

Head and Neck Cancer - After Treatment [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 06/2014

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

After treatment for head and neck cancer ends, talk with your doctor about developing a follow-up care plan. This plan may include regular physical examinations and/or medical tests to monitor your recovery for the coming months and years. If radiation therapy was used, your doctor may recommend regular thyroid gland checkups, which are done through blood tests.

[Rehabilitation](#) [3] is a major part of follow-up care after head and neck cancer treatment. People may receive physical therapy to maintain movement and the range of movements, as well as speech and swallowing therapy to regain skills, such as talking and eating. Proper evaluation and treatment may often prevent long-term speech and swallowing problems. Supportive care to manage symptoms and maintain nutrition during and after treatment may be recommended. Some people may need to learn better ways to eat or different ways to prepare foods.

People may look different, feel tired, and be unable to talk or eat the way they used to. Many people experience [depression](#) [4]. The health care team can help people adjust and connect them with support services. Support groups may help people cope with changes following treatment.

ASCO offers [cancer treatment summary forms](#) [5] to help keep track of the cancer treatment you received and develop a survivorship care plan once treatment is completed.

People recovering from head and neck cancer are encouraged to follow established guidelines for good health, such as maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, limiting alcohol, eating a balanced diet, and having recommended cancer screening tests. Talk with your doctor to develop a plan that is best for your needs. Moderate physical activity can help rebuild your strength and energy level. Your doctor can help you create an appropriate exercise plan based upon your needs, physical abilities, and fitness level. Learn more about the [next steps to take in survivorship](#) [6], including making [positive lifestyle changes](#) [7].

The next section offers a list of questions you may want to ask. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Questions to Ask the Doctor, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/head-and-neck-cancer/after-treatment>

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

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

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/30346>

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

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/22>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24554>