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# Managing Your Health [1]

**This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 08/2012**

### Key Messages:

- After treatment ends, you will continue to have regular checkups to monitor your recovery and identify any long-term effects of treatment.
- To receive appropriate follow-up care, keep a record of your treatment and a copy of your medical records.
- Ask for help with financial concerns, including health insurance coverage, to make sure you can get follow-up care.

### Follow-up care

For the first couple of years after treatment ends, you will need regular (perhaps monthly) follow-up care with your oncologist, including checkups 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 and any tests you will need in the coming months and years. Your oncologist can also tell you what signs or symptoms to watch for and give you advice on ways to stay as healthy as possible.

### Late effects

An important reason to receive follow-up care is to look for late effects or other complications of treatment. Late effects are side effects that occur months or years after cancer treatment, such as:

- Thyroid problems
- Learning and memory difficulties
- Fertility problems
- A second cancer

Doctors are still studying how to anticipate, evaluate, find, and manage health problems after cancer. One valuable resource is www.survivorshipguidelines.org [3], developed by CureSearch [4] and the Children's Oncology Group (COG) [5] for survivors of childhood, adolescent, and young adult cancer. This website is targeted to health care professionals, so cancer survivors are

encouraged to review the recommendations with their doctors. Learn more about late effects of treatment [6].

**Changing doctors**

At some point after treatment ends, you will probably switch from seeing your oncologist to seeing your primary care doctor. It?s important that you see a doctor who knows about the possible long-term effects of cancer in young adults. Your oncologist can recommend doctors in your area, or you can ask whether a  hospital or cancer center in your area has a program that specialize in providing long-term follow-up care for cancer survivors.

**Keeping your medical records**

Along with getting regular checkups, it?s important to keep a copy of your medical records. ASCO offers cancer treatment summary forms [7] to help keep track of the cancer treatment you received and develop a survivorship care plan once treatment is completed. Ask your oncologist to help you obtain a paper and/or electronic copy of your medical record. You may need to contact each doctor, hospital (or hospital department), and treatment center to get this information. A complete medical record of your cancer and cancer treatment should include the following information:

- Type and stage of cancer
- Dates, results, and copies of diagnostic tests and pathology reports
- Types of treatments, including dose information for drugs or radiation therapy
- Treatment results, including any complications or side effects A schedule for follow-up tests and visits with the doctor
- 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
- Complete contact information for doctors and treatment centers involved in your diagnosis and treatment

It?s important to have your medical records if you move or change doctors, or if you have an urgent medical problem. Your doctor will need a copy of your medical record in order to provide appropriate follow-up care. If you have additional tests, take new medications, or develop another health problem, this information should be added to your medical record. Increasingly, medical records are stored digitally [8] so that all members of the health care team can quickly access a patient's medical history from anywhere, at any time, via a secure Internet connection. Meanwhile, keep a paper version of your records, and if possible, store them electronically, such as on a CD. Learn more about keeping a personal medical record [9].

**Health insurance**

It?s important to keep health insurance coverage even after you?ve completed cancer treatment. However, this can be difficult if recovering from cancer has kept you from obtaining insurance through enrolling in school or holding a job. In these situations, young adults need to find other insurance coverage. One possibility is through a parent?s insurance. A provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is that young adults can remain on their parent?s health plans

until age 26, as long as a parent has health insurance. Learn more how health care reform affects young adults at www.healthreform.gov [10].

Although the financial cost of a cancer diagnosis, treatment, and care can be overwhelming, there are people with expertise, such as social workers [11] and case managers, that can help you and your family navigate your options. Find out more about managing the costs of cancer care [12].

**More Information**

Survivorship [13]

Financial Resources [14]

Cancer in Young Adults [15]

**Additional Resources**

*LIVE**STRONG*** : Cancer Survivorship After Treatment [16]

*LIVE**STRONG*** : Individual and Group Health Insurance [17]

The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship: What Cancer Survivors Need to Know About Health Insurance [18]

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**Links:**
[1] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/young-adults/life-after-treatment/managing-your-health
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[3] http://www.survivorshipguidelines.org/
[4] http://www.curesearch.org/
[5] http://www.childrensoncologygroup.org/
[6] http://www.cancer.net/node/25396
[7] http://www.cancer.net/node/25394
[8] http://www.cancer.net/node/24725
[9] http://www.cancer.net/node/24569
[10] http://www.healthreform.gov/
[11] http://www.cancer.net/node/24556
[12] http://www.cancer.net/node/24865
[13] http://www.cancer.net/node/22
[14] http://www.cancer.net/node/25370
[15] http://www.cancer.net/node/25117
[16] http://www.livestrong.org/Get-Help/Learn-About-Cancer/Cancer-Support-Topics/Practical-Effects-of-Cancer/Cancer-Survivorship-After-Treatment
[17] http://www.livestrong.org/Get-Help/Learn-About-Cancer/Cancer-Support-Topics/Practical-Effects-of-Cancer/Individual-and-Group-Health-Insurance
[18] http://www.canceradvocacy.org/assets/documents/health-insurance-publication.pdf