Let's talk about one of life's biggest stressors: money. During and after a cancer diagnosis, your finances may become a source of anxiety and put you at risk for sleep disturbances, depression, and financial strain. And the cost of treating cancer is not just limited to the medical bills. Medications can be very expensive, and even if you have insurance, you may still have to pay for some costs out of pocket. So, what can you do?

First, set aside some time for you and someone you trust to take a big-picture look at your current financial situation. Talk about your previous financial history, what you want to accomplish now, and what you want to accomplish in the future. Ask these questions:

1. Where do you currently stand financially?
2. What is your current income?
3. What are your debts?
4. How much can you realistically afford to spend each month?
5. What are your long-term goals?

Once you know where you stand financially, you can create a budget that will help you to stay on track. It's important to have a plan for your financial future, so you can focus on what's important—your health and your family.

So, what now? Now that you have a clearer sense of the full picture, it is time to take action. There are several steps you can take to help manage your financial future:

- Open a new bank account specifically for your cancer treatment. This will help you to keep track of all of your expenses and ensure you are staying within your budget.
- Talk to a Financial Planner. They can help you to take advantage of any tax benefits you may be eligible for and can help you to understand the complexities a cancer diagnosis can bring.
- Consider setting up a budget with your doctor. They can help you to understand what you can afford and what you need to pay for. They can also help you to understand the long-term effects a cancer diagnosis may have on your financial situation.
- Consider getting help with your taxes. Many non-profit organizations offer free tax services to those who qualify. These organizations can help you to understand the tax implications of your cancer treatment and can help you to file your taxes correctly.

We are happy to help connect you to additional supportive resources. If you are interested in participating in the Young and Strong Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer or would like to learn more about the Young and Strong Program for Young Men with Breast Cancer, please contact Katelyn MacDougall, and the whole team of infusion nurses on the 6th and 7th floors of the hospital. Our team is here to support you through this difficult time.

References: