

Living With Skin Cancer

Learning to live with cancer can be stressful. Whether your cancer is gone, or you need to continue treatment, you likely have some concerns.



During and after treatment

Your doctor will want to watch you closely, whether you have finished treatment or not. They will want to make sure you are getting better and that the cancer has not come back. Also, your risk for getting a new skin cancer on a different part of your body is high. So be sure to continue to see your doctor.

Be sure to:

- Ask your doctor how often you need to be seen.
- Ask if you will need tests to look for other cancers or check for problems from your treatment.
- Ask for a list of late- or long-term side effects you should watch for.
- Ask what to watch for and when you should contact your doctor.
- Tell your doctor or other people on your health care team about any symptoms you have so they can help you manage them.
- Ask for a copy of important medical records and a plan for care after treatment.



Staying healthy

You can do a lot to keep yourself healthy during and after treatment for skin cancer. Eating well, being active, and staying at a healthy weight can help you feel better. Healthy behaviors might also lower your risk of getting other cancers.

There are things you can do to help lower your risk of getting a new skin cancer or catch a new one early:

- Protect yourself from getting too much sun.
- Do not use tobacco products. If you use tobacco, try to quit.
- Check your skin at least once a month. Look for changes where your cancer was treated. Also look for changes or new spots on the rest of your skin.
- See your doctor regularly for skin exams. Skin cancers that are found early are often easier to treat.

Remember to get screened for other kinds of cancers and health problems.



Dealing with feelings

Having cancer might make you feel scared, sad, or nervous. These feelings are normal. And there are ways to help you cope with them.

- Don't try to deal with your feelings all by yourself.
- Talk about your feelings, no matter what they are.
- It's OK to feel sad or down once in a while. Let someone know if you're feeling unhappy for more than a few days in a row.
- Stay active and keep up healthy habits.
- Do things you enjoy, like taking a hot bath or a nap or eating your favorite foods.

- Go to a movie, out to dinner, or to a sporting event, if your doctor says it's OK.
- Get help with tasks like cooking and cleaning.

Think about asking for help and support from other people. You might want to reach out to friends and family or to religious leaders or groups. Some people find it helpful to talk with others who've been through the same things. A support group can offer that. And some people are helped by getting one-on-one counseling. Tell your health care team how you are feeling. They can help you find the right support.

For cancer information, day-to-day help, and support, call the American Cancer Society at **1-800-227-2345** or visit us online at **www.cancer.org/skincancer**.
We're here when you need us.

