

Support for Your Cancer Recovery



Recovering from cancer is not a simple process. First, you have to follow your treatment plan, which includes follow-up visits and other aftercare. It can take a while to get back to your normal activities. To help you get back to your precancer lifestyle, ask your healthcare provider and other specialists to make a rehabilitation program for you. Its goal should be to strengthen both your body and mind. Here are some specific things you might want to talk about with your healthcare providers:

- Where can you get in touch with other people who have had a cancer like yours and who are willing to share their experiences, hopes, and fears? The American Cancer Society has free programs and services to help cancer survivors and their families manage their lives from treatment to recovery. For more information, call 800-227-2345.
- How can you lower your risk of the cancer coming back or developing a new cancer? Talk with your healthcare provider about what to expect going forward. This should include the risk of cancer coming back, late or ongoing side effects of cancer treatment, and your overall plan for follow-up visits and cancer prevention. Keep a personal notebook or record of your cancer history. Be sure to include all your follow-up visits and keep all your healthcare providers up-to-date.
- Where can you find counseling for you and your family? Counseling can help you keep healthy relationships during your care and as you try to get back to your routine. Counselors can help your family with psychosocial problems (such as trouble adjusting or resolving family conflict), practical problems (such as financial concerns or problems at school), and mental health problems that can make it harder to cope (such as depression or anxiety). Talk with your healthcare provider about finding a counselor in your area. Look for a counselor who specializes in cancer survivorship.
- Where can you get help paying your medical bills? There are many resources for people and families finding it hard to pay for the extra expenses of cancer treatment. The social worker in your healthcare provider's office will be able to help you find sources of help specific to your needs.
- Who can help you understand your rights at work and about keeping your job? Cancer survivors may have long-term disabilities that make it hard to work. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) helps people who can do the key parts of their job to go back to work or keep working during and after cancer treatment. Even when a person with cancer doesn't have a disability, they may be thought of as being disabled. This alone can set the stage for discrimination at work, and the ADA addresses this as well. For more information, call the American Cancer Society at 800-227-2345.
- What kinds of physical activity are safe for you to do? Physical activity can reduce the risk of getting cancer. It also decreases the risk of a cancer recurrence and improves survival. Talk with your healthcare provider about how much exercise is right for you. Think about joining a survivor group that exercises together.

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