Lymphoma - Hodgkin - After Treatment

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After Treatment

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 in this guide, use the colored boxes on the right side of your screen, or click ?Next? at the bottom.

After treatment for Hodgkin lymphoma ends, talk with your doctor about developing a follow-up care plan. This plan may include doctor visits and medical tests to monitor your recovery for the coming months and years. Follow-up care after treatment for Hodgkin lymphoma is important to monitor for possible recurrence of the lymphoma and late effects of treatment [2].

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.

How often a person needs follow-up care and which tests are performed depends on several factors, including the original extent of the Hodgkin lymphoma and the type of treatment. Typically, all of the tests, including CT scans, PET scans, and bone marrow biopsies, are repeated after treatment ends to make sure the lymphoma is gone. Then, the frequency of additional screening depends on the results of the tests done immediately after treatment has finished.

In general, each follow-up visit includes a discussion with the doctor, a physical examination, and blood tests. During some visits, scans are done. At most cancer centers, follow-up visits are scheduled every two to three months during the time right after treatment when the risk of recurrence is highest, and the time between visits increases over time. Later visits may only be two to three times per year until five years has passed; then, annual visits should be continued with an oncologist. Special attention should be paid to cancer screening and detection, as well as heart risk factors, throughout the person?s lifetime. For patients who received radiation therapy to the neck or chest, monitoring thyroid function is important.

Follow-up care should also address the person?s quality of life, including emotional concerns. In particular, Hodgkin lymphoma survivors are encouraged to be aware of the symptoms of depression [4] and talk with their doctor immediately if they have such symptoms.

Patients who had Hodgkin lymphoma should get a yearly flu shot [5]. It may be recommended that some patients get an immunization against pneumonia, which may be done every five to seven years.

People recovering from Hodgkin lymphoma are encouraged to follow established guidelines for good health, such as maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, 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].

To continue reading this guide, choose ?Next? (below, right) for a list of questions you may want to ask your doctor. Or, use the colored boxes located on the right side of your screen to visit any section.

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