

# After Treatment

## Your Feeling After Treatment

During your cancer treatment, it might have been hard to imagine that your treatment would come to an end. Most people will experience a mix of good and bad feelings. Some of these emotions may include:

- Relief that your frequent visits to the hospital are over
- Fear that the cancer will come back
- Feeling frightened or alone without the regular support of your health care team
- Looking for new meaning or purpose in life

Family and friends may be ready to move on from your experience with cancer and want to celebrate the end of your treatment. You might not be ready for this yet and you may feel like the trauma is not over. It is normal to feel this way.

The medical part of your cancer may be over but the effects of cancer can still be felt after your treatment has ended.

### Getting Back to a 'Normal' Life

Returning to your day-to-day routines and going back to your 'normal life' may not be so easy. Rather than expecting to go back to your life as you lived it before treatment, it is helpful to think of creating a new way of living. Give yourself enough time to understand what you have just been through and do not expect to feel great about everything right away. Be kind to yourself while you sort through the mix of emotions you may feel.

Many people need some help along the way. You may choose to talk to someone about your feelings in one of the support programs listed in this guide.

### Side Effects After Treatment

Side effects can be ongoing and can last months or years after your treatment is finished. Usually side effects go away a few months after you finished treatment. Sometimes you notice new side effects long after the treatment is finished.

Make sure you speak with your doctor about your side effects and how to manage them. You can also call the Telephone Triage Nursing line at **519-685-8600** and **press '1' and follow the prompts.**

Cancer and its treatment can permanently change the way our body looks, works and feels. Do not be afraid to speak to your health care team about managing these changes long-term. There are many other health professionals that can help you manage your body changes. These health professionals may include:

- Dietitians

- Dentists
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational therapists
- Massage therapists
- Speech language pathologists

## Wellspring: Survivor's Support Guide

After cancer treatment, many people experience a difficult range of emotions. You may be wondering how to move from 'cancer patient', a role that may have taken a great deal of time to accept and learn to be a 'cancer survivor'. Wellspring London has designed a group specifically for this phase of your cancer journey.

There are several support programs that may be helpful to you and your family after you've finished your treatment.

The Survivors' Support Group is an 8-week program led by a qualified group leader and trained Wellspring co-facilitator.

**For more information on the Survivor's Support Group or to register, call Wellspring at:**

- Wellspring - London & Region Telephone: **519-438-7379**
- Wellspring - Stratford Telephone: **519-271-2232**

## Your Follow-Up Care

### **Will I need to have follow-up care at the cancer centre?**

Everyone will have a different follow-up care plan. Depending on the type of cancer you had, your treatment, and whether you experience long-term side effects, you may be asked to come in for some follow-up visits. Your doctor will let you know if you need follow-up care and you may receive care at a different location than the Verspeeten. No matter where you receive care and who your care provider is, the quality of care is the same.

## Your Family Doctor

### **It is important that you have a family doctor to organize your care.**

It is better to see a family doctor regularly than to see a few different doctors. Your family doctor can also help you keep track of your physical and emotional needs and arrange for other care if it is needed.

Make sure your family doctor is up to date on:

- Any medications that you are taking including over-the-counter medications such as pain killers, laxatives, vitamins, etc.

- Any changes you have made to your overall lifestyle (e.g., quitting smoking, trying a new diet, a change in your exercise routine, etc).
- Appointments that you have with other doctors (e.g., an oncologist).
- Any concerns that you have related to your health (e.g., a new symptom).
- When you are due for your next screening test (e.g., a mammogram, PSA test, etc.)
- Any long term side effects that they need to monitor you for.

If you do not have a family doctor, call the Health Care Connect Patient Registry at **1-800-445-1822**

## Recommended Resources

### **Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)**

EAPs are offered by some workplaces and can help keep employees and their families functioning at their best. To learn if your workplace offers an EAP, ask your union representative, health and safety representative, or human resources officer.

### **Returning to Work Online Sessions**

A 6-week educational and support program designed to help cancer patients achieve a successful and sustained return to work following an absence due to cancer. Topics include readiness to work, need for accommodation by your employer, treatment side-effects that may impact job performance, and how to get ready for the return. For more information, visit Wellspring's website.

### **Back at Work Online Series (Moving Beyond Cancer and Managing Stress at Work)**

Two online programs offered in an online environment to help people with cancer and cancer survivors return to work. For more information, visit Wellspring's website.