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Kidney 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 kidney 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.

ASCO offers cancer treatment summary forms [3] to help keep track of the cancer treatment you received and develop a survivorship care plan once treatment is completed.

As part of this follow-up care, patients should receive regular blood tests to check kidney function, chest x-rays, CT scans of the abdomen and chest, and other imaging tests to watch for recurrence or metastasis. Patients should have a checkup every three months for the first year, every four months for the second to fifth year, and once a year after that.

Because people treated for kidney cancer often have a single kidney, they will need to be monitored for possible declining kidney function for the rest of their lives. There are few long-term side effects, although some patients may have chronic pain from the surgical scar. Also, people treated for kidney cancer have a slightly higher risk of developing colon cancer [4] and prostate cancer [5].

People recovering from kidney 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 on 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/kidney-cancer/after-treatment
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/25394
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/18701
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/19562
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