

Keeping Track of Your Health

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Keeping an accurate record of your personal medical history is an important step in managing your health. You will find that your doctors and nurses will remind you that you need to have regular checkups after finishing cancer treatment. This section explains why follow-up care is important.

Follow-up care

Follow-up care is getting regular screening tests and check-ups from doctors after treatment. For the first couple of years after treatment ends, you'll need regular (perhaps monthly) checkups with your oncologist (cancer doctor) to make sure that the cancer has not come back and to monitor how your body is recovering from treatment. Your oncologist can give you a plan for long-term follow-up care, including how often you'll need to see a doctor or nurse and any tests you may need in the future. Learn more about what happens after treatment ends for a specific [type of cancer](#) [2].

Late effects

An important reason to receive follow-up care is to look for [late effects](#) [3] or other complications of treatment. Late effects are side effects that occur months or years after cancer treatment, such as thyroid, lung, heart, teeth, hearing, or vision problems; learning difficulties; emotional effects; growth problems; fertility problems; or another type of cancer. Talk with your doctor before treatment begins to learn which late effects you may experience and what can be done to lower the risks. The Children's Oncology Group has [guidelines](#) [4] to help doctors and childhood and teenage cancer survivors recognize late effects.

Changing doctors

At some point after treatment ends, you'll probably switch from seeing your oncologist and return to your pediatrician or a doctor for young adults. It's important that you see a doctor who knows about the long-term effects of cancer in teens. Ask your oncologist to recommend doctors in your area. In addition, some hospitals and cancer centers have long-term follow-up care programs that specialize in follow-up care for childhood or teenage cancer survivors. Ask your oncologist if there is a specialized follow-up program in your area.

Keeping your medical records

Along with getting regular checkups, it's important to keep a copy of [your medical records](#) [5]. Ask your doctor's office to help you get a copy of your medical records. You will probably have multiple medical records from different doctors. A complete medical record of your cancer and treatment should include the following information:

- Your diagnosis, including the specific cancer type and stage (describes where the cancer is located, whether it has spread to other parts of the body, and whether it is affecting the functions of other organs in the body)
- Dates of diagnosis and treatments
- Copies of diagnostic tests and pathology reports (laboratory test results)
- Complete treatment information, including dose information for medications or radiation therapy
- Treatment results and problems, such as side effects
- Information about supportive care, including medications or procedures used to treat pain, nausea, or other side effects, as well as other types of care, such as occupational therapy or nutritional support
- A schedule for follow-up care
- Complete contact information for doctors and treatment centers involved in your diagnosis and treatment

Having your medical records is helpful if you go away to college, move, or change doctors. If you have additional tests, take new medications, or develop another health problem, this information will be added to your medical record. It is important to keep your medical record in a safe place at home.

More Information

[Survivorship: Next Steps to Take](#) [6]

[Managing Late Effects of Childhood Cancer](#) [7]

Cancer in Teens [8]

Links:

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

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/After+Treatment+and+Survivorship/Late+Effects+of+Childhood+Cancer>

[4] <http://www.survivorshipguidelines.org/>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Quality+of+Life/Keeping+a+Personal+Medical+Record>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Survivorship/Survivorship%3A+Next+Steps+to+Take+After+Treatment/Survivorship%3A+Next+Steps+to+Take+After+Treatment>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/After+Treatment+and+Survivorship/Managing+Late+Effects+of+Childhood+Cancer>

[8] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Teens>