

[Home](#) > [Types of Cancer](#) > [Brain Tumor](#) > Brain Tumor - Follow-Up Care

PDF generated on July 21, 2016 from <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/brain-tumor/follow-care>

Brain Tumor - Follow-Up Care [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 08/2015

ON THIS PAGE: You will read about your medical care after treatment for a brain tumor is completed, and why this follow-up care is important. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Care for people diagnosed with a brain 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.

This plan may include regular physical examinations and/or medical tests to monitor your recovery for the coming months and years.

Learn more about the [importance of follow-up care](#) [3].

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 grade of tumor originally diagnosed and the types of treatment given.

Many brain tumors are very likely to recur, so you should be routinely monitored for new

symptoms and with regular MRI scans. How often you schedule follow-up visits and have scans depends on the type of the tumor and other factors, so your health care team will talk with you about your exact schedule.

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.

As described in previous sections, a brain tumor and its treatment can affect how your brain functions, as well as your overall well-being. For this reason, it is important for your health care team to evaluate your quality of life and your cognitive and functional abilities through specialized tests, typically given by a neuropsychologist. A neuropsychologist is a psychologist who has special training in the brain's capacity and behaviors. These evaluations could identify situations when specific rehabilitative therapies would be helpful, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, counseling with a social worker, and/or medications that can help to reduce fatigue or enhance memory. The goal of rehabilitation is to help people regain control over many aspects of their lives and remain as independent and productive as possible. Learn more about [rehabilitation](#) [4].

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](#) [5] 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 grade of tumor, side effects, health insurance rules, and your personal preferences.

If a doctor who was not directly involved in your care 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 are very valuable to the health care professionals who will care for you throughout your lifetime.

The [next section in this guide is Survivorship](#) [6] and it describes how to cope with challenges in everyday life after a brain tumor diagnosis. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

Links

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

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

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

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25397>

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

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/34276>