

REVIEWS

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B O O K S

Childhood Cancer Survivors: A Practical Guide to Your Future. Nancy Keene, Wendy Hobbie, Kathy Ruccione*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, Inc., 2000, 510 pages, \$27.95.

   **Softcover**



Childhood Cancer Survivors: A Practical Guide to Your Future provides information that empowers childhood cancer survivors and their families in obtaining life-long, comprehensive follow-up care through prevention, recognition, and management of physical, psychological, and socioeconomic late effects. The book is written in a direct yet sensitive manner and more than satisfies its goal by serving as a practical resource guide for clinicians who can expect to see survivors in their practice yet are not completely familiar with childhood cancer. Oncology practitioners will find recommendations for risk-based surveillance as well as perceptive quotations from survivors and their families sharing their experiences invaluable; a directory of survivor experiences reiterates the full range of issues that should be addressed in providing state-of-the-art, comprehensive long-term follow-up care.

Childhood Cancer Survivors is organized into three parts. Part one provides information about completing treatment, obtaining quality follow-up care, and finding one's way through the healthcare system. Part two discusses various childhood cancers, usual treatments, late effects associated with particular treatments, and a schedule of tests that monitor for potential late effects. Treatments and recommended screening tests for late effects are listed in easy-to-use tables. Part three is arranged by

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body system; the function of a body system is discussed, followed by information about signs and symptoms, diagnostic tests, medical and self-management, and potential late effects. This was developed based on the concept that survivors should know the nature of their diagnosis, details of their treatment, and risks for late effects that are inherent to their particular situation. This information allows patients to take action to minimize their risks and insist on appropriate follow-up medical care.

Part one clearly details the full spectrum of responses to the completion of treatment and survivorship, normalizes these responses, and describes how survivors and their families can use their personal strengths and treatment experience to manage survivorship. These messages can lessen the anxiety that is certain to come with reading a book about a traumatic experience and increase the likelihood that the material will be absorbed. If the book is studied straight through, readers may feel overwhelmed by information and will notice duplication among the late effects by disease and between parts two and three. Few will read the book cover to cover but are more likely to read the sections that seem most applicable to them. For general information readers, repetition between the disease and body system sections serves to present critical information from a different perspective and reinforce it. For professionals, this repetition renders the book useful as a quick reference tool.

Unique features and strengths of this book are its detachable "cancer survivor's treatment record" and an associated Web site. When completed by a practitioner at a cancer treatment center, the record becomes a "medical passport" that summarizes a childhood cancer survivor's treatment and documents guidelines for future risk-based monitoring. This record easily could be adapted for use with survivors of adult cancers and is available on the Web site associated with this book. Lists of scientific articles about survivors and specific late effects, contact information for centers that provide the best long-term follow-up care, and other resources also are available on the Web site. The book's information is current

for 2000, and the Web site is updated as new information is made available with postings of references and links to new articles.

Childhood Cancer Survivors and its companion Web site are clearly an ongoing labor of love by three experts and advocates in the area of childhood cancer survivorship. These publications unmistakably communicate the expectation that childhood cancer survivors can and should take charge of their health to live long and well after they overcome their disease. This is a relatively new message; however, it is one that is becoming increasingly important to individuals and society as survival rates improve and the population of childhood cancer survivors expands. I highly recommend this book for childhood cancer survivors and their families, as well as for the oncology, general pediatric, and adult practitioners who care for them.

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Childhood Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors: A Guide for Families, Friends and Caregivers. Tania Shiminski-Maher, Patsy McGuire Cullen, Maria Sansalone. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly and Associates, Inc., 2002, 546 pages, United States \$29.95, Canada \$43.95.

   **Softcover**



Central nervous system tumors are the second most common malignancy among children in the United States. Diagnosis and initiation of treatment often occur emergently, leaving parents and families little time to gain a comfortable understanding of the disease. The purpose of *Childhood Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors* is to give families and caregivers diverse information for coping with and managing the intricacies of the disease and its treatment. This guide provides detailed and precise medical information about benign and malignant brain and spinal cord tumors that affect children and adolescents. Additionally, it offers practical

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Ease of Reference and Usability	Content Level	Book Size
 Quick, on-the-spot resource	 Basic	 Pocket size
 Moderate time requirement	 Intermediate	 Intermediate
 In-depth study	 Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required	 Desk reference

suggestions for coping with procedures, hospitalizations, and school, social, and financial issues. In the event that therapy is not successful, practical yet empathetic advice is included regarding issues of death and bereavement. Each chapter is comprised of personal stories of patients afflicted with central nervous system tumors and their caregivers.

This book is well suited for novice nurses in pediatric oncology and ancillary staff such as social workers and child-life specialists. The text proceeds logically and is consistent from chapter to chapter; however, illustrations are limited and primarily pertain to the anatomy of the brain and normal function. Several appendices provide additional resources for support, including books, organizations, names of pediatric neurosurgeons, and Web sites to consult for further information. Another appendix details blood counts and what they mean in layman's terms and is complete with a pullout medical record keeper.

A potential drawback of this book is its length. At first glance, *Childhood Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors* is a bit overwhelming, comprised mostly of text with few illustrations, graphs, or tables. However, a thorough index allows the book to be used as a reference for caregivers who are presented with new problems or issues.

The authors of this guide include two experts in the field of pediatric oncology and a parent of a child who has survived a brain tumor. They have provided a comprehensive and accurate book in regard to diagnosis and treatment. Other available resources intended for families focus primarily on the emotional aspects and coping with brain tumors in general. No other book currently exists for families, friends, and

caregivers with specific emphasis on childhood brain and spinal cord tumors. This book should be recommended to all families at the time of their children's initial diagnoses.

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Other Books

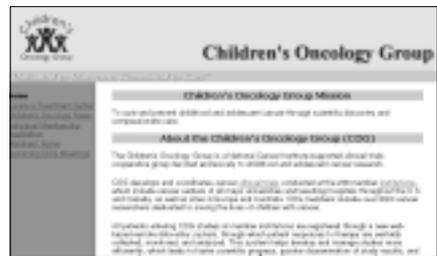
My Name Is Buddy: A Story for Children About Brain Tumors. *Dave Bauer. Oakland, CA: National Brain Tumor Foundation, 2002, 24 pages, free.*

This resource guide is a charming and amusing children's book about a dog with a brain tumor. *My Name Is Buddy* is geared toward promoting understanding about diagnosis, treatment, side effects, and survivorship.

Copies may be obtained free of charge (for the first 10) by calling 800-934-2873 or via e-mail at nbtbf@braintumor.org.

Helping Your Children Cope With Your Cancer: A Guide for Parents and Families. *Peter Van Dernoort. Long Island City, NY: Hatherleigh Press, 2002, 240 pages, \$15.95.*

This book is a collection of personal stories about parents diagnosed with cancer. *Helping Your Children Cope With Your Cancer* offers readers advice, information, and insights on a variety of topics facing families as they cope with cancer. This guide also includes the personal story of ONS member Wendy Lindstrom, RN, BSN.



Name of site: Children's Oncology Group (COG)

URL: www.childrensoncologygroup.org

Authorship: Group: COG (formerly the Children's Cancer Group, the Pediatric Oncology Group, the Intergroup Rhabdomyosarcoma Study Group, and the National Wilms' Tumor Study Group)

Privacy statement: Present, comprehensive, and easy to find.

Disclosure statement: No advertising on the site.

Content highlights: COG is a National Cancer Institute clinical trials cooperative group devoted exclusively to pediatric cancer research. This well-organized Web site is the gateway to more than 5,000 cancer researchers who work at 238 different hospitals worldwide. In addition, the site is kept very current with the latest news in pediatric oncology. Members of COG can access its comprehensive members-only area.

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