

Managing anxiety

- Romy's story



Hi! My name's Romy.
At 33 years old, I just had my
first child... when I got diagnosed
with Hodgkin lymphoma.

It was my family doctor who gave me the news. She then referred me to a specialist to find out exactly what kind of lymphoma it was.

I had never experienced anxiety before. During that in-between time, before I was able to see a specialist and get more information, my mind was plagued by so many worries. My head was full of negative thoughts, and I couldn't think clearly anymore.



I felt a number of physical effects: heart palpitations, shortness of breath, chest pains. There was no doubt about it—I was having my first anxiety attack.

My boyfriend was panicking, because he had no distance from the situation. In my heart, I wished I had some magic solution that would make me feel better—to just click my heels and poof! The anxiety would disappear.



I decided to take action and get control over what I could, to make myself feel better.

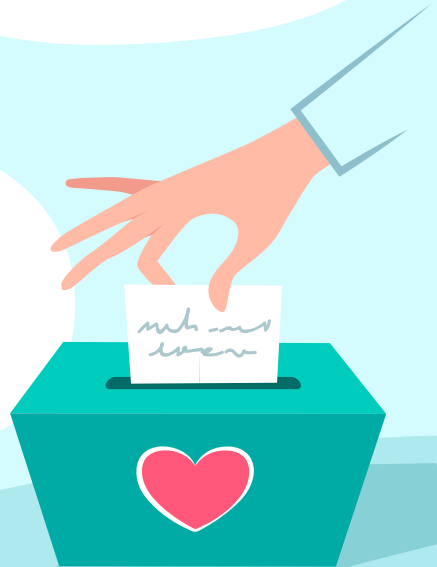
I called my sister. She had more distance and a cooler head than me. She reminded me that we live in a country with access to care, and that meant that I had treatment options. We made a list of clinics to contact so that I could see someone quickly.



There's nothing worse than just sitting around and ruminating. So, I took a walk to clear my head. I understood that there was a difference between having cancer and dying. Other outcomes were possible. There's no point in imagining made-up scenarios about something you can't control.



I had to make some difficult, painful decisions. To make it easier, my boyfriend and I made a list of pros and cons. That way, if there were any regrets later on, we could look back at it and remember why we made the choices we did.





Psssst! Everybody's different, and what works for one person might not work so well for someone else.

My advice:

Do things that you enjoy (and that you have the energy for) to get yourself moving and out of your head.

Confide in someone you know who has some distance from the situation and won't get overly emotional about it.

Take notes, write down your thoughts and feelings, and save those notes to look at again if you ever need to. You can find a printable journal on bloodcancers.ca to help with this.



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