

After Cancer Treatment: Questions to Ask Your Doctor

The end of active cancer treatment is not necessarily the end of the cancer experience for many patients. Follow-up appointments, scans, ongoing prescriptions and emotional concerns may await you. This fact sheet will help with questions for your health care team, including:

- Details about your follow-up plan
- Questions about healing and recovery
- Helping with your emotions
- Your treatment summary and other information



Your Follow-Up Plan

Your follow-up plan may include regular check-ups and ongoing periodic screenings. A key part of your plan is monitoring for any cancer recurrence. This means whether your cancer is likely to appear again. Your plan may include CT scans, MRIs, blood tests and more, and you may be prescribed medications at certain points or going forward.

- What kinds of tests will I have in the future?
- What doctors or clinics are involved in these follow-ups?
- How often are these check-ups and other visits?
- How should I schedule these appointments?
- What are prescriptions I will take, how do I update or refill them?

Make sure you understand your current health situation and what your prognosis might be. This means any future impacts on your health and whether the cancer might return.

- Is there a chance of my cancer returning?
- What are any signs to look out for?
- Who can I ask to learn more about recurrence, my prognosis and other topics?



Questions About Healing and Recovery

After surgery or treatments such as chemotherapy, it may take time to feel completely better. Some helpful questions you may ask your doctors include:

- Will I need to take off work to heal or get back to normal?
- Will I experience levels of pain or discomfort? Should I take pain medication?
- Should I change my diet or amount of physical activity? For how long?
- Should I have any concerns about healing?
- What are any potential long-term side effects of my healing?



Emotional Support

Recovering from cancer can have a significant emotional impact. Fear and anxiety can be joined with feelings of relief or even guilt for surviving cancer. It can be hard to know how to handle all of these emotions. You may even feel suddenly 'left alone' after much activity happened around your illness.

These are completely valid reactions and can be helped with counseling and other approaches. The following questions can help discuss your emotions with your doctors:

- If I am overwhelmed, who can I turn to?
- Can you recommend counseling services or support groups?
- Are there lifestyle adjustments that can help me?



Treatment Summary and Contact Information

As you move into life after cancer treatment, there is information that you should keep safe and easy to access. This can include:

Treatment summary is a summary of your diagnosis, stage, treatment plan and details of your care.

Contact information for all of your doctors, clinics and others should also be kept in one place, including social workers, pharmacists, nurse practitioners and more.

Financial information, including insurance and other bills, should be held in one place for easy access and comparison.

CancerCare® Can Help

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