Lymphoma - Non-Hodgkin - After Treatment

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [1], September / 2013

After Treatment

ON THIS PAGE: You will read about your medical care after treatment for NHL has 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 completing your treatment for NHL, 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. For the first two years, visits to the doctor are usually scheduled every two or three months. If there is no evidence of disease, patients will not have to see the doctor as often but should still return at least once a year for a checkup. Normally, follow-up visits are most frequent in the first three years after treatment. Follow-up visits should continue throughout the person?s lifetime.

During this time, most doctors will monitor the disease with CT scans or PET scans. Although these are very important tools for determining the disease?s response to treatment and monitoring for recurrence, there is some debate over how often CT scans and PET scans should be used. As described in the Diagnosis [2] section, both of these imaging tests cause the person to be exposed to a small amount of radiation, and an integrated (combined) PET-CT scan causes more radiation exposure than either one alone. In the past, these types of imaging tests were done every four to six months for up to five years after the last chemotherapy treatment. Now most physicians agree that performing routine scans, particularly when the person has no symptoms, may be exposing patients to unnecessary radiation, but there is limited guidance on how often these scans should be performed. Talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits of these tests and whether another type of test that involves less exposure to radiation can be done.

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.

People recovering from NHL 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 [4], including making positive lifestyle changes [5].

To continue reading this guide, choose ?Next? (below, right) with 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.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/19213
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/25394
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/22
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/24583