



[cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org) | 1.800.227.2345

After Anal Cancer Treatment

Get information about life as an anal 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 Anal Cancer Survivor](#)

Living as an Anal Cancer Survivor

- [Follow-up care](#)
- [Can I lower my risk of the anal cancer progressing or coming back?](#)
- [Getting emotional support](#)
- [Second Cancers After Anal Cancer](#)

For many people with anal cancer, treatment can remove or destroy the cancer. Completing 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.

For other people, anal cancer may never go away completely. Some people may need to get treatments to try to control the cancer for as long as possible. Learning to live with

health that can extend beyond your risk of anal cancer or other cancers. Stopping smoking may also help you tolerate treatments like chemotherapy and radiation much better.

About dietary supplements

So far, no [dietary supplements](#)¹³ (including vitamins, minerals, and herbal products) have been shown to clearly help lower the risk of anal cancer progressing or coming back. This doesn't mean that no supplements will help, but it's important to know that none have been proven to do so.

Dietary supplements are not regulated like medicines in the United States – they do not have to be proven effective (or even safe) before being sold, although there are limits on what they're allowed to claim they can do. If you're thinking about taking any type of nutritional supplement, talk to your health care team. They can help you decide which ones you can use safely while avoiding those that might be harmful.

If the cancer comes back

If the cancer does recur at some point, your treatment options will depend on where the cancer is located, what treatments you've had before, and your health. For more information on how recurrent cancer is treated, see [Treatment of Anal Cancer, by Stage](#)¹⁴.

For more general information on recurrence, you may also want to see [Understanding Recurrence](#)¹⁵.

Getting emotional support

It's normal to feel depressed, anxious, or worried when anal cancer is a part of your life.

To help maintain good health, anal cancer survivors should also:

- Get to and stay at a [healthy weight](#)²⁷
- Keep [physically active](#)²⁸ and limit the time you spend sitting or lying down
- Follow a [healthy eating pattern](#)²⁹ that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and limits or avoids red and processed meats, sugary drinks, and highly processed foods
- Don't drink [alcohol](#)³⁰. If you drink, have no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 per day for men

These steps may also lower the risk of some other cancers.

See [Second Cancers](#)³¹ for more information about causes of second cancers.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/lymph-nodes-and-cancer.html
 2. www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/tests/imaging-tests/ct-scan-for-cancer.html
 3. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects.html
[www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-highly processed foods](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-highly-processed-foods)
-

13. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/complementary-and-integrative-medicine/dietary-supplements.html
14. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/anal-cancer/treating/by-stage.html
15. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/recurrence.html
16. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/be-healthy-after-treatment/life-after-cancer.html
17. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/oral-cavity-and-oropharyngeal-cancer.html
18. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/oral-cavity-and-oropharyngeal-cancer.html
19. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/cervical-cancer.html
20. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/vaginal-cancer.html
21. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/vulvar-cancer.html
22. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lung-cancer.html
23. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/kaposi-sarcoma.html
24. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/non-hodgkin-lymphoma.html
25. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/hpv.html
26. www.cancer.org/cancer/screening/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer.html
27. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/take-control-your-weight.html
28. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/get-active.html
29. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/acs-guidelines-nutrition-physical-activity-cancer-prevention.html
30. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/alcohol-use-and-cancer.html
31. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/second-cancers-in-adults.html

References

Gilbert DC, Wakeham K, Langley RE, Vale CL. Increased risk of second cancers at sites associated with HPV after a prior HPV-associated malignancy, a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Br J Cancer*. 2019;120(2):256-268. doi:10.1038/s41416-018-0273-9.

Mysliwiec PA, Cronin KA, Schatzkin A. New Malignancies Following Cancer of the Colon, Rectum, and Anus. In: Curtis RE, Freedman DM, Ron E, Ries LAG, Hacker DG, Edwards BK, Tucker MA, Fraumeni JF Jr. (eds). *New Malignancies Among Cancer Survivors: SEER Cancer Registries, 1973-2000*. National Cancer Institute. NIH Publ.

No. 05-5302. Bethesda, MD, 2006. Accessed on 4/09/2020 at
http://seer.cancer.gov/archive/publications/mpmono/MPMonograph_complete.pdf.