

Life After Treatment



A **QUALITY PROGRAM**
of the AMERICAN COLLEGE
OF SURGEONS



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Dear Survivor,

We would like to be the first to welcome you to life after cancer treatment, an extremely important milestone in the road to your recovery. You may be experiencing many emotions, but most of all are likely relieved to be finished with the demands of treatment and ready to put the experience of cancer behind you.

One of the hardest things after treatment is not knowing what happens next or where to turn when challenges arise. People around you may expect life to return to the way it was before you were diagnosed, while you may feel like you have entered a whole new world and everything has changed. Remember, it takes time to adjust.

This booklet is designed to be a source of information to help you through this time; we encourage you to read it and use the resources listed in it.

While cancer is a major event for all who are diagnosed, it brings with it the opportunity for growth, celebration and inspiration. Wishing you hope for each new day and peace of mind for your journey ahead.

~Your Oncology Team



Watching for Recurrence

One of the most common concerns of survivors have is worrying that the cancer will come back. This fear of recurrence is very real and entirely normal. One of our goals of follow up care is to check for a recurrence of cancer. While we understand that a decrease in monitoring can be scary, the recommendations made by your doctor are backed through national guidelines and lead to exceptional outcomes without the added anxiety. A doctor or clinician more familiar with your medical history will give you personalized information on how to best follow up with screenings associated with your cancer history.

In addition, it is important to remain engaged with your healthcare team and keep up with your routine health screenings to ensure your total health is up to date. In the box below, you will see some of these items listed. This is designed to be written on and is something that your healthcare team can assist with filling out if needed. To better help you track and/or schedule all of your future health needs, download the My Doctor Online app below.

My Doctor Online (NCAL)



Take care of your general health screenings and wellness:

◇ Follow your personal recommended cancer screenings by your doctor:

- Breast Cancer Screening (Mammogram)

Date Due: _____

- Cervical Cancer Screening (Pap)

Date Due: _____

- Colorectal Cancer Screening

Date Due: _____

◇ Other health tests and tips for you to check and follow:

- Get Immunizations
- Blood Pressure
- Cholesterol
- A1C (diabetes lab test)
- Eye Photo (for patient with diabetes)
- Quitting Tobacco

Getting “Back to Normal”

When treatment ends, we understand that you hope to feel like you did before your diagnosis. People may also expect you to be celebrating and full of energy now that treatment has ended. But for many, that’s just not the case.

In fact, it may take a year or more for you to start to feel like yourself again. Many people find it means adjusting to a “new normal” that isn’t exactly like your life before treatment.

There are many aspects of life after treatment that can require some adjustment.

- **Physical changes.** Some side effects from treatment last longer than you might expect or may become permanent.
- **Fatigue,** You may find that you tire out more quickly than prior to your cancer diagnosis. This may last for months or years; pace yourself. Try not to schedule as many events or outings in a day as you may have prior to treatment. Build in time for breaks and rest on busy days.
- **Sexual/relationship changes.** This may resolve in time, but you may wish to seek help from a specialist for any physical or relationship issues that persist.
- **Body image changes.** Many of us have difficulty adjusting to losing or gaining weight, loss of a body part or its function, or changes in mobility. This is normal, and while it often improves over time, it’s also normal to need support from your partner or a family/behavioral health specialist to get through it.
- **Lifestyle changes.** Many aspects of readjusting to life after treatment can contribute to feeling unsettled, such as:
 - * Job changes or loss
 - * Difficulty performing job, hobbies, or home duties
 - * Financial burdens/bills
 - * Health insurance worries
 - * Cost of medications and ongoing treatment
 - * Adjusting to a retirement or unanticipated retirement

The National Cancer Institute has produced an excellent booklet with more details on living life after cancer treatment called **Facing Forward**.

<https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/life-after-treatment.pdf>

Relationship changes. This is a normal and challenging effect of going through cancer treatment. Ways that relationships may be influenced include:

- * A new role of being cared for vs. being the caregiver
- * People considered “friends” become distant after diagnosis
- * Others’ expectations of how you “should” be doing
- * Sexual relations changes
- * Children’s reactions
- * Feeling alienated from those who don’t “get it”
- * Others say misinformed or misguided things
- * Existing relationship tensions escalated after treatment

Emotional changes. Feeling stressed, tense, or worried is common at this time. Some people may have fears about the cancer coming back. Often, it’s the process of putting the pieces back together to find a “new normal” for yourself that causes this unsettled feeling.

- * While some degree of fear and worry is normal, major depression or anxiety is not. If you’re having trouble coping with these feelings, please talk to your primary care doctor or call for an appointment with our behavioral health services. You don’t need a referral to access behavioral health care.
- * Your fears and worries may seem heightened before follow-up appointments or scans. While this is unpleasant, it’s normal and it doesn’t mean anything is wrong.



For questions and to connect with one of our medical social workers, see below:

Roseville Oncology

- Laura Young/Brandy Malloy
916-784-5626 opt 2, then opt 4

Sacramento Oncology

- Thomas Boone
916-497-3131

Radiation Oncology

- Carol Martin
916-771-2836

Gratitude Journal

A gratitude journal can be a helpful tool in developing a more positive way of thinking. Emphasizing gratitude can inspire you to appreciate the pleasures in life, large and small. Focusing on gratitude shifts your focus from any negativity to the good in your life.

Start by writing down a few things you are grateful for each day. Even only one can have a positive impact on your mindset.

Some people like to make a rule that they never repeat the same thing twice. This can help you be more creative in finding new things to be grateful for every day.

Try focusing on different areas of life, such as:

- * Nature
- * Friends, family and pets
- * Technology
- * Health
- * Art, music and books
- * Entertainment
- * Weather
- * Seasons
- * Celebrations
- * Work well done
- * Food, shelter and basic needs met
- * Humorous happenings in daily life
-The list is endless

Adding Pleasurable Activities to Your Life!

- Be outdoors in nature
- Help others
- Go to a play, concert, or ballet
- Plan a trip or vacation
- Rearrange a room at home
- Read books or magazines
- Hear a lecture or a sermon
- Go boating
- Play board games
- Complete a difficult task
- Take a long bath or shower
- Gather natural objects (rocks, driftwood, acorns)
- Get new glasses
- Write stories, poetry or music
- Sing
- Go swimming
- Play a musical instrument
- Sit in the sun
- Go to a fair, zoo, or park
- Give gifts
- Hear jokes or comedy routines
- See beautiful scenery
- Do a job well
- Walk barefoot
- Play frisbee or catch
- Listen to music
- Build or watch a fire
- Repair something
- Cook a delicious recipe
- Learn to do something new
- Engage in social, political, or environmental issues
- Get up early to see the sunrise
- Write in a diary
- Sew or do needlework
- Spend time with someone you love
- Go to the library
- Prepare a new or special food
- Write letters, cards, or notes
- Host or go to a potluck
- Play with children or pets
- Do volunteer work
- Get a massage or back rub
- Go to a museum or exhibit

Add your own

Rehabilitation

Lymphedema

Lymphedema is a collection of fluid that causes swelling (edema) in the arm or legs. This type of edema occurs when the amount of lymph fluid in a person's arm or leg exceeds the ability to remove it, and the fluid then collects in the tissues of the limb.

If you have had lymph nodes removed or have had radiation as part of cancer treatment, you can take steps to avoid lymphedema. If you already have lymphedema, you can take steps to keep it from getting worse.

Know the symptoms and get treatment right away. Symptoms include:

- A feeling of heaviness, achiness, fullness, tingling in the affected area.
- Swelling in any affected areas.
- Feeling as though your clothes, rings or other jewelry are too tight.
- Less flexibility in the affected limbs.

Keep lymph fluid moving

Do all you can to help keep the lymph fluid moving so that it doesn't collect in your arm or leg.

- Prop up your arm or leg on a pillow with the limb above the level of your heart if you have swelling.
- When you are having your blood pressure taken, minimize the use of your affected arm and offer your unaffected arm.
- Keep your clothing loose around the limb that is affected. Wear clothing that does not bind or leave marks.
- Don't use heating pads on the area and stay out of saunas and hot tubs. Extreme heat may increase the blood flow and make swelling worse.
- Minimize heavy lifting or repetitive stresses (i.e., scrubbing tiles) with affected limb; monitor for swelling or heaviness in your affected limb
- Do light to moderate exercise regularly. When starting an exercise program, ease into it gradually and monitor your limb for symptoms of lymphedema. **START LOW AND PROGRESS SLOW.**
- See a physical therapist if you suspect you have lymphedema. He or she can teach you how to do special massages that can help move fluid out of your arm or leg. You also can learn what activities would be best for you.

Lymphedema (continued)

Protect your arm or leg

Do all you can to protect your arm or leg from injury and infection.

- Try not to get cuts, scratches or skin injuries on affected limb to reduce your risk of infection.
- Use sunscreen and insect repellent to protect your skin from sunburn and insect bites.
- Take good care of your skin and nails. Use a mild soap that has a moisturizer or use a moisturizer separately. Skin that is dry and cracked can get infected. Be careful when you clip your nails. Don't cut your cuticles.
- Use an electric razor if you shave an arm or leg that is affected.
- Call your doctor at the first sign of a rash or inflammation on your arm or leg.
- Arms
 - Current evidence does not indicate that needle punctures or IVs on affected limb is a risk factor, but we suggest minimizing this if you can; offer an unaffected limb if possible; if you are in the hospital, make sure staff is aware of your condition.
 - Wear gloves when you garden or do other activities that may lead to cuts on your fingers and hands. Use a thimble when you sew.
- Legs
 - Keep your feet clean, and wear clean socks or stockings every day if you are at risk for leg lymphedema
 - Don't walk outside barefoot and check your feet often for cuts, blisters, or signs of infection.

Exercise

Numerous studies have shown that being active during and after cancer treatment improves survival, strength, fatigue, and quality of life. Exercise plays a critical role in your recovery both during and after your cancer treatment. Exercise on a daily basis is recommended unless specifically instructed otherwise by your physician. **START SLOWLY AND GENTLY AND PROGRESS GRADUALLY—THIS IS KEY.**

It is also recommended that you wear your compression garment during exercise if you have lymphedema. If you are at risk for lymphedema, know the signs and symptoms and monitor at-risk areas closely. If you are having trouble with range of motion or lymphedema, a physical therapist may be able to provide guidance. Your doctor can make a referral to physical therapy when appropriate.



Resources for Rehabilitation:

Kaiser Walk to Thrive: <https://kpwalktothrive.org/>

Health Education –Every Move Matters: https://mydoctor.kaiserpermanente.org/ncal/Images/90193%20Rev%203.13%20CL_tcm75-14608.pdf

Triumph Fitness: <https://triumphfound.org/>

National Lymphoma Network: <https://lymphnet.org/>

American Cancer Society: <https://www.cancer.org/>

Wellness Within (Roseville) : <https://www.wellnesswithin.org/>

Eating Hints After Cancer Treatment

Many Eating Problems Go Away When Treatment Ends

Once you finish cancer treatment, many of your eating problems will get better. Some eating problems, such as weight loss and changes in taste or smell, may last longer than your course of treatment. If you had treatment for head and neck cancer or surgery to remove part of your stomach or intestines, then eating problems may always be part of your life.

Ways to Return to Healthy Eating

While healthy eating by itself cannot keep cancer from coming back, it can help you regain strength, rebuild tissue, and improve how you feel after treatment ends. Here are some ways to eat well after treatment ends:

- Prepare simple meals that you like and are easy to make.
- Cook 2 or 3 meals at a time. Freeze the extras to eat later.
- Stock up on frozen dinners.
- Make cooking easy, such as buying cut-up vegetables.
- Eat many different kinds of foods. No single food has all the vitamins and nutrients you need.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, including raw and cooked vegetables, fruits and fruit juices. These all have vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Eat whole wheat bread, oats, brown rice, or other whole grains and cereals. These foods have needed complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Add beans, peas and lentils to your diet and eat them often.
- Go easy on fat, salt, sugar, alcohol, smoked or pickled foods, and processed meats.
- Choose low-fat milk products.
- Eat small portions (about 6-7 ounces each day) of lean meat and poultry without skin.
- Limit red meat to 18 ounces per week. Use low-fat cooking methods, such as broiling, steaming, grilling and roasting.
- Limit alcohol to 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men.

Talk with a Dietitian

You may find it helpful to talk with a dietitian even when you are finished with cancer treatment. A dietitian can help you return to healthy eating or discuss ways to manage any lasting eating problems. Talk with your primary care doctor about a referral. If you have any quick questions, our experts on the nutrition advice line at 916-614-4979 can help guide you in the right path for nutritional wellness.

Cancer Prevention Recommendations

To help prevent cancer, you should aim to follow as many of the 9 cancer prevention recommendations as possible. However, any change you make that works towards meeting the goals set out in the recommendations will help to reduce your cancer risk.

1. Make whole grains, vegetables, fruits and legumes such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet.
2. Limit consumption of fast foods and other processed foods high in fat, starches or sugars. Limiting these foods helps control calorie intake and maintain a healthy weight.
3. Limit consumption of red and processed meat. Eat no more than moderate amounts of red meat, such as beef, pork, and lamb. Eat little, if any processed meat.
4. Limit consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks. Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks.
5. Limit alcohol consumption. For cancer prevention, it is best to not drink alcohol.
6. Keep your weight within the healthy range and avoid weight gain in adult life.
7. Be physically active as part of everyday life; walk more and sit less.
8. Do not use supplements for cancer prevention: Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone.
9. New mothers should breastfeed their baby if possible. Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby.

After a cancer diagnosis, follow our recommendation if you can. Check with your health professional about what is right for you.



Cancer Support Groups

Kaiser Permanente Oncology Support Groups

Roseville Medical Center

1600 Eureka Rd. Roseville, CA

Provides confidential support to cancer survivors with any diagnosis. Adult family and friends welcome.

Date/Time: 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month, times and room vary.

Call (916) 784-5652...option 2, option 4

Point of contact: Laura Young, ACSW, MSW & Brandy Malloy, LCSW

Sacramento Downtown Commons Building

501 J St., Sacramento, 6th floor Oncology Conference Room

Provides confidential support to cancer survivors with any diagnosis. Adult family and friends welcome

Date/Time: Every Monday from 3-4 PM

Call (916) 497-3131

Point of contact: Thomas Boone, LCSW

Adult Family and Friends of Cancer Patients

Sutter Roseville Medical Center 1 Medical Plaza– Roseville, CA

Provides a confidential place to share concerns about your adjustment to a loved one's cancer and to learn new coping skills and self-care. Facilitated by a health care professional that is also a cancer survivor.

Date/Time: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month, 6-7 PM

Call (916) 781-1634

Living with Cancer Support Group

Woolsey Health Sciences Library Woodland Surgery Center Medical Building

1321 Cottonwood St. 1st level Woodland, CA 95695

A support group for individuals who have or have had cancer, whether receiving treatment or not. Spouses, caregivers, family members and friends are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Date/Time: 1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesday of every month, 7-8:30 PM

Contact: Shelia Murray, R.N. Community Health Education

Call: (530) 669-5305

Yes I Can Workshop

Four-part series teaching caregivers specific skills such as nutrition, transfer and personal care. Note this is not a support group—it is an educational class series held several times a year.

Date/Time: Call for times and locations.

Call Del Oro Resource Center, (916) 728-9333 or (800) 635-0220

Nutrition Services Classes

Class	Description
Heart Health Nutrition	
1 1/2 hours	Diet plays a big role in management of cholesterol levels, congestive heart failure, and high blood pressure. This class is ideal for patients interested in reducing intake of sodium, saturated fat and cholesterol. Learn easy ways to eat more fruits/vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and protein.
To register call: (916) 474-6269	
Nutrition Basics	
1 hour	Nutrition can affect your health, weight, and physical and emotional well-being. Attend this class to learn about healthier eating habits, developing a healthy grocery list, and incorporating good nutrition into your lifestyle.
To register call: (916) 474-6269	
Plant-Based Nutrition A	
1 1/2 hours	A plant-based diet can improve your overall health. This class will cover the benefits of a whole foods, plant-based diet and how to meet your nutritional needs. Sample menus and online resources will be provided. First class of optional two class series.
To register call: (916) 474-6269	
Plant-Based Nutrition B	
1 1/2 hours	This workshop focuses on the “how’s” to incorporating whole food, plant-based eating into your diet. Learn about plant-based menu planning, shopping and cooking. You are not required to be “vegetarian” or “vegan” to attend. Second class of two class series. Prerequisite = Plant Based Nutrition A.
To register call: (916) 474-6269	

Health Education Classes

Class	Description
Life Care Planning (Advance Directives) 1 1/2 hours To register call: (916) 474-6269	Life care planning begins with choosing someone to speak on your behalf if you were ever unable to communicate for yourself. This class can assist you with selecting your health care agent and exploring your values and goals for care. If you have already selected an agent, bring him or her with you to the class. To get started now, visit: kp.org/lifecareplan
Congestive Heart Failure Self Care 1 1/2 hours To register call: (916) 474-6269	Learn what congestive heart failure is, and important self-care skills that can improve your quality of life. We cover healthy eating, activity, medication, and the importance of weighing yourself. Caregivers are also encouraged to attend.
Fibromyalgia 1 1/2 hours To register call: (916) 474-6269	Learn how to manage pain, cope with symptoms, and function better with fibromyalgia.
Healthy Weight 1 6, 1 hour sessions Healthy Weight 2 9, 1 hour sessions To register call: (916) 474-6269	Discover the confidence and skills you need to reach and maintain a healthy weight. Topics include healthy eating for weight loss, making physical activity a part of your daily life, building a strong support network and coping with stress.
Improving Your Sleep Series 4, 1 1/2 hour sessions To register call: (916) 474-6269	Want to fall asleep quickly, sleep more soundly, and awaken feeling more refreshed? Learn how nighttime habits and thinking patterns affect your sleep, and how to change them.
Managing Your Weight 1 1/2 hours To register call: (916) 474-6269	This workshop will help you determine the best way to achieve your weight loss goals based on your unique needs and preferences. We will help you develop a personalized action plan that includes resources to help you every step of the way.

Behavioral Health Classes

Class	Description
Pathways to Emotional Wellness Roseville, Sacramento, Folsom Free for Kaiser Permanente members To register call: (916) 973-5300	Learn how stress affects your body, mind and emotions. Understand how depression and anxiety differ and overlap with stress. This class introduces the participant to a wide variety of stress management techniques and skills. Allows participants to sign up for the entire range of behavioral health offerings.
Relaxation Class Roseville, Sacramento Free for Kaiser Permanente members To register call: (916) 973-5300	Understand the fight or flight response, the relaxation response and their impact on stress, anxiety, sleep, pain and anger. Members are introduced to the skill of eliciting the relaxation response using a variety of techniques.
Anger Management Series Sacramento, Folsom Free for Kaiser Permanente members To register call: (916) 973-5300	Members booked for the 1st session can choose to enroll in the whole series or take it as an overview. Anger triggers, anger cycle, calming the nervous system and making better choices lead to improved anger management and better relationships. Workbooks provided.
Understanding Your Anxiety Series Roseville, Sacramento Free for Kaiser Permanente members To register call: (916) 973-5300	Members learn about anxiety triggers, fight or flight, relaxation and avoidance vs. exposure. They begin to approach anxiety provoking triggers and adapt and manage anxiety symptoms better. Workbooks provided.
Couples Communication Series Sacramento, Folsom Free for Kaiser Permanente members To register call: (916) 973-5300	Couples learn and practice communication skills and tools to enhance closeness, understanding and compassion as well as negotiating conflicts. Please book only one member for this class series. Workbooks are provided.

Behavioral Health Classes (continued)

Class	Description
Managing Your Depression Series	
Roseville, Sacramento, Folsom	
Free for Kaiser Permanente members	
To register call: (916) 973-5300	
	In this 6 to 8 week class members learn to activate behaviors that can improve mood, challenge negative, distorted thinking, including the inner critic and harmful core beliefs, increase pleasant activities, increase self-compassion and practice assertiveness to improve social support and connectedness. Workbook provided.
Mindfulness Series	
4 week series	
Free for Kaiser Permanente members	
To register call: (916) 973-5300	
	Mindfulness in daily activities, mindfulness meditation, various relaxation practices and mini relaxations are practiced as well as mindful movement such as T'ai Chi or Qi Gong. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a pillow. Handouts provided.
Managing Your Stress Series	
6 week series	
Roseville, Sacramento	
Free for Kaiser Permanente members	
To register call: (916) 973-5300	
	A wide variety of coping skills including mindful movement and relaxation practices as well as CBT skills are covered in this class. Workbook provided.

