



How to Set Achievable Resolutions in 2024

By: Erin Jones, LCSW

The start of the new year is often a time of reflection and planning: reflection on the year that has recently passed and planning for goals hoped to be achieved in the year ahead. While the idea of making a list of resolutions (anything from health goals to completing home projects to personal growth and fulfillment) in the new year is not a new concept, it may be useful to have a formula that helps to increase the likelihood of goal success. The SMART acronym is useful for setting and accomplishing goals to achieve the desired results. Details on the SMART goal setting system are outlined below:

- S** Goals should be **specific** and clear.
- M** Goals should be **measurable**, meaning there should be a way to track the progress.
- A** Goals should be **achievable**. Setting unrealistic goals can lead to frustration, shutting down and therefore not achieving the goal.
- R** Goals should be **relevant** to day-to-day life, so that there is motivation to achieve them.
- T** Goals need to be **time-specific** with an allowance for some flexibility. Recognize that changes to health and mobility may have an impact on the timeline of a goal.

Utilizing the SMART system can help individuals fulfill just about any goal. Best of luck to those setting goals for the year ahead. May your 2024 resolutions be accomplished!

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ASK OUR EXPERT



What is a Cancerversary?

By: Cindy Deminsky, RN, OCN

What is a **cancerversary**?

A **cancerversary**, a milestone defined by the individual, is often the day that treatment is finished. However, it can also be the day of diagnosis or any other important date that occurs during the cancer experience. A **cancerversary** allows one the opportunity to reflect on the cancer journey and to process the feelings around it.

Why do people celebrate their **cancerversary**?

People may celebrate a **cancerversary** for a variety of reasons. For many, it is a time to reflect on the strength, resilience and progress since that life-altering moment. It can also be a time to reflect on

the challenges faced and the support of loved ones. Or, it can be a time to sit in gratitude for moments of doubt that turned into moments of triumph.

What are some ways to acknowledge or celebrate a **cancerversary**?

There are many ways one might choose to celebrate. Some might choose to celebrate their **cancerversary** alone, either in reflection through journaling or prayer, or enjoying a favorite activity such as a spa day or going to the movies. Others may choose to throw a party, plan a trip or set future goals to accomplish. A beautiful way to celebrate is to give back, perhaps

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What is a Cancerversary? *(continued from page 1)*

by helping someone who may be beginning their own cancer journey, through sharing experiences, volunteering or by simply listening.

Who should be involved in the celebration?

That is entirely up to the individual. As mentioned above, some choose to celebrate alone while others may enjoy the company of those who provided love and support. Whatever the decision, choose to celebrate a cancerversary with people who are positive and uplifting!

What are the benefits of celebrating a cancerversary?

Healing from cancer is not just physical. Emotionally, it can take a while to feel fully recovered, even after being declared cancer-free. Honoring a cancerversary can help one reflect upon this difficult experience. It is a time to feel gratitude as well as a reminder of the incredible power of hope and the endless possibilities of healing.

**BOOST YOUR HEALTH & WELLNESS****Three Key Nutritional Tips for Newly-Diagnosed Patients**

By: Savannah Duffy, MS, RDN, LD

Every stage of the cancer journey is unique and has its own set of goals and challenges. During treatment, the overarching nutritional goal is to maintain body weight and the body's store of nutrients to better prevent fatigue and delays in treatment. To help achieve this goal, try following the three key nutritional tips outlined below, while keeping in mind that every patient and their cancer journey is unique and not a one-size-fits-all approach.

**Tip #1: Visualize a balanced meal.**

Ideally, a balanced meal contains a three to four ounce serving of protein such as chicken or fish, two servings of fruits or vegetables and one serving of a tasty whole grain. This combination ensures that a variety of both macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein and fat) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) are included. Both are necessary to reduce fatigue, facilitate wound healing and support lean body mass.

**Tip #2: Keep food safety in mind.**

Many patients undergoing chemotherapy treatment have a weakened immune system, so it is best to reduce exposure to contaminants that may cause illness. Make sure to keep cold foods below 40 degrees and hot foods above 140 degrees (except when actually eating them, of course). If any mold is present on food, toss out the entire container. Avoid consuming raw or undercooked meat, fish and eggs. Wash all produce thoroughly to remove as much bacteria as possible. It is also safest to avoid eating raw produce when outside of the home because there is no guarantee that the food preparer used safe food handling practices.

**Tip #3: Identify and utilize a support system.**

Professional and personal support make a difference. Identify those core people that are willing to make a run to the grocery store, prepare a meal and/or provide a ride to an appointment. This support system can help prevent decision-making burnout or fatigue related to meal preparation and planning. Additionally, get to know your registered dietitian. A dietitian can help with managing and treating specific side effects, understanding appropriate supplement usage and so much more. Knowing that there are people ready and willing to provide support can allow the peace of mind needed to finish treatment feeling as strong as possible.

Survivorship Nutrition Program

Northside Hospital Cancer Institute offers complimentary nutrition counseling sessions specifically for survivors. These sessions are intended for individuals who have finished treatment and are considered cancer-free. Northside dietitians are able to provide counseling on lifestyle changes to help survivors manage the long-term side effects of cancer treatment, promote a healthy body weight and reduce the risk of cancer recurrence.

If interested in a virtual or in-person nutrition assessment, contact [Outpatient Nutrition Services](#) or call [404.236.8036](tel:404.236.8036).

Recipe Corner: Chicken and White Bean Soup

Ingredients (for eight one-cup servings)

1 rotisserie chicken breast section or 3 cups chopped white chicken meat	2 cups water
1 tablespoon canola oil	6 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
3 carrots, sliced	1 (15-ounce) can Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained
2 celery stalks, sliced	Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 onion, chopped	

Directions

1. Remove wings from the chicken and reserve. Remove skin from the breast and discard. Shred the meat from the breast and break off breastbones.
2. In a stockpot over medium heat, add oil. Sauté the carrots, celery, onion, chicken wings, and breastbones for 8 to 10 minutes, or until vegetables soften.
3. Add water and chicken broth and bring to a boil, stirring to combine. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Add beans and chicken meat and cook for five minutes. If too thick, add additional broth or water. Discard bones and wings before serving. Season with salt and pepper.



Nutrition facts per serving: 235 calories, 5 grams total fat (1 gram saturated fat, 0 grams trans fat), 60 milligrams cholesterol, 17 grams carbohydrates, 28 grams protein, 5 grams dietary fiber, 675 milligrams sodium, 5 grams sugar

Photo and recipe credit: cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/eat-healthy/find-healthy-recipes/main-dishes/chicken-and-white-bean-soup.html



Strategies for Successful Social Communication

By: Nicole Kong, MEd, CCC-SLP

Cognition, or the ability to think, plays a major role in how individuals communicate and socialize with others. Cancer and/or treatments can affect the ability to think clearly, which may impact how effectively one is able to communicate and connect with others. These challenges can affect both social and psychological health, such as one's identity and self-esteem as well as relationships with others.

If cognition is affected, one may notice the following when trying to communicate with others:

- Difficulty finding the right word(s)
- Difficulty with organizing thoughts and ideas
- Difficulty expressing thoughts and ideas to others in a way that is understandable
- Difficulty concentrating/focusing within a conversation
- Forgetting what is said in the conversation and missing important information
- Difficulty remembering/holding on to a thought or idea
- Experiencing prolonged processing making it difficult to keep up in conversation
- Feeling "overloaded" with information and a desire to avoid communication
- Difficulty attending or keeping track of multiple conversations at one time, which may worsen within a busy or distracting environment

Next are some tips and strategies to help when experiencing difficulties expressing thoughts and maintaining communication or a conversation:

1. Take time to think about a response. Ask for more time or for help with a word or phrase that may be challenging.

2. Think of a different way to say the word or idea that is difficult to retrieve or recall. Describing it, using similar or opposite words and using associated words, are just a few examples of how to express words and ideas in a different way.
3. Repeat what was heard, ask questions for clarification and/or have a recap of the conversation.
4. Suggest having conversations in a quieter, less distracting place, if possible.
5. Write down key words and ideas to help remember them from a conversation.
6. For future conversations or interactions, visualize and/or write down key words and ideas beforehand.
7. Use gestures or writing/drawing to help express thoughts and words.



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Strategies for Successful Social Communication *(continued from page 3)*

Frustration, anxiety and other stressors that can be triggered when engaging with others is challenging. Here are some additional tips to reduce stressors and improve the ability to communicate:

- Take two to three deep slow breaths to allow for time to process the information and/or to construct any responses.
- Practice engaging in large social groups/ gatherings with two to three close friends and/or family members. Optional – add more people as confidence increases.
- Apply mindfulness relaxation techniques, such as breathing techniques, use of positive/relaxation visual imagery and general body and mind relaxation, to increase the ability to focus on the present. Phone/tablet apps and meditation classes can help improve mindfulness as well.

- Defer the discussion to a later time. Reduced stress or pressure to communicate effectively may bring ease to a conversation.
- Take time to self-reflect on a conversation that did not go well. This could help to identify strategies that could be applied more readily to improve confidence and communication effectiveness in the future.

Remember to allow for grace. Navigating through difficult social communication alone may be frustrating. Let people know which conversational techniques are preferable and ask for help. A speech-language pathologist can help improve cognition and the ability to express thoughts and ideas to others. A physician can submit a referral for speech, cognition and/or language services. To schedule an appointment (once referred) contact [Northside Hospital Rehabilitation](#) at [404.236.8030](tel:404.236.8030).

**STORIES OF HOPE & HEALING*****Survivor Story: Meet David****What are the events that led to your cancer diagnosis?**

I was having colonoscopies every two years due to a history of colon cancer in my family. My diagnosis came after one of my routine screening colonoscopies. I had no symptoms or health issues before my diagnosis.

What treatment did you receive?

I had surgery at Northside Hospital to remove two-thirds of my colon. Following the surgery, I received FOLFOX chemotherapy for six months.

How and where did you receive support during your treatment and recovery?

I am thankful that I had good insurance and wonderful support at Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Atlanta Cancer Care in Conyers. Additionally, Dr. Megan McKee was exceptional.

What advice do you have for someone navigating their treatment and recovery journey?

As a stubborn single man, I took care of myself by myself, including driving to every chemotherapy

appointment. However, I would recommend asking a family member or partner to help you get through the rough parts.

How far out are you from treatment or is treatment ongoing?

I finished my chemotherapy in mid-2022, and I am cancer-free. Currently, I go in every six months for CT scans and every 12 months for a colonoscopy.

Closing thoughts

Every male in my family for the past two generations has passed away due to colon cancer. My father passed away at 40, and my uncle passed away at 51. I also tested positive for Lynch syndrome. My biggest advice is to get a colonoscopy and/or early detection process in place.

Colon cancer is generally treatable and curable if caught in the early stages.



*Patients' stories are based on individual experiences. The process from diagnosis through treatment may vary as well as symptoms, side effects and provider recommendations.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Community Partner Spotlight: [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#)



Please share the name and purpose of the organization.

The [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#) exists to end colorectal cancer. One of every 24 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in their lifetime, which makes colorectal cancer the second-leading cause of cancer-related death. Every year, 53,000 people in the United States die from this disease. The Alliance approaches ending colorectal cancer in three ways – to screen those who may be at risk for colorectal cancer, to support patients and caregivers who are affected by colorectal cancer and to contribute to research for a cure for this unnecessary disease. The Alliance serves the entire nation through its programs.

Please describe the population that it serves.

The Alliance is forging a path to finding a cure, and in doing so, serves patients and survivors as well as those who care for patients and survivors.

What resources are provided to patients, survivors and/or caregivers?

No one is ever alone. The Patient Empowerment Team is always available to provide hope and support to patients, families, caregivers and survivors via online resources. We also offer up-to-date information, expert resources and cutting-edge tools. The Alliance's patient and family support programs include the following:

- **Toll-Free Helpline.** The Alliance's Certified Patient & Family Support Navigators offer one-on-one connection, life-saving information, tailored resources, local and national referrals and ongoing psychosocial support and camaraderie for callers who are navigating a new and sometimes scary journey.
- **Navigator Online Chat.** For those who prefer to chat online to ask for support, the Alliance's Certified Patient & Family Support Navigators

are on standby to answer questions and offer connections using an easy-to-access, 1-on-1 chat function on the Alliance website.

- **Buddy Program®.** The Alliance can match patients and caregivers in need of peer support with an individual who has been through a similar experience for ongoing connection and support. Certified Patient & Family Support Navigators guide buddies with capacity building trainings, tools and resources.
- **Clinical Trial Finder.** Finding a clinical trial can be intimidating, but the Alliance helps patients explore options via its Trial Finder and helps patients prepare a list of trials to take to the doctor. Patients answer simple questions to receive a curated list of trial options matching their current treatment profile.
- **Financial Assistance Programs.** Patients may be eligible to receive a one-time \$200 check to help with daily expenses, such as household bills, childcare, transportation costs or food, that add to the burden during treatment. Through the screening support program, patients who qualify receive low- or no-cost screenings, such as a colonoscopy or fecal immunochemical test (FIT).

What type of volunteer opportunities are offered, and what is the best way to get involved?

The Alliance has a variety of volunteers opportunities and ways to get involved. Individuals can volunteer at a walk or bash, start their own DIY event, become a Buddy to help someone else on their cancer journey, share their story to spread awareness, focus on young-onset issues, start or become part of a team of allies impacting their local community, and much more. Contact [Monica Riedesel](#) to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

Do you have a question you would like answered by an expert or a story to share in a future issue of Hope & Healing? If so, please send your questions or stories to survivornewsletter@northside.com.

Cancer Support Community Atlanta's New Rotating Workshops



Cancer Support Community (CSC) Atlanta is pleased to announce an important addition to its 2024 calendar.

Beginning in January, CSC Atlanta will offer a rotating series of workshops on important issues that affect many survivors: Neuropathy, Bone Building and Lymphedema.

Each month, one of these topics will be featured with four consecutive weeks of workshops that will offer practical exercises and solutions. The following month will feature the next topic and the third month will feature the third topic in the series. These topics will be

on a rotating schedule throughout the year, allowing survivors continual access to gentle exercise and techniques to improve their health throughout 2024.

The programs will be offered virtually (allowing everyone to participate, regardless of where they live) every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. - noon and will be led by CSC Atlanta instructor, Bev Stegman, CR, RYT. Classes are created for all levels of learners and will focus on both education and movement. Sessions build on practices taught in previous classes, so regular attendance is encouraged but not mandatory.

To register, please visit [CSC Atlanta](#) online or call [404.843.1880](tel:404.843.1880) for more information.



GET INVOLVED

Northside Hospital Events Continue to Raise Awareness and Funds for the Early Detection and Diagnosis of Breast Cancer

Tennis & Pickleball Against Breast Cancer 2023



Thank you to everyone who participated in Tennis & Pickleball Against Breast Cancer 2023! The event had over 1,200 players at 10 facilities and raised over \$340,000. The funds raised will help provide over 2,700 screening mammograms for local uninsured women over the next year.



Please mark your calendar for our 2024 event!

- October 4: North Fulton/Gwinnett
- October 11: Forsyth
- October 18: Cherokee
- October 25: North Fulton



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Northside Hospital Events Continue to Raise Awareness and Funds for the Early Detection and Diagnosis of Breast Cancer *(continued from page 6)*

Paint Gwinnett Pink 2023



Paint Gwinnett Pink has now raised \$1.8 million in cumulative proceeds for breast tomosynthesis imaging technology. This technology produces a 3D image of the breast that aids in the early detection and diagnosis of breast cancer. Proceeds have been used to upgrade mammography machines at Northside Hospital imaging centers in Duluth, Hamilton Mill and Lawrenceville. With more than 2,000 participants, this event has become Gwinnett's largest 5K in support of breast cancer awareness and screening. Thank you to everyone who participated in our 2023 event! Be sure to save the date for our 2024 event on Saturday, October 19th!



EVENTS & CANCER CELEBRATIONS

CANCER SCREENING & PREVENTION

Prostate Cancer Screenings

February 1, 2024 from 5:30-8 p.m. @ Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Radiation Oncology – Midtown

February 15, 2024 from 5:30-8 p.m. @ Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Radiation Oncology – Forsyth

Mobile Mammography Van – ScreenAtlanta

February 22, 2024 @ Atlanta Cancer Care – Conyers

To schedule an appointment or for additional information, call [404.531.4444](tel:404.531.4444)

Built To Quit – Smoking and Tobacco Cessation Course

Next six-week session start date: March 7, 2024

Weekly classes include the American Lung Association Freedom from Smoking curriculum and are available in person and virtually. They are conducted in a group setting, which encourages participants to learn from each other.

Skin Cancer Screenings

March 12, 2024 from 6-8 p.m. @ Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Radiation Oncology – Midtown

April 16, 2024 from 6-8 p.m. @ Northside Hospital Cancer Institute Radiation Oncology – Cherokee



Click [here](#) to sign up to receive the Survivorship Newsletter in your inbox.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

National Dress in Blue Day for Colon Cancer Awareness

March 3, 2024

Lustgarten Foundation's Pancreatic Cancer Walk for Research

March 17, 2024 @ 9:30 a.m.

Walk begins @ 1 Porsche Drive, Atlanta, GA 33405

Race to Cure Sarcoma Atlanta 2024

April 6, 2024 @ 8 a.m. @ Suwanee Town Center

PanCAN PurpleStride Walk

April 27, 2024 @ 8:30 a.m. @ Historic Fourth Ward Park in Atlanta



EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Nutrition and How to Reduce Cancer Risk Series

Next four-week program start date: February 6, 2024 from 2-3 p.m.

This virtual four-week series is led by a registered dietitian nutritionist who will cover diet and lifestyle recommendations, provide weekly challenges to help implement change and allow patients to have questions answered regarding reducing cancer risk.

Cancer Transitions: Moving Beyond Treatment

Next four-week start date: February 7, 2024 from 6-7:30 p.m.

Cancer Transitions is a free four-week workshop designed to help cancer survivors make the transition from active treatment to survivorship. Each week, participants will meet for a 90-minute virtual session to discuss important topics focused on health and wellbeing. For more information or to register, please contact [Lauren Walch](#).

Mind Over Matter: A Group for Men & Women Being Treated for Cancer

Series dates: February 21- March 20, 2024 from 10:30 a.m. - noon

Patients are invited to attend this free five-session virtual program. Mind Over Matter uses evidence-based strategies to help decrease feelings of anxiety and depression, and increase a sense of well-being.

Registration is required. To register please call [404.731.1876](tel:404.731.1876) or email [Emma Shin, LCSW, OSW-C](mailto:Emma.Shin@northsidehospital.com).



NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Northside Hospital Foundation Cancer Survivor Celebration

Save the Date: April 9, 2024 @ Truist Park in Atlanta

More information will be available soon.

Upcoming Cancer Awareness Months

January: Cervical Cancer

February: Gallbladder/Bile Duct Cancer and National Cancer Prevention Month

March: Colorectal Cancer, Kidney Cancer and Multiple Myeloma

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