

Fertility and Reproductive Health

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board \[1\]](#), January / 2012



Watch the ["Moving Forward" videos about fertility concerns \[2\]](#) from ASCO and the **LIVESTRONG** Foundation, adapted from this content.

Most teens think of parenthood as something for the future. However, when you're treated for cancer as a teen, these treatments may affect your ability to have children later in life. Some cancer treatments can lead to temporary or permanent infertility (in both men and women), making it difficult or impossible to have a baby in the future. These treatments include surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy. The term fertility means a woman's ability to become pregnant or a man's ability to father a child.

Before cancer treatment

Even if you haven't thought much about having children, it's important to ask some basic questions before you start treatment for cancer. You have the most options for protecting your fertility before treatment begins.

- Can this treatment harm my chances of having children?
- Are there other treatments we can talk about?
- Are there steps I can take to help protect my fertility?
- Should I see a reproductive endocrinologist (doctor who specializes in fertility)?
- What additional information do I need to consider regarding my future sexual health?

During cancer treatment

It's important to remember that you need to be careful not to become pregnant or to have unprotected sexual intercourse while you are receiving cancer treatment. If you are sexually active, or thinking about becoming sexually active, talk with your doctor about the risks of sexual intercourse and pregnancy during cancer treatment. Talking about these concerns and issues may help to give you peace of mind and keep you safe.

After cancer treatment

Once cancer treatment is finished, talk with your doctors and nurses about what to expect for your reproductive health. For women, this discussion may include when to expect regular menstrual periods. If you are sexually active, ask about when it is okay to start again. Finally, make sure you or your parents keep the information about your cancer treatment and fertility preservation for future doctors.

More Information

[Fertility and Cancer Treatment \[3\]](#)

[What to Know: ASCO's Guideline on Fertility Preservation \[4\]](#)

[Sexual and Reproductive Health \[5\]](#)

[Self-Image and Cancer \[6\]](#)

[Cancer in Teens \[7\]](#)

Additional Resources

[Center for Young Women's Health: Reproductive Questions and Answers for Cancer Survivors \[8\]](#)

[LIVESTRONG: Physical Effects of Cancer \[9\]](#)

[TeensHealth: Can I Have Children After Cancer Treatment? \[10\]](#)

Links:

- [1] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>
- [2] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Multimedia/Cancer.Net+Videos/For+Young+Adults+with+Cancer/Fertility>
- [3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25268>
- [4] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Publications+and+Resources/What+to+Know%3A+ASCO%27s+Guidelines/What+to+Know%3A+ASCO%27s+Guideline+on+Fertility+Preservation>
- [5] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Treating+Cancer/Sexual+and+Reproductive+Health>
- [6] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Emotional+and+Physical+Matters/Self-Image+and+Cancer>
- [7] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Teens>
- [8] <http://youngwomenshealth.org/cancer.html>
- [9] <http://www.livestrong.org/Get-Help/Learn-About-Cancer/Cancer-Support-Topics/Physical-Effects-of-Cancer>
- [10] http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/cancer/fertility.html#cat20161