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After Multiple Myeloma Treatment

Get information about how to live well after multiple myeloma 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 Multiple Myeloma Survivor

- [Second cancers after treatment](#)
- [Getting emotional support](#)

For some people with multiple myeloma, 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's hard not to worry about cancer coming back. This is very common if you've had cancer.

For other people, the cancer might never go away completely. Some people may get regular treatment with [chemotherapy and other drugs](#)¹, [radiation therapy](#)², 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 multiple myeloma means returning to some familiar things and making some new choices.

Follow-up care

During and after treatment, it's very important to go to all follow-up appointments. During these visits, your doctors will ask about symptoms, examine you, and order blood tests or [imaging studies](#)³ such as CT scans or x-rays. Follow-up is needed to see if the cancer has come back, if more treatment is needed, and to check for any [side effects](#)⁴. This is the time for you to talk to your cancer care team about any changes or problems you notice and any questions or concerns you have.

Almost any cancer treatment can have side effects. Some last for a few weeks to several months, but others can be permanent. Don't hesitate to tell your cancer care team about any symptoms or side effects that bother you so they can help you manage them.

Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan

Talk with your doctor about developing a [survivorship care plan](#)⁵ 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 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

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 Choices for Multiple Myeloma, by Stage](#).¹²

For more general information on recurrence, you may also want to see [Understanding Recurrence](#).¹³

Second cancers after treatment

People who've had multiple myeloma can still get other cancers. In fact, multiple myeloma survivors are at higher risk for getting some other types of cancer. Learn more in [Second Cancers After Multiple Myeloma](#).

Getting emotional support

Some amount of feeling depressed, anxious, or worried is normal when multiple myeloma 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. Learn more in [Life After Cancer](#).¹⁴

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/multiple-myeloma/treating/chemotherapy.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/multiple-myeloma/treating/radiation.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/tests/imaging-tests/imaging-radiology-tests-for-cancer.html
4. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects.html
5. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/survivorship-care-plans.html
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7. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco.html

8. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/eat-healthy.html
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11. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/complementary-and-integrative-medicine/dietary-supplements.html
12. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/multiple-myeloma/treating/by-stage.html
13. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/recurrence.html
14. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/be-healthy-after-treatment/life-after-cancer.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). doi:10.3322/caac.21591. Accessed at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.3322/caac.21591> on June 9, 2020.

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Second Cancers After Multiple Myeloma

- [Follow-up after multiple myeloma treatment](#)
- [Can I lower my risk of getting a second cancer?](#)

Cancer survivors can be affected by a number of health problems, but often their greatest concern is facing cancer again. If a cancer comes back after treatment it is called a [recurrence](#)¹. But some cancer survivors may develop a new, unrelated cancer later. This is called a second cancer. No matter what type of cancer you have had, it is still possible to get another (new) cancer, even after surviving the first.

Unfortunately, being treated for cancer doesn't mean you can't get another cancer.

People who have had cancer can still get the same types of cancers that other people get. In fact, certain types of cancer and cancer treatments can be linked to a higher risk of certain second cancers.

Survivors of multiple myeloma can get any type of second cancer, but they have an increased risk of:

- [Acute myeloid leukemia \(AML\)](#)²
- [Myelodysplastic syndrome \(MDS\)](#)³

Follow-up after multiple myeloma treatment

Patients with multiple myeloma need to see their doctors regularly. Treatment often doesn't cure this cancer, but can cause it to regress or go away for a time. If the cancer comes back or worsens, treatment may begin again. Let your doctor know about any new symptoms or problems, because they could be caused by the myeloma or by a new disease or second cancer.

Can I lower my risk of getting a second cancer?

There are steps you can take to lower your risk and stay as healthy as possible. For

Hyperlinks

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