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After Adrenal Cancer Treatment

Get information about life as a cancer survivor, next steps, and what you can do to help.

Living as a Cancer Survivor

For many people, cancer treatment often raises questions about next steps as a survivor.

- [Living as an Adrenal Cancer Survivor](#)

Cancer Concerns After Treatment

Treatment may remove or destroy the cancer, but it is very common to have questions about cancer coming back or treatment no longer working.

- [Second Cancers After Adrenal Cancer](#)

Living as an Adrenal Cancer Survivor

For some people with adrenal cancer, the end of treatment can be both stressful and exciting. You may be relieved to finish treatment, but it's hard not to worry about cancer coming back. This is very common if you've had cancer.

But sometimes, the cancer never goes away completely. Some people may get chemotherapy or other treatments to try and help keep the cancer in check. Learning to

live with cancer that does not go away can be difficult and very stressful.

Life after adrenal cancer means returning to some familiar things and making some new choices.

- [Follow-up care](#)
- [Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan](#)
- [Nutrition](#)
- [Keeping health insurance and copies of your medical records](#)
- [Can I lower my risk of adrenal cancer progressing or coming back?](#)
- [If the cancer comes back](#)
- [Could I get a second cancer after treatment?](#)

Follow-up care

Follow-up care will be very important after treatment for adrenal cancer. One reason for this is that the cancer can come back (recur), even after treatment for early-stage disease. Your doctor will want to see you frequently in the first months and years after treatment, but this might become less often as time goes on. This is a good time for you to talk to your cancer care team about any changes or problems you notice and ask any questions you have.

If you are still taking mitotane, you might need more frequent follow-up appointments to check for its levels in your blood and if there are any side effects from this drug. Remember that mitotane will also suppress the usual steroid hormone production from your other, normal adrenal gland. As a result, you will need to take hormone replacement tablets to protect you against cortisol deficiency.

CT (computed tomography) scans may be done periodically to see if the cancer has returned or is continuing to grow. Your blood and urine hormone levels may be tested regularly to see how successful the drugs have been in suppressing hormone production by the cancer.

Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan

Talk with your doctor about developing a [survivorship care plan](#)¹. This plan might include:

- A suggested schedule for follow-up exams and tests
- A schedule for other tests you might need in the future, such as [early detection](#)

[\(screening\) tests](#)² for other types of cancer, or tests to look for long-term health effects from your cancer or its treatment

- A list of possible late- or long-term side effects from your treatment, including what to watch for and when you should contact your doctor
- [Diet and physical activity](#)³ suggestions
- Reminders to keep your appointments with your primary care provider (PCP), who will monitor your general health care

Nutrition

Eating right can be hard for anyone and can get tougher during cancer treatment. The cancer, varying hormone levels, and your treatment can all affect how you eat and absorb nutrition. Nausea can be a problem during and after some treatments, and you may have lost your appetite and some weight.

If you have lost or are losing weight, or if you are having trouble eating, do the best you can. Eat what appeals to you. Eat what you can, when you can. You might find it helps to eat small portions every 2 to 3 hours until you feel better. Now is not the time to restrict your diet. Try to keep in mind that these problems usually improve over time. Your cancer team may refer you to a dietitian, an expert in nutrition who can give you ideas on how to handle some of the side effects of your treatment.

Keeping health insurance and copies of your medical records

Even after treatment, it's very important to keep health insurance. Tests and doctor visits cost a lot, and even though no one wants to think of their cancer coming back, this could happen.

At some point after your cancer treatment, you might find yourself seeing a new doctor who doesn't know your medical history. It's important to keep copies of your medical records or keep a patient app current on your smart phone to be able to give your new doctor the details of your diagnosis and treatment. Learn more in [Keeping Copies of Important Medical Records](#)⁴.

Can I lower my risk of adrenal cancer progressing or coming back?

If you have (or have had) adrenal cancer, you probably want to know if there are things you can do that might lower your risk of the cancer growing or coming back, such as

exercising, eating a certain type of diet, or taking nutritional supplements. Unfortunately, since there are no known preventable risk factors for this cancer, it is not yet clear if

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/survivorship-care-plans.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/screening/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity.html
4. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/keeping-copies-of-important-medical-records.html
5. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/guide-quitting-smoking.html
6. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/complementary-and-integrative-medicine/dietary-supplements.html
7. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/adrenal-cancer/treating.html
8. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/recurrence.html

References

Rock CL, Thomson C, Gansler T, et al. American Cancer Society guideline for diet and physical activity for cancer prevention. *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*. 2020;70(4).

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Second Cancers After Adrenal Cancer

- [Follow-up after treatment](#)

Cancer survivors can be affected by many health problems, but often their greatest concern is facing cancer again. If the same cancer comes back after treatment it is called a [recurrence](#)¹.

Some cancer survivors may develop a new, unrelated cancer later. This is called a **second cancer**. Unfortunately, being treated for cancer doesn't mean you can't get

another cancer. Survivors of adrenal cancer can get any type of second cancer, but they have increased risks of getting:

- [Lung cancer](#)²
- [Bladder cancer](#)³
- [Prostate cancer](#)⁴

Women who have had adrenal cancer also have an increased risk of [melanoma of the skin](#)⁵.

Patients who were under 45 when adrenal cancer was diagnosed have increased risks of [breast cancer](#)⁶, [bone](#)⁷ and [soft tissue sarcoma](#)⁸, [brain tumors](#)⁹, and [acute leukemia](#)¹⁰. These cancers, along with adrenal cancer, are seen in a [family cancer syndrome](#)¹¹ called Li-Fraumeni syndrome.

Follow-up after treatment

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.orgfile:///C:/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/recurrence.html
 2. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lung-cancer.html
 3. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/bladder-cancer.html
 4. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer.html
 5. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/melanoma-skin-cancer.html
 6. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer.html
 7. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/bone-cancer.html
 8. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/soft-tissue-sarcoma.html
 9. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/brain-spinal-cord-tumors-adults.html
 10. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/leukemia.html
 11. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/genetics/family-cancer-syndromes.html
 12. www.cancer.org/cancer/screening/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer.html
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