

## **[Adrenal Gland Tumor - Follow-Up Care](#) [1]**

**This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 03/2016**

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will read about your medical care after treatment for an adrenal gland tumor is complete, and why this follow-up care is important. To see other pages, use the menu.

Care for people diagnosed with a tumor doesn't end when active treatment has finished. Your health care team will continue to check to make sure the tumor has not returned, manage any side effects, and monitor your overall health. This is called follow-up care.

Your follow-up care may include regular physical examinations, medical tests, or both. Doctors want to keep track of your recovery in the months and years ahead. Learn more about the [importance of follow-up care](#) [3].

The endocrine system is a complex collection of hormone-producing glands that control many essential functions. If the adrenal gland that did not have the tumor is still working correctly after surgery, it should be able to provide enough of the hormones the body needs. Sometimes, a person needs hormone replacement therapy, such as steroids, because the body can't produce enough hormones. Over time, the person can often lower the dosage and even stop taking the hormone replacement drug. An endocrinologist, a doctor who specializes in the endocrine system, should carefully monitor this process.

If both adrenal glands have been removed, long-term medication will be required to replace the hormones that are normally produced by these glands. You should also wear a medical-alert bracelet. If you ever become sick or fall unconscious, the bracelet can inform health care professionals of your condition.

## Watching for recurrence

One goal of follow-up care is to check for a recurrence. A tumor recurs because small areas of tumor cells may remain undetected in the body. Over time, these cells may increase in number until they show up on test results or cause signs or symptoms.

During follow-up care, a doctor familiar with your medical history can give you personalized information about your risk of recurrence. Your doctor will also ask specific questions about your health. Some people may have blood tests or imaging tests as part of regular follow-up care, but testing recommendations depend on several factors including the type and stage of the tumor originally diagnosed and the types of treatment given.

For some people who've had an adrenal gland tumor, the risk of developing a tumor in the other gland is 10% or higher. Because of this, people treated for an adrenal gland tumor may need regular checkups with an endocrinologist to monitor recovery and detect any new tumor growth. In particular, adrenalcortical carcinoma can grow and spread quickly. Because it is rare, a person may want to participate in a clinical trial at a medical center with experience treating and monitoring this type of tumor. Talk with your doctor about locating these studies.

## Managing long-term and late side effects

Most people expect to experience side effects when receiving treatment. However, it is often surprising to survivors that some side effects may linger beyond the treatment period. These are called long-term side effects. In addition, other side effects called late effects may develop months or even years afterwards. Long-term and late effects can include both physical and emotional changes.

Talk with your doctor about your risk of developing such side effects based on the type of tumor, your individual treatment plan, and your overall health. If you had a treatment known to cause specific late effects, you may also have certain physical examinations, scans, or blood tests to help find and manage them.

## Keeping personal health records

You and your doctor should work together to develop a personalized follow-up care plan. Be sure to ask about any concerns you have about your future physical or emotional health. ASCO offers [forms to help create a treatment summary to keep track of the treatment you received and develop a survivorship care plan](#) [4] once treatment is completed.

This is also a good time to decide who will lead your follow-up care. Some survivors continue to see their oncologist, while others transition back to the general care of their family doctor or another health care professional. This decision depends on several factors, including the type and stage of the tumor, side effects, health insurance rules, and your personal preferences.

If a doctor who was not directly involved in treating the adrenal gland tumor will lead your

follow-up care, be sure to share your treatment summary and survivorship care plan forms with him or her, as well as all future health care providers. Details about your treatment for an adrenal gland tumor are very valuable to the health care professionals who will care for you throughout your lifetime.

*The [next section in this guide is Survivorship](#) [5]. It describes how to cope with challenges in everyday life after being diagnosed with a cancerous tumor. Or, use the menu to choose another section to continue reading this guide.*

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#### **Links**

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/adrenal-gland-tumor/follow-care>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/29386>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25394>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/34956>