

# Follow-Up Medical Care After **BREAST CANCER TREATMENT**

## Why is medical care so important?

Some of the goals of these visits are to:

- Find local breast cancer **recurrence**.
- Find any breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body (**metastasis**).
- Manage any problems you have taking medications (such as **hormone therapy**).
- Manage any side effects of treatment (such as **menopausal symptoms**).
- Check for changes in your **family history** and refer you to **genetic counseling and testing**, if appropriate.
- Look for signs of **lymphedema**.
- Discuss ways to help **lower your risk of breast cancer recurrence**.
- Provide **emotional support**.
- Give you a time to **ask questions** and share your concerns.

## I'm done with treatment, now what?

It's normal to be worried after treatment for breast cancer ends. You may also be scared the cancer will come back. It may take time to heal physically and emotionally. Take it slow and ease back into your daily routine. Doing things you enjoy, even if it takes time, will help you feel better.

## What medical care do I need after treatment?

You should see your doctors on a regular basis, about every 6 months for the first few years after breast cancer treatment. After that, you'll see them every year for many years.

Regular physical exams, mammograms and for many, bone health tests are an important part of follow-up care after breast cancer treatment. Your oncologist can help plan your follow-up care. You'll see your primary care doctor (PCP) to monitor your general health. Your PCP will also oversee your routine health screenings.

## Recommended medical care after breast cancer treatment

	Who	Plan for care
<b>Medical history and physical exam</b>	Everyone treated for breast cancer	1-4 times a year (depending on your situation) for 5 years, then every year
<b>Mammogram (both breasts)</b>	People treated with lumpectomy	6-12 months after radiation therapy ends, then every year
<b>Mammogram (opposite breast)</b>	People treated with mastectomy	1 year after mammogram that led to diagnosis, then every year
		A reconstructed breast(s) does not need mammography screening.
<b>Bone health exams</b>	Women at higher risk of osteoporosis due to risk factors including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aromatase inhibitor use</li> <li>• Early menopause due to treatment</li> <li>• Age 65 years or older</li> <li>• Age 60-64 years with a family history of osteoporosis or with low body weight</li> </ul>	Bone mineral density tests every 1-2 years, depending on a person's risk factors

\*Adapted from National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and American Cancer Society materials.

It's also important to talk with your doctor about any vaccines, such as for the flu and **COVID-19**, that you may need after breast cancer treatment.

This fact sheet is intended to be a brief overview. For more information, visit [komen.org](http://komen.org) or call Susan G. Komen's Breast Care Helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET, or email at [helpline@komen.org](mailto:helpline@komen.org). Se habla español.

## Susan G. Komen® Breast Care Helpline

**1-877 GO KOMEN**  
**(1-877-465-6636)**  
or email  
[helpline@komen.org](mailto:helpline@komen.org)

## Resources

**Susan G. Komen®**  
1-877 GO KOMEN  
(1-877-465-6636)  
[komen.org](http://komen.org)

### Living Beyond Breast Cancer

1-888-753-5222  
[lbbc.org](http://lbbc.org)

## Related educational resources:

- [After Early Breast Cancer - Signs and Symptoms of Metastatic Breast Cancer](#)
- [Breast Cancer Recurrence](#)
- [Lymphedema](#)
- [Sexuality and Intimacy](#)
- [Side Effects After Breast Cancer Treatment Ends](#)
- [Support After A Breast Cancer Diagnosis](#)

## Mental health is an important part of follow-up care.

If you feel **anxious** or **depressed**, tell your doctor. It's common to have these emotions. Your doctor may refer you to a **support group**, counselor or other resources. They may also recommend medication to treat your anxiety or depression.

## I'm anxious about recurrence. What symptoms should I report to my doctor?

You might be aware of every ache and pain in your body now. Each pain brings with it the fear cancer has returned. This is normal. It may ease with time.

During follow-up visits, your doctor will ask you about any symptoms or other concerns you may have. Your doctor will also discuss ways to lower your risk of recurrence.

Local recurrence is often found on a mammogram, during an exam by your doctor or when you notice a change in or around the breast or underarm area.

Metastasis is usually found when new and persistent symptoms are reported to a doctor. These may include:

- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Weight loss
- Bone pain
- Seizures
- Yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes (jaundice)



It's normal to be concerned if you have symptoms like fatigue, weight change or bone pain. These are common problems for many people. Most often they don't mean the breast cancer has spread. For instance, some women have arthritis. This pain is not breast cancer. Discuss any symptoms you have with your doctor, especially if the symptoms last for more than 2 weeks.

## Will it ever be over?

Believe it or not, there may come a day when you no longer think about cancer every day. It's normal to worry though. This should lessen over time.

## You're not alone

You may be able to get support from others who've completed breast cancer treatment and know what you're going through. There are many types of support groups. These groups can be a helpful source of information and support.

Our Breast Care Helpline 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) provides free, professional support services to anyone with breast cancer questions or concerns. Calls are answered by a trained specialist or oncology social worker Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET. You can also email the helpline at [helpline@komen.org](mailto:helpline@komen.org).

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