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After Hodgkin Disease 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 a Hodgkin Lymphoma Survivor](#)
- [Late and Long-term Side Effects of Hodgkin Lymphoma Treatment](#)

Cancer Concerns After Treatment

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

- [Second Cancers After Hodgkin Lymphoma](#)

Living as a Hodgkin Lymphoma Survivor

- [Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan](#)
- [Follow-up after Hodgkin Lymphoma](#)
- [Keeping health insurance and copies of your medical records](#)

- [Can I lower my risk of Hodgkin lymphoma progressing or coming back?](#)
- [If Hodgkin lymphoma comes back](#)
- [Could I get a second cancer after treatment?](#)
- [Getting emotional support](#)

For many people with Hodgkin lymphoma (HL), treatment can cure the lymphoma. Completing treatment can be both stressful and exciting. You may be relieved to finish treatment, but find it hard not to worry about the lymphoma coming back. (When cancer comes back after treatment, it's called a recurrence .) This is a very common concern if you've had cancer.

For some people, HL may never go away completely. These people may get regular treatments with chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or other therapies to help control it for as long as possible and to help relieve symptoms. Learning to [live with HL that doesn't go away](#)¹ can be difficult and very stressful.

Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan

Talk with your doctor about developing a [survivorship care plan](#)² for you. 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](#)³ for other types of cancer, or tests to look for long-term health effects from the HL 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

Follow-up after Hodgkin Lymphoma

Even if you've completed treatment, your doctors will still want to watch you closely. It's very important to go to all your follow-up appointments because HL can sometimes come back even many years after treatment.

Some treatment side effects might last a long time or might not even show up until years after you have finished treatment (see [Late and Long-term Side Effects of Hodgkin Lymphoma Treatment](#)). These doctor visits are a good time to ask questions

Adopting healthy behaviors such as [not smoking](#)

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/cancer-as-a-chronic-illness.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
4. www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/tests/imaging-tests/imaging-radiology-tests-for-cancer.html
5. www.cancer.org/cancer/financial-insurance-matters/understanding-health-insurance.html
6. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/keeping-copies-of-important-medical-records.html
7. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco.html
8. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity.html
9. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/hodgkin-lymphoma/treating/by-stage.html
10. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/recurrence.html
11. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/be-healthy-after-treatment/life-after-cancer.html

References

Bartlett NL, Foyil KV. Chapter 105: Hodgkin lymphoma. In: Niederhuber JE, Armitage JO, Dorshow JH, Kattan MB, Tepper JE, eds. *Abeloff's Clinical Oncology*. 5th ed. Philadelphia, Pa. Elsevier: 2014.

Kushi LH, Doyle C, McCullough M, et al. American Cancer Society Guidelines on nutrition and physical activity for cancer prevention: Reducing the risk of cancer with healthy food choices and physical activity. *CA Cancer J Clin*. 2012;62:30-67.

National Cancer Institute. Adult Hodgkin Lymphoma Treatment (PDQ®)—Health Professional Version. March 1, 2018. Accessed at www.cancer.gov/types/lymphoma/hp/adult-hodgkin-treatment-pdq on March 21, 2018.

National Cancer Institute. Childhood Hodgkin Lymphoma Treatment (PDQ®)—Health Professional Version. December 1, 2017. Accessed at www.cancer.gov/types/lymphoma/hp/child-hodgkin-treatment-pdq on March 21, 2018.

- [Breast cancer](#)⁴ (in women)
- [Lung cancer](#)⁵
- [Thyroid cancer](#)⁶
- [Cancer of the lip and tongue](#)⁷

After completing treatment for HL, you should still see your doctor regularly and may have tests to look for signs that the cancer has come back. Let them know about any new symptoms or problems, because they could be caused by the lymphoma coming back, by a new disease, or by second cancer.

Women who were treated with radiation therapy to the chest (such as mantle field radiation therapy) before age 30 have an increased risk of breast cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends yearly [breast cancer screening](#)²¹ with breast MRIs along with mammograms and clinical breast exams beginning at age 30 for these women. Some experts recommend that screening start 8 to 10 years after treatment or at age 40 (whichever is earlier).

The Children's Oncology Group has guidelines for the follow-up of patients treated for cancer as a child, teen, or young adult, including screening for second cancers. These can be found at www.survivorshipguidelines.org²².

Survivors of HL should also follow [the American Cancer Society guidelines for the early detection of cancer](#)²³, such as those for colorectal and lung cancer. Most experts don't recommend any other testing to look for second cancers unless you have symptoms.

Can I lower my risk of getting a second cancer?

There are steps you can take to help lower your risk and stay as healthy as possible. For example, it's important to [stay away from tobacco](#)²⁴ products. Smoking increases the risk of many cancers, including some of the second cancers seen in people who have had Hodgkin lymphoma.

To help maintain good health, HL survivors should also:

- Get to and stay at a [healthy weight](#)²⁵
 - Keep [physically active](#)²⁶ and limit the time you spend sitting or lying down
 - Follow a healthy [eating pattern](#)²⁷ that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and limits or avoids red and processed meats, sugary drinks, and highly processed foods
- Not drink [alcohol](#)²⁸. If you do drink, have no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 for men.

Late and Long-term Side Effects of Hodgkin Lymphoma Treatment

- [Second cancers](#)
- [Fertility issues](#)
- [Infections](#)
- [Thyroid problems](#)
- [Heart disease and stroke](#)
- [Lung damage](#)
- [Special concerns in childhood Hodgkin lymphoma survivors](#)

Each type of treatment for Hodgkin lymphoma (HL) has side effects that could last for months or longer. And there are some that might not show up until long after treatment

risk, such as not smoking, staying at a healthy weight, being active, and eating a healthy diet. It's also important to have regular check-ups with your doctor and get treated if you have high blood pressure.

Lung damage

The chemo drug bleomycin can damage the lungs, as can radiation therapy to the chest. This can lead to problems like shortness of breath, which might not show up until years after treatment. Smoking can also seriously damage the lungs, so it's important that people who have had these treatments do not smoke.

Special concerns in childhood Hodgkin lymphoma survivors

Just as the treatment of childhood HL requires a very specialized approach in children, so does follow-up and monitoring for relapse (HL coming back) and late effects of treatment. Careful follow-up after treatment is very important and it should be done for the rest of the child's life. The earlier problems are found, the more likely it is they can be treated effectively.

[Diagnosed With Cancer: Late Effects of Cancer Treatment](#)⁵.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/fertility-and-sexual-side-effects/fertility-and-women-with-cancer.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/fertility-and-sexual-side-effects/fertility-and-men-with-cancer.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/low-blood-counts/infections.html
4. www.survivorshipguidelines.org/
5. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/children-with-cancer/late-effects-of-cancer-treatment.html

References

Bartlett NL, Foyil KV. Chapter 105: Hodgkin lymphoma. In: Niederhuber JE, Armitage JO, Dorshow JH, Kastan MB, Tepper JE, eds. *Abeloff's Clinical Oncology*. 5th ed. Philadelphia, Pa. Elsevier: 2014.

Children's Oncology Group. Long-Term Follow-Up Guidelines for Survivors of Childhood, Adolescent and Young Adult Cancers. 2014. Accessed at www.survivorshipguidelines.org on March 22, 2018.

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Younes A, Carbone A, Johnson P, Dabaja B, Ansell S, Kuruvilla J. Chapter 102: Hodgkin's lymphoma. In: DeVita VT, Lawrence TS, Rosenberg SA, eds. *DeVita, Hellman, and Rosenberg's Cancer: Principles and Practice of Oncology*. 10th ed. Philadelphia, Pa: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2015.

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