

**Suggestions for Friends and Caregivers**  
for when **"I just don't know what to say or do."**  
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**1. I love you**

Whether the diagnosis has come after a series of suspicious events or just out of the blue, hearing that they are loved and that you will be there, no matter what happens, is one of the kindest things you can ever do.

**2. Make quick, frequent visits and phone calls**

The ill person may be too exhausted for long calls or visits but a quick "hello, I was thinking of you," is always welcome

**3. Make specific offers to help**

It is overwhelming for the ill person to ask for an unspecific "something." Making the offer definite is more comfortable for the person to accept. An offer like, "What time would work for me to come over and vacuum the floors for you?" is very appreciated. Instead of "I can help – just let me know."

**4. Support during treatment or tests**

Ask if they want someone with them the entire time, especially at the treatment center. The infusions can take 4-5 hours, and they may love a ride to and from but would prefer to have quiet time there. Give them the option.

**5. Gifts**

Bring small things that the person will enjoy immediately. A single flower speaks volumes. A warm cozy lap quilt or shawl is most welcome. A playlist of favorite tunes makes a thoughtful gift.

**6. Comments on Appearance**

A comment on what a great friend they have been to you, or a remembrance of a fun time together is a great morale booster and more welcome than comments on how they look, good or bad.

**7. Bring Food and Meals**

Be sure to check with them as to what kinds of things they like or can eat. Taste buds are affected by chemo, and they would feel terrible to have to throw out the donated food because they couldn't eat it.

**8. What to do when you are visiting**

Think about what they would like – watching a movie, listening to some music, maybe doing a jigsaw puzzle together over a few weeks. Sometimes it is comforting just to sit there and be quiet, offering company without any expectations is very welcome.

**9. Cards and Notes**

A card in the mail is so vital. Send one right away and remember to send notes regularly. When treatment goes on for months, seeing new cards is such a loving reminder that someone is thinking of them.

**10. Bringing it Together**

Being there for the person and their family can make a huge difference in their recovery and coping with whatever is happening to them. These seemingly small gestures mentioned above have tremendous meaning for the patient. These ideas have come from my personal experience over the years of this journey. I hope they will help you in helping another facing this situation.