

CANCER SURVIVORSHIP CHECKLIST

What you need to know when you have finished treatment for head and neck cancer.



NAME

AGE

CANCER TYPE

CARE PLAN

Ask for a written treatment summary and care plan for me and my current and future health care providers. This should include what my treatment was and plans for future tests and visits.

Discuss with my health care team important topics, including:

- What recovery from my treatment will be like.
- Physical or emotional concerns I have after treatment ends.
- Short- and long-term treatment side effects and actions to take when symptoms arise (e.g., radiation fibrosis, lymphedema, and voice/swallowing/chewing issues).
- How, and how often, I will be screened for recurrence or for new cancers.
- Recommendations for my diet, exercise plans, and other healthy activities.

Review the completed care plan with a member of my oncology care team to assure that I understand it.

COMMUNICATION WITH MY HEALTH CARE TEAM

Discuss with my health care team who will manage my care after treatment ends — a member of the oncology team, my primary care physician, or both — using the care plan.

Discuss how my care will be coordinated with my primary care doctor. Ensure my primary care provider understands the required follow-up care specific to my diagnosis and treatment.

Schedule all necessary appointments and get a copy.

GOALS OF HEALTHY LIVING

Avoid inactivity. Ask for an exercise referral to connect with resources in my community that match my abilities.

Learn what foods are healthy and how to add more of them to my diet.

Prioritize drinking water and staying well-hydrated.

If I consume alcohol or caffeine, ask my physician what amount is reasonable for me.

Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Don't smoke, chew, or sniff tobacco. If I smoke or vape, seek help to quit.

Practice sun safety daily by using sunscreen and do not use tanning beds.

Prioritize getting eight hours of sleep.

See my primary care provider on a regular basis.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Discuss and seek a referral for a **survivorship clinic** to support my recovery after treatment.

Ask my radiation oncologist to mark on a drawing of a head/neck where radiation fibrosis might develop. Discuss how radiation fibrosis might be experienced going forward and discuss therapy options to best address it.

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SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (CONTINUED)

Meet with my dentist to address problems with dry mouth due to damage to salivary glands. Discuss healthy habits including artificial saliva, prescription-strength fluoride toothpaste, and using a water pick to limit future dental problems.

Meet with a speech & language pathologist (speech therapist) if chewing or swallowing difficulties limit my ability to enjoy my favorite foods.

Meet with a nutritionist if taste changes are limiting my intake of healthy proteins, fruits, and vegetables.

Ask for a referral to a **cancer rehabilitation physician or therapist** who can evaluate my medical conditions and help me maintain or restore my maximum possible functioning within the limits set by my disease and its treatments. These therapists specialize in addressing restrictions in the following areas:

- Physical therapy to improve strength, range of motion, impaired balance, pain, and fatigue.
- Occupational therapy to perform activities of daily living and address cognitive impairment.
- Speech therapy for difficulties speaking, swallowing, and decreased jaw movement.
- Lymphedema services including manual drainage, wrapping/compression, and skin care.
- Pelvic floor therapist for incontinence, sexual dysfunction, and internal therapy.

Discuss options for **integrative oncology** (acupuncture, yoga, meditation, oncology massage, nutrition, and exercise) to manage my wellness and potential side effects.

Discuss options for **palliative care** to support symptom management and maintain quality of life.

EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Ask for a referral for a psychologist or psychiatrist if I am experiencing anxiety or depression that is interfering with my quality of life, including relationships.

Consider a support group where I can discuss the fear of recurrence and ways to manage anxiety related to scans and tests.

Prioritize activities that benefit mental health (e.g., therapy, meditations, yoga, or journaling).

Identify the types of therapists who could help support me as I address emotional, sexual, or relationship issues.

Read books that inspire me, listen to music that brings me a sense of peace or joy, and surround myself with only friends and family that bring me joy, laughter, and support.

Practice self-compassion.

Identify patient advocacy groups where I can get support. Find meaning or make sense of my cancer experience in order to thrive with other cancer survivors.

Look for volunteer opportunities in my community that resonate with me. Research indicates that volunteering raises a person's mood and enhances a person's sense of purpose.

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