Cancer Terms: After Treatment [1]

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Cure: To fully restore health. This term is sometimes used when a person's cancer has not returned for at least five years after treatment. However, the concept of ?cure? is difficult to apply to cancer because undetected cancer cells can sometimes remain in the body after treatment, causing the cancer to return later, called a recurrence. Recurrence after five years is still possible.

Disease-free survival (DFS): The measure of time after treatment during which no sign of cancer is found. This term can be used for an individual or for a group of people within a study. This term is usually used in the context of scientific research.

Event-free survival (EFS): The measure of time after treatment that a group of people in a clinical trial has not had cancer come back or get worse. This term is also usually used in the context of scientific research.

Follow-Up Care: Medical examinations and tests the doctor recommends after the active treatment period. This care is used to monitor a patient?s recovery and check for signs of recurrence.

Late effects: Side effects of cancer treatment that occur months or years after a diagnosis of cancer because of the related treatments, such as chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or surgery. Learn more about the long-term side effects of cancer treatment [3].

Progression-free survival (PFS): The length of time during and after treatment that the cancer does not grow or spread further. This term is often used in the context of scientific research.

Recurrence: Cancer that has returned after a period during which the cancer could not be detected. ?Local recurrence? means that the cancer has come back to the same general area where the original cancer was located. ?Regional recurrence? refers to cancer that has come back in the lymph nodes or other tissues near the original cancer site, usually by direct spread. ?Distant recurrence? refers to cancer that has come back and has spread to other parts of the body, usually by traveling through the lymph system or bloodstream. Learn more about dealing with cancer recurrence [4].

Rehabilitation: Services and resources that help a person with cancer obtain the best physical, social, psychological, and work-related functioning during and after cancer treatment. Find out more about rehabilitation [5].

Relative survival: The amount of time after treatment that a person with cancer lives, excluding all other causes

of death but cancer. Learn more about survival statistics [6].

Remission: The disappearance of the signs and symptoms of cancer but not necessarily the entire disease. The disappearance can be temporary or permanent.

Survivorship: This term means different things to different people. Two common definitions include having no disease after the completion of treatment and the process of living with, through, and beyond cancer. Learn more about cancer survivorship [7].

Survivorship care plan: A personalized schedule of follow-up examinations and tests that the doctor recommends after a patient?s active treatment period ends. This may include regular physical examinations and/or medical tests to monitor the patient?s recovery for the coming months and years. It may also be called a follow-up care plan; it is often used in conjunction with a treatment summary (see below). Develop a survivorship care plan with your doctor using ASCO forms [8].

Treatment summary: A written summary of the therapies that the patient had during the active treatment period. This is often used in conjunction with a survivorship care plan (see above) to help monitor a survivor?s long-term health. Use cancer treatment summary forms [8] with your doctor to keep track of the cancer treatment you received.

More Information

Life After Cancer [9]

Survivorship Resources [10]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/cancer-basics/cancer-terms-after-treatment
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/25396
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/25042
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/25397
[6] http://www.cancer.net/node/24961
[7] http://www.cancer.net/node/25393
[8] http://www.cancer.net/node/25394
[9] http://www.cancer.net/node/25400
[10] http://www.cancer.net/node/25401