

# Your Way Forward After a Cancer Diagnosis

A Guide for Cancer Survivors

 Aurora Cancer Care®

We are  AdvocateAuroraHealth

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## Who is a survivor?

A “cancer survivor” is anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer, from the time of diagnosis through the rest of his or her life. Cancer also affects family members, friends, and caregivers. Sometimes they are called “co-survivors.”

At Aurora Cancer Care we want to help you manage all aspects of your life after cancer. We believe that survivorship is about living the best quality of life possible. To assist you in achieving that goal, we have the resources to help you deal with the questions, concerns or problems that you might experience after diagnosis and treatment.

As difficult as a diagnosis of cancer is, it can also be a time for growth and change. It can lead to a new outlook on life. Many cancer survivors find the motivation to make positive changes in their lives. In addition, many survivors become advocates for others diagnosed with cancer.

## Defining the “Stages” of Survivorship

Survivorship is unique for each person. There are different stages of survivorship, defined by the American Society of Clinical Oncologists as:

- **Acute survivorship:** *The time when a person is being diagnosed and/or is in treatment for their cancer.*
- **Extended survivorship:** *The time immediately after treatment is completed, usually measured in months.*
- **Permanent survivorship:** *The time after diagnosis and treatment, usually measured in years.*

After treatment survivors are excited about the idea of their lives returning to “normal.” But it is important to remember that it can take time to recover and there may be long term side effects of treatment. The first few months after treatment can be difficult. Many people have to find a new sense of what is “normal.” Cancer changes your life. It is hard not knowing what comes next.

## Talking With Your Cancer Care Team

During cancer treatment, you had a lot of interaction with your cancer care providers. It is still important to feel connected to your providers. Your primary care (or family) practitioner may be involved in your care. It is important to feel that communication is good and we want to help you. Our goal is to provide you and your primary care provider with all of the information that you need to manage your health and to feel well.

It is important to communicate with your doctor and their staff about any health issues such as:

- New symptoms
- Pain that troubles you
- Physical problems that get in the way of your daily life or that bother you, such as fatigue, trouble sleeping, sexual problems, or weight gain or loss

- Other health problems you have, such as heart disease, diabetes, or arthritis
- Medicines, vitamins, or herbs you are taking and other treatments you are using
- Emotional problems, such as anxiety or depression, that you may have now or that you’ve had in the past
- Changes in your family’s medical history, such as relatives with cancer
- Things you want to know more about, such as new research or side effects

### Other Important Tips:

- Ask your health care provider or pharmacist about the best way to take your medicine and about possible side effects.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for more time when you make your next appointment.
- Ask us about support groups in your area!
- Ask for booklets or other materials to read at home.
- Keep your own set of records about any follow-up care you have.





# Your Way Forward: Making Healthy Lifestyle Choices



Making healthy lifestyle choices means eating a nutritious diet, exercising regularly, and stopping tobacco use. While these things are important for everyone because they reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, they are especially important for cancer survivors. Adopting a healthier lifestyle may reduce the risk of some cancers coming back after treatment.

## Healthy Eating

*The following guidelines can help to reduce cancer risk.*

**Maintain a healthy weight.** The key to weight management is calories. Be aware of how many calories you take in, and how many calories you use in daily physical activity. The number of calories each person needs to maintain a healthy weight depends on many factors including age, gender, current weight, height, and activity level. If you have questions please talk to your Aurora Cancer Care team. We would be happy to connect you with one of our dieticians who can help answer questions and provide guidance.

**Read food labels** to learn more about the calories in the foods you eat.

**Eat more plant foods.** Including high amounts of vegetables, fruits, legumes (such as beans) and whole grains in your diet can reduce cancer risk. Aim to fill at least half of your plate with vegetables & fruits. Variety is also important - include dark-green, red, and orange vegetables, and beans and peas. Fruits and vegetables are high in nutrients, and low in calories.

**Make at least half of your grains whole grains.** Whole grains are an important source of iron, magnesium, selenium, B vitamins, and dietary fiber. Replace refined grains (white flour, white bread, white rice) with whole grains (whole wheat bread, whole wheat flour, brown rice, long-grain rice). Look for “whole grain” or “whole wheat” as the first or second ingredient in food labels.

**Limit sugar-sweetened drinks and large portions of calorie-dense foods.** Limit food and drinks with sugar added during processing or preparation. Replace calorie-dense foods (foods higher in fat and calories) with lower calorie, high nutrient foods such as fruits and vegetables. Reducing added sugars lowers the calorie content of your diet.

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**Drink fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk and milk products.** Try plant-based milks such as soy, almond or coconut milk. Milk and milk products, such as cheese and yogurt, provide calcium, potassium, and other important nutrients to your diet. Fat-free or low-fat products offer the same nutrients with fewer calories.

**Eat lean proteins** such as seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans, unsalted nuts and seeds. Seafood provides a variety of nutrients that may also prevent heart disease. For this added benefit, adults should consume at least eight ounces weekly. Limit red meat and avoid processed meats, such as salami and hot dogs, which have been shown to raise cancer risk.

**Cut back on sodium (salt).** Sodium is an essential nutrient, but too much can be harmful. Adults should limit daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. People who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should limit daily sodium intake to 1,500 mg.

**Replace saturated and trans fats-** such as butter, shortening and lard-with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats like olive oil, canola oil, sunflower oil or safflower oils. Other unsaturated fats to include are avocado, flaxseed, and nuts (almonds, peanuts, macadamia nuts, hazelnuts, pecans, cashews).

**It is best not to drink alcohol.** Too much alcohol increases the risk of certain diseases, including colorectal cancer and cancer of the mouth, esophagus, pharynx (part of the throat), and breast. If you do choose to drink alcohol, women should have no more than 1 drink per day and men should have no more than 2 drinks per day. Serving size matters. One serving of alcohol is 12 ounces (oz) of beer, 5 oz of wine, and 1.5 oz of 80-proof distilled spirits, such as gin, whiskey, or vodka.

## Be More Active!

Most people should aim for 30 to 60 minutes of moderate-to-intense physical activity on most days of the week. However, even a small increase in physical activity has benefits. Examples of exercise include walking, swimming, bicycle riding, and participating in a sporting activity.

Moderate intensity activities are those that require effort equal to a brisk walk. If you haven't been active, you should start slowly and gradually increase the duration, frequency, and intensity over time. Remember to warm up and stretch to reduce chance of injury and make sure that you drink plenty of water before, during, and after physical activity.

If you exercise at a gym remember to be safe and follow all instructions and safety recommendations when using exercise equipment or machinery. If you don't know how a machine works, ask a staff member for help.

### Tips for fitting in exercise to your busy life:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk or bike to your destination.
- Be active at lunch with your co-workers, family, or friends.
- Take a 20-minute activity break at work to stretch or take a quick walk.
- Walk to visit co-workers instead of sending an email message.
- Go dancing with your spouse or friends.
- Wear a pedometer every day to increase your number of daily steps.
- Use a stationary bicycle or treadmill while watching TV.

## Tobacco Use

One of the most important things that you can do for your health is to quit smoking. Smoking or using chewing tobacco puts you at risk. It is never too late to stop! There are a number of reasons why you should quit smoking. It may help cancer survivors live longer and reduce their risk of a cancer recurrence or of developing a new cancer. It also decreases physical symptoms and improves appetite, sleep, and energy.

**Are you ready to quit?** At Aurora Health Care we have programs and resources that can help. Please ask your health care provider for information and support.

## Your Way Forward: Living with the Emotional Effects of Cancer



Many survivors describe life after cancer treatment as their “new normal.” It is not unusual to have feelings of uncertainty. This can come as a surprise but is normal. Cancer not only affects your body, but often also affects your mind and spirit. You may have psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual changes that can influence your quality of life and may continue to be felt after treatment is completed.

Each person’s experience with cancer is different and there is no “standard” or typical response to cancer survivorship. Changes in emotions or mood are common. At diagnosis you may have felt afraid, worried, and/ or sad, but more confident after a treatment plan was started. During treatment, many cancer survivors describe their experience as an emotional “roller coaster,” with good days and bad days. After treatment, you may be surprised by a mixture of feelings. Feeling happy and relieved to be finished with treatment can be uplifting, but fear of recurrence and feeling anxious, depressed, angry, alone, and/or guilty can also happen. Because you are unique, you may experience none, some, or all of these feelings.

Knowing more about some of the most common emotional reactions to completing treatment may help you understand your feelings and better prepare you for survivorship. Knowing more about resources that can help may also be beneficial.

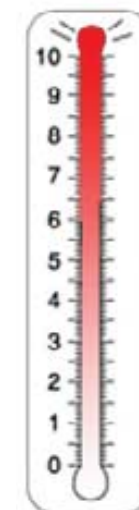
### What is distress?

Distress is a word that has many meanings. For cancer patients it is used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that may cause problems for you, your family members and loved ones. Saying that you are distressed can mean that you feel sad, hopeless, powerless, afraid, guilty, anxious, discouraged, depressed or uncertain.

The distress thermometer asks you to choose a number from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning no distress and 10 meaning the most distress.

Not only does this tool tell your cancer care team about your emotional health but it also gives you a chance to talk about and help us to work out problems with you during your visit.

*Extreme  
Distress*



*No Distress*



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## Fear of Recurrence

Worrying about the cancer coming back is one of the most common fears that survivors can have after treatment is completed. Certain events, such as follow up visits and tests, the anniversary date of when you were diagnosed, or a serious illness of a family member or friend, can trigger this concern. You may also miss the support from your cancer care team that you received during treatment when visits were more frequent. Sometimes fear can serve as motivation to keep appointments and talk with members of the health care team. At other times it interferes with enjoyment of life. Learning ways to continue with daily living without focusing on fear of the cancer returning is a part of adjusting to survivorship and is different for each person.

## Anxiety

Some survivors find that the time right after treatment is completed can be a time of uncertainty. Not knowing what will happen in the future or feeling that something bad is about to happen can lead to feeling insecure and anxious. Questions or concerns about health, family, work, or finances may become a primary focus. Although a certain amount of stress is normal in daily life, constant worry takes the joy out of life and can be very draining. Having a clear plan for follow up care after treatment is completed should be helpful in decreasing anxiety. Talking with members of your health care team and/or a mental health professional about your feelings/concerns is also often beneficial.

## Sadness or Depression

Sadness may be the most surprising emotional effect after treatment ends. It is often a reaction to loss or a stressful situation, such as a cancer diagnosis. When you were receiving treatment, you may not have allowed yourself to really think about the changes that have occurred in your life as a result of your diagnosis. Sadness often occurs in the early months after treatment ends, as you learn to adjust. For most people, these feelings eventually go away or lessen over time.

For some people, however, these painful feelings become more severe, last longer, and interfere with daily living. This may be a medical condition known as depression, which is treatable and can be caused by a chemical change in the brain. Symptoms of depression can include: a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, problems with sleep, eating and/or concentration, feeling hopeless, and suicidal feelings. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms or other symptoms that prevent you from moving on with your life, contact your health care team or a mental health professional right away.

## Anger

Feeling angry about having cancer and the effects that it has had on your life is normal. You may be angry because of changes that have occurred, or when you think about what you have lost because of cancer. Physical, emotional, social, financial or spiritual distress also contribute to feeling angry. Anger can motivate you to take steps to decrease stress, but it can also be a destructive force in your life. Finding positive ways to express your anger, such as writing about it or exercising as tolerated, are steps that you can take to help you move forward to adjust to life after treatment.

## Guilt

Guilt is another emotion that may be surprising after treatment is finished. You may feel that you have placed too much burden on your family and friends. There may be a change in the roles of family members. Surviving cancer while others have not, can also lead to guilty feelings, or you may think that you did something to cause the cancer. Recognizing these feelings can sometimes be difficult, but talking about how you feel is a positive strategy to moving toward healthy survivorship.

## Feeling Alone

People around you may not understand the emotions that come with completion of treatment. They may expect you to get back to normal quickly and get on with your life. Others may want to help, but don't know what to say or how to act. They may not know how to talk to you about their own fears, resulting in silence and a lack

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of communication. Some people may continue to treat you as if you were still undergoing treatment. All of these situations can lead you to feel alone or isolated, even from family and friends who are close to you. You may feel that only those who have experienced cancer can understand you. Discussing your feelings with a health care or mental health professional, or attending a support group can be helpful.

## Spiritual Distress

After surviving a cancer diagnosis and treatment, you may find yourself thinking more about the meaning and purpose of your life. Some survivors find that their values have changed, and make adjustments in their lifestyle to reflect what is important to them, such as spending more time with loved ones, with more focus on the present. Spiritual beliefs may have become stronger. Studies have shown that for some survivors, religion plays an important role in helping them cope and recover from cancer. Others may struggle with why they had to experience cancer and question “Why me?” The way cancer affects a person’s spirituality is different for everyone. Contacting a religious or spiritual leader or the hospital chaplain may be helpful.

## Self-Image

During treatment, changes to your body may have occurred, which can result in a lower self-image or self-esteem. You may feel differently about how you feel or look, which can be a challenge as you adjust to survivorship. Loss of a body part because of a surgical procedure or surgery that results in a change in the way your body functions can all contribute to how you feel about your body. Amputation of a limb, a mastectomy, a prostatectomy or creation of a colostomy are all examples. Weight loss or gain after treatment may also be a factor. Sometimes there can be issues with intimacy as a result of body changes. Keeping open communication with people you trust and seeking professional counseling are strategies that can be helpful.

## Grief

Losses can result in feelings of grief. Survivors may experience many types of losses such as loss of a job or career, loss of independence, loss of a body part or function, or loss of financial goals. Grief is a normal reaction and can take time to resolve. Recognizing and working through these feelings is an important part of moving toward survivorship. There are many resources, such as grief support groups, that can help you through this process.

## What Can Help?

There are many things that you can do to help manage the emotional effects after treatment ends. Since you are unique in how you cope with emotional changes, choose those that work best for you.

- Talk to a counselor/mental health professional
- Share your feelings with a trusted friend or loved one
- Join a support group
- Use a journal to write down your feelings/thoughts
- Attend survivorship events that address common concerns
- Discuss feelings of distress with your health care team
- Exercise as tolerated and with your doctor’s approval
- Discuss feelings with a chaplain/spiritual leader
- Try meditation, yoga or tai chi
- Participate in activities that have helped you relieve stress in the past
- Be creative through art, music, dance

## Spiritual Care and Support Groups

Spiritual Care Services are available to support you and your family during and after cancer treatment. Aurora Cancer Care offers a variety of support groups for survivors. These support groups are open to patients and their loved ones, as well as members of the general public. Please ask your health care team for more information.



## Your Way Forward: Living with the Physical Effects of Cancer



It is very important for cancer survivors to get regular checkups. Some cancer treatments can cause long term health problems. Some of these problems can appear years after treatment.

Some cancer treatments can affect the **heart**. If you experience any chest pain, shortness of breath or the feeling that your heart is beating too fast notify your health care provider immediately. If there is any concern about your heart you may be referred to a cardiologist (heart doctor).

Some cancer treatments can affect the **lungs and breathing airways**. If you experience any coughing, difficulty breathing, repeated lung infections or cough up any blood you should notify your health care provider immediately. If there is any concern about your lungs you may be referred to a pulmonologist (lung doctor) if needed.

Some cancer treatments can affect the **liver**. If you experience dark urine, yellowing of your eyes or skin, swelling or pain in your abdomen, flu-like symptoms, or severe fatigue notify your health care provider immediately.

Some cancer treatments can affect the **kidneys**. If you experience decreased amount of urine output, a change in the color of your urine, blood in your urine, or burning during urination notify your health care provider, who may order blood and urine tests to check on how your kidneys are working.

### Sleep

Insomnia is defined as troubling falling asleep or staying asleep at least three nights a week for a month or more. Hot flashes, night sweats, breathing problems or feeling worried can interrupt your sleep and lead to feeling tired during the day. There are medications that can help with sleep but it is not good to take them for a long period of time. Other techniques such as yoga, meditation and guided imagery may be helpful.

There are some things you can try to improve your sleep:

- Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature and free from light and noise
- Don't exercise within three hours of bedtime
- Avoid going to bed too hungry or full
- Limit intake of liquids in the evening, especially caffeine
- Avoid alcohol, especially in the evening

- Turn the clock so you can't see the time
- Don't nap during the day
- Do not use your bed for activities other than sleep and sex

## Fatigue

Fatigue is the feeling of extreme tiredness or weakness that can make it hard for you to get things done. Many cancer survivors continue to experience fatigue after their cancer treatment has ended. Sometimes it is because you are experiencing insomnia, but for other patients it occurs even when you are sleeping well. There are some things that you can do to help with fatigue. If you are having difficulty with sleep, talk to your health care provider. Mild to moderate exercise has been found to be helpful in reducing fatigue. Develop a routine and plan your day. If you prioritize what you need to do each day, you can save your energy for the things that you need to get done. As always, follow a healthy diet and try to eat smaller meals that require less energy to digest than a big meal.

## Chronic Pain

Not everyone who has cancer has pain. Pain does not always mean the cancer has returned or grown. You may have pain that has nothing to do with your cancer. Pain can be chronic (pain that is there all the time), acute (pain that occurs all of a sudden), or intermittent (pain that comes and goes). It can also be mild or severe. Some pain can be caused by the cancer treatments. Pain in the hands or feet, called peripheral neuropathy, is caused by damage to the nerves and can be due to chemotherapy or surgery. Sometimes people have pain as the result of surgery.

If you are dealing with chronic pain, keep a journal.

- Use numbers to describe your pain. At Aurora Cancer Care we use a 0-10 scale to assess your pain.

### Are you in pain?



- Describe what the pain feels like. Is it sharp, dull, burning, throbbing?

- When do you feel the pain?
- Does it come and go or is it constant?
- Point out the exact place on your body where the pain is happening.
- How does the pain affect your daily life (do certain things make it better or worse)?
- What can you do to cause the pain and what can you do to relieve the pain?

There are medications that may help control the pain. Cancer rehabilitation and physical therapy also can be helpful. Acupuncture, which uses needles at pressure points to reduce pain, can be very helpful. Other therapies that may be helpful are massage therapy, yoga, guided imagery and other mind-body relaxation therapies.

It is important to tell your health care providers if you are experiencing pain. If your pain is severe and you are not getting relief, you may be referred to a pain management specialist.

## Memory and Concentration

You may have heard the term “chemo brain,” a common term that is used by cancer survivors to describe memory and concentration problems that can occur after cancer treatment. A more accurate term is cancer treatment-related cognitive dysfunction because chemotherapy is not the only cause of concentration and memory problems in cancer survivors. It is not clear what causes these issues for survivors but there are things that you can do to help yourself.

- Use a daily planner or calendar to keep track of important appointments and daily reminders.
- Try to focus on one task at a time, avoiding distractions.
- Try to stay organized and keep things in the same place, such as car keys, cell phone etc.
- Exercise your brain by reading, doing puzzles and playing memory games.
- Plan ahead and write it down.
- Try not to get frustrated or impatient with yourself, which can make symptoms worse.

The good news is that these memory issues may get better over time. If these symptoms are not getting better or are causing significant difficulties on a daily basis, please discuss this with your health care team.

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## Neuropathy

Peripheral neuropathy is a group of symptoms caused by damage to the nerves in your arms and legs. It can be caused by chemotherapy, radiation, and/or surgery. Symptoms may include:

- Pain, tingling or numbness in the fingers, toes, hands and feet
- Difficulty picking things up or buttoning clothes
- Sensitivity to hot or cold temperatures
- Muscle weakness
- Problems with balance

There are medications that can be used to relieve the discomfort of neuropathy. Other treatments such as acupuncture may also be helpful. Preventing injury to areas of numbness or from falling is important. Acupuncture, physical and occupational therapy can also be helpful. If you are experiencing cancer treatment-related peripheral neuropathy, please discuss it with your health care providers.

## Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a type of bone disease that happens when more bone tissue is broken down by the body than can be replaced. Survivors with osteoporosis are more likely to suffer fractures (breaks) because of weakened, fragile bones. Some cancer medicines, high doses of steroids and treatments that decrease or block certain hormones can cause increased bone loss. In women who have gone through menopause the loss of estrogen can lead to osteoporosis, but osteoporosis can affect both men and women on hormonal therapies.

People with osteoporosis may have no symptoms at all. Early detection and treatment to prevent further bone loss are important. There are prescription medications that can be used to treat and prevent osteoporosis.

There are some steps that you can take to improve the health of your bones.

- Calcium can help maintain bone health and strength. Calcium-rich foods include cheese, yogurt and broccoli. You can also eat calcium-fortified foods such as orange juice, milk and pasta. Calcium can be taken as a dietary supplement. Most adults need a total of 1,200 to 1,500 milligrams of calcium every day. Your health care provider can tell you how much calcium you need.

- Vitamin D is needed to absorb calcium. Our main source of Vitamin D is the sun but you can also get it from food. Adults younger than 70 years of age need at least 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D daily, while adults 70 and older need 800 IU daily. Some people may need more, and your health care provider may do a blood test to check your Vitamin D level.
- Weight-bearing exercise (such as walking) stimulates production of bone-forming cells and also helps build muscles, providing more stability.
- Do whatever you can to prevent falls by removing throw rugs and any other clutter in your home that can cause you to trip.

## Sexual Changes

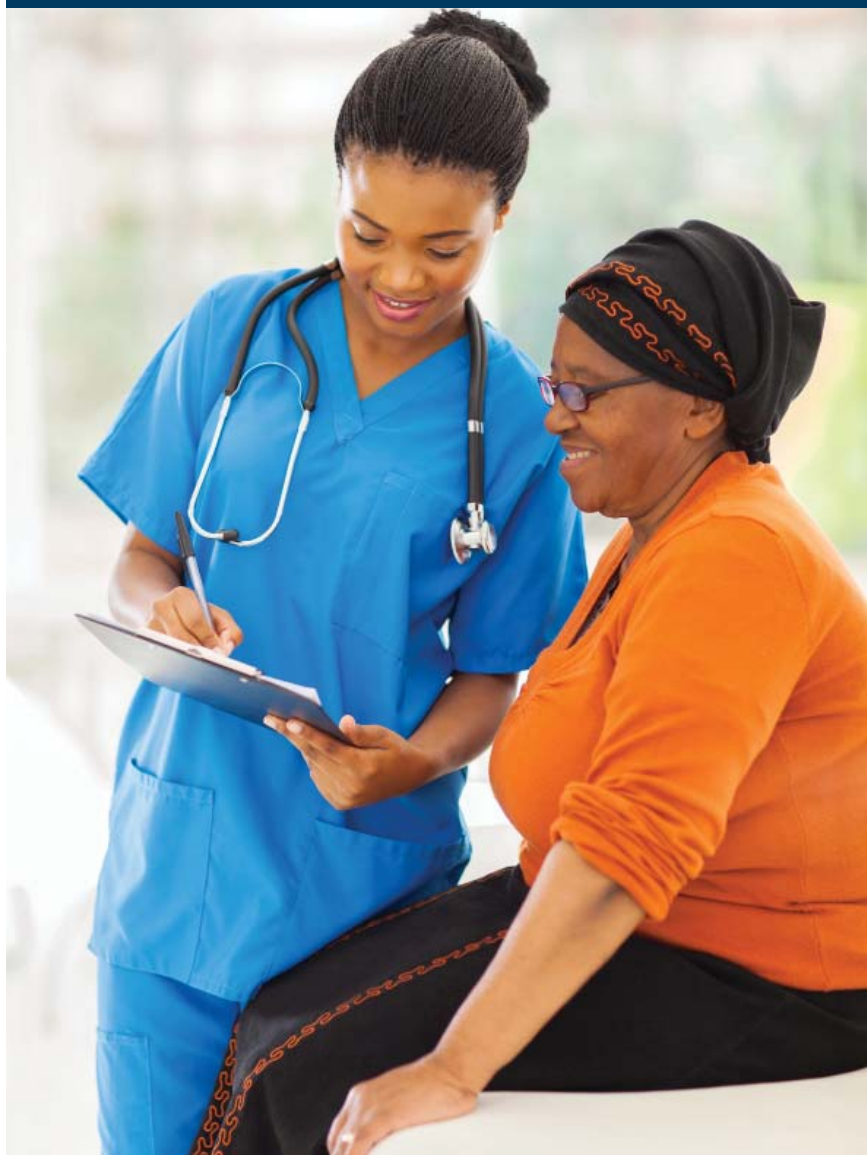
Many cancer survivors experience changes in their sex life after cancer treatment. Sexual problems after cancer treatment may be caused by body changes caused by surgery. Chemotherapy, radiation, hormonal therapies and other medications can also cause changes that affect one's sex life. Sometimes emotional issues like anxiety, depression and stress can also be the cause of sexual problems. What types of problems can happen?

- Changes in your body image (the way you think you look to others) can affect intimacy after treatment. Sometimes people feel that they are "less attractive." Survivors often worry that having sex will hurt or that they won't be able to perform sexually.
- Cancer treatments can cause a decrease or loss of interest in sex.
- Sometimes cancer treatments cause changes to the sex organs that can impact your sex life.
- For women, hormonal changes can cause menopause symptoms, including hot flashes, vaginal dryness or tightness in the vagina, and/or other problems that can affect sexual interest and ability. Men can experience difficulty achieving and maintaining an erection.

Unfortunately, in many instances sexual problems will not get better on their own. The good news is that there is help available! There are medications that can help with some of these issues. Talking with a counselor, psychologist or sex therapist can also help. Talk to your health care team for guidance.



## Your Way Forward: Other Health Concerns



### Diabetes

Some drugs that are given during cancer treatment can cause your blood sugar to rise. You may be at risk for diabetes if your blood sugar levels do not return to normal after treatment is finished. Your health care provider may order blood tests to check your blood sugar. If you have issues with your blood sugar you may be referred to a diabetic educator or clinical dietitian to help you learn to control your blood sugar.

### Thyroid

Some cancers and/or their treatments can cause the thyroid gland to make too little thyroid hormone, causing weight gain, constipation, dry skin or the feeling of being cold. Hypothyroidism can be treated with medication.

### Vision

Both your cancer and the cancer treatments can affect your eyesight. Some chemotherapy medicines, steroid medications, hormonal treatments (Tamoxifen), and radiation close to the eyes can all increase your risk of developing cataracts. If you experience visual changes like blurred or double vision, please tell your health care provider. You may also be at increased risk of developing glaucoma, so it is a good idea to get regular eye examinations.

### Hearing

Chemotherapy drugs, some antibiotics, or radiation to the brain or ear may cause changes in your hearing. If you experience any hearing loss you may be referred to an audiologist (hearing specialist).

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## Dental

Chemotherapy and radiation to the mouth can affect tooth enamel and cause a decrease in the amount of saliva in your mouth causing chronic dry mouth. This increases your risk of long term dental problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. It is important for all cancer survivors to see their dentist regularly.

## Integrative Medicine

Aurora Health Care is a leader in the field of integrative medicine, offering a healing-oriented approach for the whole person. Integrative Medicine is used to supplement and enhance your cancer treatment. It can improve your quality of life, as well as promote healing and recovery. Visit [AuroraHealthCare.org](http://AuroraHealthCare.org) for more information about any of the programs listed below or contact Aurora Integrative Medicine at 414-219-5900 or email [integrativemedicine@aah.org](mailto:integrativemedicine@aah.org)

**Aromatherapy** is the art and science of using pure essential oils extracted from natural plants and flowers. Essential oils are used to calm, balance and give energy to the body, mind and spirit. At Aurora Health Care, we use essential oils to enhance our patients' well-being. We also provide information on how you can use them in your daily life. Some of the oils that can help cancer survivors are listed below. For more information please speak to one of your cancer team caregivers or contact Aurora Integrative Medicine.

- **Lavender** is known to relieve insomnia and reduce anxiety and is the perfect choice to soothe the soul. While you relax, it works to eliminate airborne bacteria and viruses, helping you stay healthy and well.
- **Mandarin** is one of the gentlest and safest essential oils. Its calming influence promotes sleep, reduces irritability and lifts moods. It is also used to sooth digestion and reduce nausea.
- **Peppermint** is a refreshing and mentally stimulating essential oil. Its minty fresh scent is easy to recognize and can also help with sinus congestion, nausea, vomiting and headache.

**Yoga** is a mind-body practice that dates back 5,000 years. It can be practiced by people of all ages in any physical condition. Yoga can help to alleviate pain, fatigue, stress and anxiety. Yoga is offered at some of our Aurora locations.

The word **Reiki** comes from Japanese terms that translate as "universal life energy." Reiki is based on the belief that energy can be channeled through a Reiki practitioner to balance the patient's energy and is thought to help the body heal naturally. Reiki can increase relaxation and one's sense of well-being. Reiki is offered at some of our Aurora locations.

**Massage therapy** can help improve a person's health and wellbeing through the manipulation of muscles and tissues in the body. It is a great way to improve focus and concentration, calm the mind, stimulate the immune system, improve circulation and relieve chronic pain. Massage therapy is offered at some of our Aurora locations.

**Acupuncture** is a form of traditional Chinese medicine that dates back 4,000 years. It is the most commonly used system of healing in the world and can be very beneficial to cancer survivors. Acupuncture has been found to alleviate symptoms of fatigue, pain, neuropathy, anxiety and depression. It is a gentle and safe treatment option. Acupuncture is offered at a number of Aurora locations.

Our **Integrative Health** Coaches can help you make healthy lifestyle choices. Be empowered to achieve your personal health goals by working with a registered dietitian with advanced training integrative nutrition approaches and health coaching. To learn more, visit our website.

## Cancer Rehabilitation

The goal of cancer rehabilitation is to improve the lives of cancer survivors who may experience side-effects caused by treatments. Surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and other cancer treatments frequently cause problems with a person's energy, strength, mobility, pain level and overall ability to function normally. From diagnosis into survivorship, cancer rehabilitation is designed to address issues that are common both during and after cancer treatment.

Our cancer rehabilitation therapists (physical, occupational or speech therapist) will work with you to feel better so that you can return to a full, joyful life.

**Symptoms helped by cancer rehabilitation include:**

- Fatigue
- Pain
- Weakness
- Stiffness
- Swelling
- Bone loss
- Difficulty walking
- Decreased range of motion
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficulty speaking
- Bladder or bowel incontinence
- Pelvic pain
- Pain with sexual activities

## How to Make an Appointment

You will need a prescription for physical, occupational or speech therapy from any of your health care providers prior to your first visit. The prescription can be entered electronically or faxed by your provider, or you can bring it with you to your first visit. Physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy are covered by most insurance plans. Please call the Aurora Cancer Rehabilitation Center nearest to you and our clinical office assistants can assist you with insurance coverage and authorization investigations.

## Your Way Forward: Financial and Legal Issues

A cancer diagnosis can leave survivors with many financial questions and concerns. Cancer care is expensive and you may be left with questions about bills and other issues related to treatment cost. If you lost time from work during treatment, your income may have been reduced. Insurance policies and benefits can be confusing, and you may be concerned about debt. Financial problems caused by cancer and its treatment can substantially affect survivors and their families and create barriers to seeking health care. At Aurora Cancer Care our financial counselors are available to help you handle these concerns.





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## Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

In March 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law. For people with cancer, this new law affects both the cost of and access to medical care. If you have questions about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and how it applies to you our financial counselors are happy to assist. For more information contact the helpline at 1-877-732-6334.

## Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that prohibits all types of discrimination. For patients with a cancer diagnosis it provides protection from discrimination in the workplace. It requires eligible employers to make “reasonable accommodations” to allow employees to function properly on the job and ensures that employers must treat all employees equally. In 2008 the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) was signed into law. The amendments broaden the numbers of those who are eligible for protection by extending and clarifying the conditions covered. For more information go to [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

## Advance Directives

An advance directive lets you make your wishes known about medical treatment. There are three kinds of Advance Directives.

- Medical Power of Attorney, which appoints someone you know and trust to be your agent, who can make health care decisions if you are unable to make them for yourself.
- Living Will, which instructs your doctor not to use life support to extend the natural process of dying. This directive will take effect only when you are in the terminal phase of an illness.
- Out-of-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR), which allows patients in the terminal phase of an illness to refuse life-sustaining treatments when outside the hospital.

Aurora Health Care can help you complete the Five Wishes Advance Directive. For more information about Five Wishes, to acquire your own Five Wishes document and for assistance in completing your advance directive, please call 1-888-863-5502 to find an Aurora facilitator in your area or visit [www.Aurora.org/ACP](http://www.Aurora.org/ACP).

## Genetic Testing and Counseling

Somewhere between 5-10% of all cancers are inherited or genetic. Genetic mutations are passed from one blood relative to another, and people who inherit one of these abnormal genes have a higher chance of developing cancer within their lifetime and at a younger age than these cancers usually occur. If you have a family history of breast cancer, colorectal cancer, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer and endocrine cancer you may be a candidate for genetic testing. If you think you are at risk for an inherited cancer, it may be a good idea to meet with one of our genetic counselors. Ask your health care provider for more details.

## Palliative Care and Hospice

Many patients do not understand what palliative care is and what it can do for them. The goal of palliative care is to prevent and relieve cancer symptoms in order to provide the best possible quality of life. Many people believe that palliative care is only for patients with end stage cancer who are close to the end of life, but in reality it is recommended that it be started along with cancer treatment.

Hospice care is an extension of palliative care for patients whose cancer cannot be treated. To be eligible for hospice services, the doctor must certify that the patient is expected to live six months or less and the doctor and patient must agree that the focus of care is on comfort or the quality of the time rather than the quantity of the time. It is care that is focused on how you feel not whether your cancer is growing, shrinking or spreading. Hospice care can be provided in different settings including the patient’s home, hospital, nursing home or a dedicated hospice facility.

## Survivor Care Plans

Your cancer care team will provide you with a detailed, written record of your cancer care called a “Survivor Care Plan”. Your individual plan includes a description of your cancer stage and grade, a treatment summary that gives you the names of any medicines you were given and the dates of treatment, including radiation and surgery, and contact information for follow up care. It will also give you information about the recommended schedule for follow-up appointments and tests. This information will be shared with your other health care providers and will help give a clear picture of your past experience and future needs. Our goal at Aurora Cancer Care is to help you stay as healthy as possible and to make sure that your survivorship needs are being met.

# Resources and References for Survivors



## Resources and References for Survivors

### **Aurora Behavioral Health Service**

Scheduling, Triage and Insurance Coverage  
1-877-666-7223 or 1-414-773-4312

### **Aurora Family Service**

414-342-4560

### **Aurora Cancer Support Groups**

Vince Lombardi Cancer Hotline  
1-800-252-2990

### **Aurora Center for Financial Wellness**

1-414-482-8801  
[www.creditcounselingwi.org](http://www.creditcounselingwi.org)

## Booklets

*Facing Forward: Life After Cancer Treatment, National Cancer Institute*

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/life-after-treatment.pdf>

*When Someone You Love Has Completed Cancer Treatment Support for Caregivers, National Cancer Institute.*

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping/someone-you-love-completed-cancer-treatment.pdf>

## Websites

**American Cancer Society Cancer Survivors Network**  
<http://csn.cancer.org/>

**Cancer and Careers**  
[www.cancerandcareers.org](http://www.cancerandcareers.org)

**CancerCare**  
[www.cancercares.org](http://www.cancercares.org)

**Cancer Financial Assistance Coalition**  
[www.cancerfac.org](http://www.cancerfac.org)

**Cancer Legal Resource Center (CLRC)**  
[www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org](http://www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org)

**Job Accommodation Network**  
<http://AskJAN.org>

*The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the ADA and related legislation.*

**LIVESTRONG**  
[www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org)

**MyOncofertility.org**  
[www.myoncofertility.org](http://www.myoncofertility.org)

**National Cancer Institute: Office of Cancer Survivorship**  
<http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/ocs/office-survivorship.html>

**National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship**  
[www.canceradvocacy.org](http://www.canceradvocacy.org)

**Patient Advocate Foundation**  
[www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)



We are  Advocate Aurora Health

[aurora.org/cancercare](https://aurora.org/cancercare)