This fact sheet is for people recovering from cancer who have finished having treatment.

Common feelings after finishing treatment

It is normal to have a mixture of feelings and to have good and bad moments after finishing treatment. Common feelings include:

- happiness or relief
- loneliness
- fear that the cancer may return
- sadness, including sadness that won’t go away (depression)
- anxiety.

Some people want to return quickly to their usual routines, while other people need time to recover. It is important to remember that there is no right or wrong way to feel.

With time, survivors often find a new way of living. Many people call this a ‘new normal’. It may take months or years to find a ‘new normal’. Speak to your doctor about how you are feeling and give yourself time to adjust.

Sometimes I feel like crying. Although your problem is gone, cancer is life changing. Feeling like this after cancer is normal; you should talk to your doctor if you feel that you need to.

Fear of cancer returning

The most common fear that people recovering from cancer have is the cancer returning. This may affect your ability to enjoy life and make future plans. For some people, the fear lessens over time. If you

Fear of cancer returning

The most common fear that people recovering from cancer have is the cancer returning. This may affect your ability to enjoy life and make future plans. For some people, the fear lessens over time. If you

Fear of cancer returning

The most common fear that people recovering from cancer have is the cancer returning. This may affect your ability to enjoy life and make future plans. For some people, the fear lessens over time. If you

Fear of cancer returning

The most common fear that people recovering from cancer have is the cancer returning. This may affect your ability to enjoy life and make future plans. For some people, the fear lessens over time. If you
are worried about the cancer returning, make an appointment with your doctor. It may help to have information about how likely it is that the cancer will come back.

Coping
There are many ways to cope with your feelings, including:
- getting help from others
- looking after your health
- preparing for important dates, such as the anniversary of the date you were diagnosed
- understanding how relationships may change
- becoming resilient and helping yourself
- accepting or understanding the changes in your life.

Your doctor, family and friends can provide support and help you cope with your feelings.

Follow-up care
After treatment has finished, you may need regular check-ups so that your doctor can check your physical and emotional health. You may see your general practitioner (GP) or cancer specialist.

Ask for an interpreter when you book an appointment with your doctor, so that the person who comes with you does not have to translate and can concentrate on helping you.

During check-ups your doctor will:
- see how you are recovering
- ask how you are feeling and coping with life after cancer
- monitor and treat any ongoing side effects of the cancer and treatment
- look for any signs of the cancer coming back
- investigate any new symptoms
- ask if you have any questions or concerns
- discuss your general health and suggest things you can do to keep healthy, such as good nutrition and regular exercise.

Before the appointment, you may want to ask a trusted friend or family member to come with you.

It is important that you discuss your health and any concerns you have with your doctor. They can provide you with information about the likelihood that your cancer may return. They may also help you understand your health and how it may change over time.

Coping
There are many ways you can cope with your feelings, such as:
- getting help from others
- looking after your health
- preparing for important dates, such as the anniversary of the date you were diagnosed
- understanding how relationships may change
- becoming resilient and helping yourself
- accepting or understanding the changes in your life.

Your doctor, family and friends can provide support and help you cope with your feelings.

Follow-up care
After treatment has finished, you may need regular check-ups so that your doctor can check on your physical and emotional health. You may see your general practitioner (GP) or cancer specialist.

Ask for an interpreter when you book an appointment with your doctor, so that the person who comes with you does not have to translate and can concentrate on helping you.

During check-ups your doctor will:
- see how you are recovering
- ask how you are feeling and coping with life after cancer
- monitor and treat any ongoing side effects of the cancer and treatment
- look for any signs of the cancer coming back
- investigate any new symptoms
- ask if you have any questions or concerns
- discuss your general health and suggest things you can do to keep healthy, such as good nutrition and regular exercise.

Before the appointment, you may want to ask a trusted friend or family member to come with you.

It is important that you discuss your health and any concerns you have with your doctor. They can provide you with information about the likelihood that your cancer may return. They may also help you understand your health and how it may change over time.
You can also write down any questions you want to ask the doctor.

How often you see your doctor depends on the type of cancer and treatment you had, and your side effects from treatment. The doctor will tell you when you need to have check-ups – this is different for every patient. If you are seeing a specialist, it is still important to see your GP regularly.

**Side effects of treatment**
Cancer treatment can cause unwanted health problems, called side effects. Many people have some side effects after cancer treatment. Whether you have side effects can depend on:
- the type of cancer you had
- how far the cancer spread in your body
- the treatment you had
- the time since treatment finished.

Common side effects include:
- feeling very tired (fatigue)
- pain
- hair loss
- sleeping difficulties
- feeling sad or depressed
- low self-esteem and confidence
- difficulty concentrating
- loss of sexual desire
- weight loss or gain
- menopausal symptoms (periods stopping) for women
- fertility problems
- changes in the way your bladder and bowel work
- problems eating or drinking
- swelling in the limbs (lymphoedema)
- mouth and teeth problems
- bone loss (osteoporosis), meaning an increased risk of fracture.

If the side effects of cancer treatment bother you, make an appointment with your GP or specialist. Your doctor can help you to manage the side effects.

**Late and long-term effects**
For some people side effects may continue for months or years (long-term effects) or start a long time after treatment ends (late effects). Whether you
Some ways to stay healthy after treatment include:
- eating nutritious foods (a healthy diet)
- maintaining a healthy weight
- not smoking
- being physically active
- limiting sun exposure.

Late effects can happen years after treatment finishes. They can include:
- lung, heart and liver problems
- developing another type of cancer
- eye problems, such as clouding of the lens in the eye (cataracts)
- infertility
- bowel problems
- tooth decay
- bone loss (osteoporosis), meaning an increased risk of fracture
- swelling in the limbs (lymphoedema)
- memory problems.

Talk to your doctor about whether or not you are at risk of developing late effects from your treatment. Your doctor may be able to tell you the signs and symptoms of late effects. If you are concerned about a new side effect, talk to your doctor.

Healthy living after cancer
Having cancer and treatment may change how you think about your health.

After treatment, some people decide to make some changes to live a healthier lifestyle. Making healthy changes may reduce the chance of the cancer coming back or prevent a new cancer developing.

Looking after yourself can also make your body and mind feel better after cancer treatment. Talk to your doctor about how to stay healthy after treatment.

It is important to remember not all people who had cancer get late effects.
If you would like more information, please contact the Cancer Council on 13 11 20. For information in Hindi through an interpreter, phone 13 14 50.

Complementary therapies
Some people use complementary therapies (sometimes called natural therapies or Eastern medicine) to help them feel better after cancer treatment.

Some therapies have been proven to be safe and effective in scientific (clinical) studies. These therapies may not suit all people. For example, your doctor may advise against strong massage if you had surgery or bone problems.

Talk to your doctor about any complementary therapies you are using or thinking about trying. You should always let the complementary therapist know that you have had cancer.

Effect on family and friends
After treatment is over, family and friends also need time to adjust. Carers of people with cancer often have high levels of distress, even when treatment has finished. Like you, they may be worried about the cancer coming back.

Carers may feel:
• relieved that you finished treatment and are okay
• happy to focus on others and themselves, without always talking about cancer
• exhausted
• confused, especially if your relationship has changed
• worried about what the future holds.

Carers also need support to cope with these feelings. Your carer may want to know how you are feeling. This can be difficult if you do not want them to worry about you. Some people find it hard to ask for help or talk about their fears. It is important for the person who has had cancer and the carer to communicate openly. Listening to each other and talking about these feelings can be reassuring.

For further information phone the Cancer Council on 13 11 20. For information in Hindi, phone 13 14 50.
Legal, financial and workplace concerns

When you are recovering from cancer, you may also need to deal with money (financial), work or legal issues. Knowing where to get help with these issues can be difficult. Your hospital social worker is a good person to ask about practical issues. If there is no social worker, ask your doctor or nurse. This person can talk with you about any benefits or assistance you might be entitled to and where to go for further help.

Further information

- For more information about the topics raised in this fact sheet, phone the Cancer Council on 13 11 20. For information in Hindi, phone 13 14 50.

You may also contact:

- Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office – see www.humanservices.gov.au (choose your language at the top of the webpage) or phone 131 202 to speak to someone in Hindi
- Cancer Council 13 11 20 – there are many services, including a free program to connect with someone else who has had cancer (Cancer Connect).

Further information

- For more information about the topics raised in this fact sheet, phone the Cancer Council on 13 11 20. For information in Hindi, phone 13 14 50.

You may also contact:

- Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office – see www.humanservices.gov.au (choose your language at the top of the webpage) or phone 131 202 to speak to someone in Hindi
- Cancer Council 13 11 20 – there are many services, including a free program to connect with someone else who has had cancer (Cancer Connect).

Further information

- For more information about the topics raised in this fact sheet, phone the Cancer Council on 13 11 20. For information in Hindi, phone 13 14 50.

You may also contact:

- Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office – see www.humanservices.gov.au (choose your language at the top of the webpage) or phone 131 202 to speak to someone in Hindi
- Cancer Council 13 11 20 – there are many services, including a free program to connect with someone else who has had cancer (Cancer Connect).

Further information

- For more information about the topics raised in this fact sheet, phone the Cancer Council on 13 11 20. For information in Hindi, phone 13 14 50.

You may also contact:

- Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office – see www.humanservices.gov.au (choose your language at the top of the webpage) or phone 131 202 to speak to someone in Hindi
- Cancer Council 13 11 20 – there are many services, including a free program to connect with someone else who has had cancer (Cancer Connect).

Further information

- For more information about the topics raised in this fact sheet, phone the Cancer Council on 13 11 20. For information in Hindi, phone 13 14 50.

You may also contact:

- Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office – see www.humanservices.gov.au (choose your language at the top of the webpage) or phone 131 202 to speak to someone in Hindi
- Cancer Council 13 11 20 – there are many services, including a free program to connect with someone else who has had cancer (Cancer Connect).