



Your follow-up care is

the first of many positive
steps in survivorship.

No matter what kind of cancer you had or what kind of treatment you experienced, there will still need to be some sort of follow-up care. Especially in the early stages after treatment, going to the doctor for follow-up can be stressful. It's hard not to fear that the doctor may say the cancer has come back. This fear of recurrence is very common.

It may take a while before your confidence in your own recovery begins to feel real and before your fears are somewhat relieved. Usually, as each follow-up visit yields no evidence of recurrence and the visits are scheduled at longer and longer intervals, fear turns to concern, and concern turns to healthy vigilance. Should there be a recurrence, it's important to remember, that it's always better to discover it early, when it's most successfully treated.

Follow-up care can include:

- a physical exam
- blood tests, imaging tests, X-rays, etc., depending upon the type of cancer you have had
- a follow-up plan outlining dates of visits, tests that will be administered, any dietary requirements, an outline of medicines to be taken and when, etc.

Follow-up visits are also a good time to discuss any side effects you may be experiencing. Your cancer care team can help you manage them.

Screenings

It's easy to forget that, just because you have had a particular type of cancer, you are still at risk for other types of cancers – just like anyone else in the general population. That's why it's important to keep up your various screenings such as those for prostate, breast, colon, and cervical cancers.

Seeing a new doctor

At some point after your cancer treatment, you may find yourself in the office of a new doctor. Give your new doctor the exact details of your diagnosis and treatment. To do that, make sure you have the following information to share with your new doctor and always keep copies for yourself, too:

- a copy of your pathology report from any biopsy or surgery
- a copy of your operative report, if you had surgery

- if you were hospitalized, a copy of the discharge summary that every doctor must prepare when patients are sent home from the hospital
- finally, since some cancer-treatment drugs can have long-term side effects, a list of your drugs, drug doses, and when you took them

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National Home Office, 1599 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30329