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After Vaginal Cancer 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 Vaginal 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.

- [Can I Get Another Cancer After Having Vaginal Cancer?](#)

Living as a Vaginal Cancer Survivor

- [Follow-up care](#)
- [Keeping health insurance and copies of your medical records](#)
- [Can I lower my risk of the vaginal cancer progressing or coming back?](#)
- [If the cancer comes back](#)
- [Could I get a second cancer after treatment?](#)

- [Getting emotional support](#)

For many women with vaginal cancer, treatment can remove or destroy the cancer. The end of treatment can be both stressful and exciting. You may be relieved to finish treatment, yet it's hard not to worry about cancer coming back. This is very common if you've had cancer.

For other women, the cancer might never go away completely. Some women may get regular treatment with chemotherapy or other treatments to try and help keep the cancer in check. Learning to live with cancer that doesn't go away can be difficult and very stressful.

Life after cancer means returning to some familiar things and also making some new choices.

Follow-up care

When treatment ends, your doctors will still want to watch you closely. It's very important to go to all of your follow-up appointments. During these visits, your doctors will ask questions about any problems

- 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
- 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.

At some point after your cancer treatment, you might find yourself seeing a new doctor who doesn't know about your medical history. It's important to keep copies of your medical records to give your new doctor the details of your diagnosis and treatment. Learn more in [Keeping Copies of Important Medical Records⁶](#).

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

If you have (or have had) vaginal 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. Unfortunately, it's not yet clear if there are things you can do that will help.

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 come back or recur at some point, your treatment options will depend on where the cancer is located, what treatments you've had before, and your overall health. For more information on how recurrent cancer is treated, see [Treatment Options for Vaginal Cancer by Stage and Type](#)¹².

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

Could I get a second cancer after treatment?

People who've had vaginal cancer can still get other cancers. In fact, vaginal cancer survivors are at higher risk for getting some other types of cancer. Learn more in [Can I Get Another Cancer After Having Vaginal Cancer?](#)

Getting emotional support

Some amount of 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. Learn more in [Life After Cancer](#)¹⁴.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/vaginal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/how-diagnosed.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/tests/understanding-your-lab-test-results.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects.html
4. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/fertility-and-sexual-side-effects/sexuality-for-women-with-cancer/problems.html

5. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/survivorship-care-plans.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/eat-healthy.html
9. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/get-active.html
10. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/take-control-your-weight.html
11. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/complementary-and-integrative-medicine/dietary-supplements.html
12. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/vaginal-cancer/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

American Society of Clinical Oncology. Vaginal Cancer: Follow-Up Care. 08/2017. Accessed at www.cancer.net/cancer-types/vaginal-cancer/follow-care on March 13, 2018.

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.

Society of Gynecologic Oncology. What happen after treatment? Accessed at www.sgo.org/patients-caregivers-survivors/patients/vaginal-cancer-what-happens-after-treatment/ on March 13, 2018.

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Can I Get Another Cancer After Having Vaginal 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's called a [recurrence](#)¹. But some cancer survivors may develop a new, unrelated cancer later. This is called a [second cancer](#)². No matter what type of cancer you have had, it's still possible to get another (new) cancer, even after surviving the first.

Being treated for cancer doesn't mean you can't get another cancer. And 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 vaginal cancer can get any type of second cancer, but they have an

the risk of many cancers, including the second cancers most often seen in women treated for vaginal cancer.

To [help maintain good health](#)¹⁰, survivors should also:

- 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
- Not drink alcohol. 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.

See [Second Cancers in Adults](#)¹¹ for more on the causes of second cancers.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/recurrence/what-is-cancer-recurrence.html
 2. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/second-cancers-in-adults/what-are-second-cancers.html
 3. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/vulvar-cancer.html
 4. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/esophagus-cancer.html
 5. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lung-cancer.html
 6. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/bladder-cancer.html
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[See all references for Vaginal Cancer](#)

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