



cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345

After Thymus Cancer Treatment

Learn more about how to live well after thymus cancer treatment and make decisions about next steps.

Living as a Cancer Survivor

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

- [Living as a Thymus Cancer Survivor](#)

Cancer Concerns After Treatment

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

Living as a Thymus Cancer Survivor

For most people with thymus cancer (thymoma or thymic carcinoma), treatment can remove or destroy the cancer. The end of treatment can be both stressful and exciting. You may be relieved to finish treatment, but it can be hard not to worry about cancer coming back. This is very common if you have had cancer.

For other people, the cancer might never go away completely. Some people may get treatments to help control the cancer. Learning to live with cancer that does not go away can be difficult and very stressful.

[Life after cancer](#)¹ means returning to some familiar things and also making some new choices.

Regardless of your situation, there are steps you can take to help you live well, both physically and emotionally.

- [Follow-up care](#)
- [Can I lower my risk of the thymus cancer growing or coming back?](#)
- [Could I get a second cancer after treatment?](#)
- [Getting emotional support](#)

Follow-up care

Whether or not you've finished treatment, your doctors will still want to watch you closely. It's very important to go to all follow-up appointments. During these visits, your doctors will ask questions about any problems you may have and may do exams, lab tests, or imaging tests.

Your doctor will most likely want to see you fairly frequently (every couple of months or so) at first. The time between visits may be extended if there are no problems. Most patients get a chest CT scan every six months or so for a couple of years, then yearly for 5 to 10 years.

Your follow-up care is needed to check for cancer recurrence or spread, as well as possible side effects of certain treatments. This is the time for you to ask your cancer care team any questions and to discuss any concerns you might have.

Almost any cancer treatment can have side effects. Some may last for a few days or weeks, but others might last longer. Some side effects might not even show up until years after you've finished treatment.

Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan

Talk with your doctor about creating a [survivorship care plan for you](#)². 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](#)³ (screening) tests 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 suggestions that might improve your health
- Reminders to keep your appointments with your primary care provider (PCP), who will monitor your general health care

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. Learn more at [Managing Your Health Insurance](#)⁴.

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 (or have access to) your medical records so you can give your new doctor the details of your diagnosis and treatment.

Can I lower my risk of the thymus cancer growing or coming back?

If you have (or have had) thymus 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.

Adopting healthy behaviors such as [not smoking](#)⁵, [eating well](#)⁶, [getting regular physical activity](#)⁷, and [staying at a healthy weight](#)⁸ might help, but this isn't clear. Still, we do know that these types of changes can have positive effects on your health that go beyond your risk of thymus cancer or other cancers.

About dietary supplements

So far, no [dietary supplements](#)⁹ (including vitamins, minerals, and herbal products) have been shown to clearly help lower the risk of thymus progressing or coming back. This doesn't mean that supplements couldn't be helpful in other ways, though.

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, what treatments you've had before, and your overall health and preferences. For more on how recurrent cancer is treated, see [Treatment of Thymus Cancer by Extent and Type of Tumor](#)¹⁰.

For more general information on recurrence, you might also want to see [Understanding Recurrence](#)¹¹.

Could I get a second cancer after treatment?

People who've had cancer can be affected by other health problems, but often their greatest concern is facing cancer again. Cancer that comes back after treatment is called a **recurrence**. But some cancer survivors may develop a new, unrelated cancer later. This is called a _____

To help maintain your health after thymus cancer:

- Get to and stay at a healthy weight.
- Keep physically active and limit the time you spend sitting or lying down.
- Follow a healthy eating pattern that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and limits or avoids red and processed meats, sugary drinks, and highly processed foods.
- Avoid or limit [alcohol](#)¹⁷¹⁸. If you do 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 health problems.

Survivors of thymus cancer should also follow the [American Cancer Society guidelines for the early detection of cancer](#)¹⁹.

Getting emotional support

Feeling depressed, anxious, or worried is normal when cancer is a part of your life. Some people are affected more than others. But everyone can benefit from help and support from other people, whether friends and family, religious groups, support groups, professional counselors, or others.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/be-healthy-after-treatment/life-after-cancer.html
 2. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/survivorship-care-plans.html
 3. www.cancer.org/cancer/screening/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer.html
-

