



**DIGESTIVE CANCERS**  
EUROPE



## *Living well with advanced colorectal cancer (CRC) – what does it mean for you?*



*For me, living well with advanced CRC is having more good days than bad, getting outside to spend time with my family and doing things that make me feel good, like advocacy work.*

Alexa, 31, living with advanced CRC



An Advanced CRC Patient Resource by the following contributors (Patients / Patient Advocates and Healthcare Professionals):

**Alexa**, Dana Farber Cancer Institute's Young Onset Colorectal Cancer Center and Bluem Patient Advocate; **Dr Tanios Bekail-Saab**, MD, Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science, US; **Dr Chiara Cremolini**, MD, PhD, University of Pisa, Italy; **Dr Cathy Eng**, MD, Professor of Medicine, Hematology and Oncology; **Dr Jin Huang**, PhD, Xiangya Hospital of Centre-south University, China; **Dr Luo Hui Yan**, MD, PhD, Sun Yat-sen University Cancer Center, China; **Ireneusz**, Digestive Cancers Europe (DICE) Patient Advocate; **Michael**, Fight Colorectal Cancer (Fight CRC) Patient Advocate; **Nina**, Digestive Cancers Europe (DICE) Patient Advocate; **Dr Lisa Salvatore**, MD, PhD, Comprehensive Cancer Center, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino, IRCCS, Rome, Italy

The development of this patient resource was supported by Bayer.

Date of preparation: October 2021 | PP-PF-ONC-ALL-0165-1

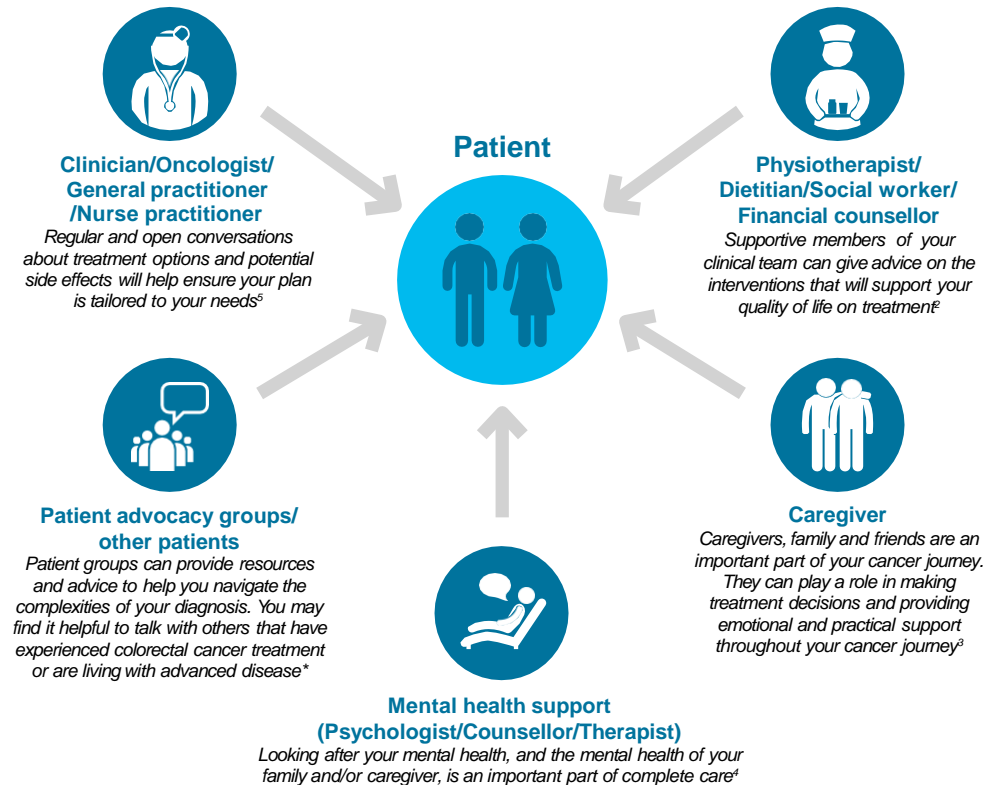
# Living well with advanced CRC

As a person living with advanced CRC, who has been previously treated, living longer as well as protecting your **quality of life** are likely to be top of mind.

With advances in treatment and care, **you can live well with advanced CRC.**<sup>1</sup> Your **healthcare team is an important partner in living well** throughout your cancer journey.<sup>2</sup> You should feel comfortable talking with your healthcare team about the best ways to stay healthy during and after cancer treatment.

## Talking treatment options with your healthcare team

When talking to your healthcare team let them know what's important to you – what are your needs, concerns and symptoms - so that you can access the **right treatment at the right time** and continue to focus on the things that matter most to you.



\*always speak to a healthcare professional about what treatment options are right for you

1. Soerjomataram, Isabelle et al. "Most colorectal cancer survivors live a large proportion of their remaining life in good health." *Cancer causes & control* : CCC vol. 23.9 (2012): 1421-8. doi:10.1007/s10552-012-0010-2. Last accessed October 2021 2. Husebø AML, Karlisen B, Husebø SE. Health professionals' perceptions of colorectal cancer patients' treatment burden and their supportive work to ameliorate the burden - a qualitative study. *BMC Health Serv Res.* 2020;20(1):661. doi:10.1186/s12913-020-05520-y. Last accessed October 2021 3. Urquhart R, Folkes A, Babineau J, Grunfeld E. Views of breast and colorectal cancer survivors on their routine follow-up care. *Curr Oncol.* 2012;19(6):294-301. doi:10.3747/co.19.1051. Last accessed October 2021 4. Ipos-society.org. [https://www.esmo.org/content/download/117593/2061518/1/ESMO\\_Patient-Guide-Survivorship.pdf](https://www.esmo.org/content/download/117593/2061518/1/ESMO_Patient-Guide-Survivorship.pdf). Last accessed October 2021 5. Colon cancer. *Mayoclinic.org*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/colon-cancer/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353674>. Last accessed October 2021.

# Prioritizing your quality of life in treatment decisions

Understanding your treatment options helps ensure the decisions that are made align with your goals as a patient. There are a variety of treatment options for advanced CRC and it's important to discuss these options with your healthcare provider.<sup>6</sup> Have **frequent discussions, ask them questions and check in regularly** with them on how you're feeling and what you're experiencing.

## Five things to consider:

1



Identify what aspects of your quality of life you want to focus on and discuss them with your healthcare team [see next page], this can include addressing your psychological, social and spiritual needs

2



Bringing a caregiver, family member or friend to appointments can be useful so that you have someone to help take notes, ask questions and so that they know what side effects and symptoms to look out for

3



Talk to your clinician about potential side effects and how they should be managed so that you know what to look out for and what you need to discuss with your healthcare team

4



Ask your doctor about genetic and fertility testing and whether this is something that could be right for you

5



Talk to your doctor about the potential benefits of switching to a chemo-free treatment option after receiving chemotherapy, as this may help optimize outcomes and maintain quality of life<sup>7</sup>



*Having my wife by my side throughout my journey, from diagnosis to my current treatments, has made all the difference. She took my hand when I was first diagnosed and told me, "we'll fight this together."*

Ireneusz, 40, living with advanced CRC



6. Golshani G, Zhang Y. Advances in immunotherapy for colorectal cancer: a review. Therap Adv Gastroenterol. 2020;13:1756284820917527. doi:10.1177/1756284820917527. Last accessed October 2021 7. Grothey A, Ciardiello F, Marshall JL. How to incorporate a chemo-free interval into the management of metastatic colorectal cancer. Clin Adv Hematol Oncol. 2020;18 Suppl 16(10):1-24. Last accessed October 2021

You may find it helpful to **record how you're feeling** using the prompts below before your next appointment to support any conversations around your treatment plan and quality of life with a member of your healthcare team.

How much energy do I have? How does this compare to my last appointment?

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What hobbies / activities / life events / upcoming milestones are important to me at the moment?

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Is there anything I want to do but can't because of my cancer or the treatment I'm on?

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How are things going with my support system and peer support? When was the last time I discussed how I'm feeling with someone who is not part of my healthcare team?

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Is there any support (medical, emotional, financial, nutritional, sexual) that could help me?

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If you have an ostomy system, how are you finding it? Are you able to manage your ostomy care?

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What side effects or symptoms have I experienced since my last appointment?

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Additional Notes / Feelings

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