unexpected co-pays, and hospital stays where I needed to be with him. I'm self-employed so I was able to reschedule my hours to some degree, but still missed work that I really needed. Just when I wondered how we would make it, a check for \$50 or \$100 would appear in my mailbox or in my Bible at my church. All gifts of love mean the world when your world caves in." – Cheryl Baer

[See: [A Tour of Mammographic Screenings During Your Life.](#)]

9. Regular Visits

It's free, it's easy and it's so important. Going through [cancer treatment can feel isolating](#), and having the support of regular visitors is the best way to combat that.

Coordinate with your loved one to find the days they'll be undergoing treatment and pick times that work for both of you to come visit. Trust us, simply showing up makes a world of difference to someone going through a health crisis.

10. A Professional Massage

The benefits of massage include helping manage pain and muscle tension, plus emotional perks like stress relief and feelings of comfort and connection. Giving someone struggling with cancer an hour of bliss and relaxation will always be a great option.

11. Cards in the Mail

It may sound old-school, but there is something inexplicably sweet about receiving a handwritten note. Taking the few extra minutes to write kind words by hand is a great way to both tell *and* show your support.

12. Books

Hospitals aren't the most exciting setting and boredom can set in quickly. Keep your loved one entertained by bringing over some of your favorite books. You could bring anything from your favorite mystery novel to a prayer book – the main focus should be on sharing something you love (and think they'll love, too.)

Check out these [entertaining book suggestions](#) to spark some ideas.

13. A Care Package

Ah, the care package: It's a solid classic. You can't go wrong with a well put-together basket of your loved one's favorite things. You can use a mixture of the previous suggestions or look to these other gift ideas for inspiration:

"A meal service. A gift card to the spa. A red blanket for the bottom of the bed (no verbal sign of very important patient). Phone charger and cords. Posters for endless beige walls. A Kindle with a one-year subscription to Prime. A sleep mask. Earplugs." – Anna Gregerson

"I got a gift basket of find-a-word books, ink pens, cards to send out and scarves for my bald head. So thoughtful." – Lela Preston

["Bravehoods!"](#) – Allison Feinglas Yacht

And Finally: Give the Gift of Love

It matters much less *what* you choose to give as long as you give it with love. We hope these gift ideas for cancer patients got your imagination whirring. They certainly put us in the giving mood.

Important note: If you plan on bringing your gift to the hospital, be mindful that there are restrictions. Please contact the hospital staff or patient to ensure that there are no allergies or other limitations that might prevent you from bringing your gift.

Liwanag Ojala, Contributor

Liwanag Ojala is CEO of [CaringBridge](#), the first and most widely used global nonprofit social ne... **READ MORE »**

Tags: patients, patient advice, holidays, holiday shopping, cancer

[DISCLAIMER AND A NOTE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH »](#)

RECOMMENDED

ER Nurses Deal With Gun Violence

Multiple bullet wounds have become the norm with critically injured patients.

Lisa Esposito Dec. 5, 2018

Activities for Seniors in Long-term Care

Different facilities offer a variety of activities, so look for ones that appeal to your loved one.

Elaine K. Howley Dec. 5, 2018

A Basic Guide to Vertigo

The most common cause of this spinning sensation is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, or BPPV.

Nitinkumar J. Patel, M.D. Dec. 5, 2018