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After Prostate Cancer Treatment

Get information about how to live well after prostate cancer treatment and make decisions about next steps.

Living as a Cancer Survivor

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

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

Living as a Prostate Cancer Survivor

For most men with prostate cancer, treatment can remove or destroy the cancer. Completing treatment can be both stressful and exciting. You may be relieved to finish treatment, but find it hard not to worry about cancer growing or coming back. This is very common if you've had cancer.

For some men, the [cancer may come back](#)¹ in other parts of the body, or it [may never go away completely](#)². These men may get hormone therapy or other treatments to help keep the cancer under control for as long as possible and to help with any symptoms they're having. Learning to live with cancer that does not go away can be difficult and very stressful.

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Follow-up care

Even if you have completed treatment, your doctors will still want to watch you closely.

Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan

Talk with your doctor about developing a [survivorship care plan](#)⁶ for you. This plan might include:

- A summary of the treatment you received
- 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 for other types of cancer](#)⁷, 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
- Suggestions for things you can do that might improve your health, including possibly lowering your chances of the cancer coming back

Keeping health insurance and copies of your medical records

Even after treatment, it's very important to keep [health insurance](#)⁸. Tests and doctor visits cost a lot, and although 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](#)⁹ to give your new doctor the details of your diagnosis and treatment.

Can I lower the risk of prostate cancer progressing or coming back?

If you have (or have had) prostate 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. While there are some things you can do that might be helpful, more research is needed to know for sure.

Get regular physical activity

Some research has suggested that men who [get regular physical activity](#)¹⁰ after treatment might be less likely to die from their prostate cancer than those who don't. It's not clear exactly how much activity might be needed, but more seems to be better.

More vigorous activity might also be more helpful than less vigorous activity. Further studies are needed to follow up on these findings.

Quit smoking

Some research has suggested that men who smoke are more likely to have their prostate cancer recur and are more likely to die from it than men who don't smoke. More research is needed to see if quitting smoking can help lower these risks, although quitting is already known to have a number of other health benefits. If you want to quit smoking and need help, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345. You can also learn more in our [_____](#)

- Stay physically active, and limit time spent sitting or lying down.
- Follow a healthy eating pattern that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and that limits or avoids red and processed meats, sugary drinks, and highly processed foods.
- Avoid or limit alcohol. If you do drink, have no more than 2 drinks per day.

These steps may also lower the risk of some other health problems.

See [Second Cancers](#)²⁷ for more information about causes of second cancers.

Getting emotional support

Feelings of [depression, anxiety, or worry](#)²⁸ are normal when prostate cancer is a part of your life. Some men are affected more than others. But everyone can benefit from [help and support](#)²⁹ from other people, whether it's friends and family, religious groups, support groups, professional counselors, or others.

Sexuality and feeling good about your body

Prostate cancer treatment can often affect sexual function. Learning to be comfortable with your body during and after prostate cancer treatment is a personal journey, one that is different for everyone. Information and support can help you cope with these changes over time. Learn more in [Sex and the Adult Male With Cancer](#)³⁰.

Bladder or bowel issues after treatment

Some prostate cancer treatments might also cause bladder or bowel problems. In some men

www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/how-

- [changes.html](#)
29. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/be-healthy-after-treatment/life-after-cancer.html
 30. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/fertility-and-sexual-side-effects/sexuality-for-men-with-cancer.html
 31. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/stool-or-urine-changes/bladder-incontinence.html

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