Prostate Cancer: After Treatment

Information and resources for men with prostate cancer after completion of active treatment

Cancer Care Transition of Care Program McGill University Health Centre | March 2022

This material was developed by the MUHC Cancer Care Transition of Care Program team and the MUHC Urology Oncology team.

Layout and Design: Roula Drossis

Editing: Karen Brown / Media Meducom

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Cancer Care Manitoba for allowing us to use their *"Moving Forward After Cancer Treatment"* patient booklet as a starting point for us to develop this booklet, and Cedars Cancer Foundation for funding the translation and design.

Special thanks to the patient partners who shared their feedback on the booklet.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is written specifically for men with prostate cancer who have been treated with surgery, or radiation therapy with or without hormonal therapy. Now that you have finished your treatment, you may have unanswered questions about what lies ahead.

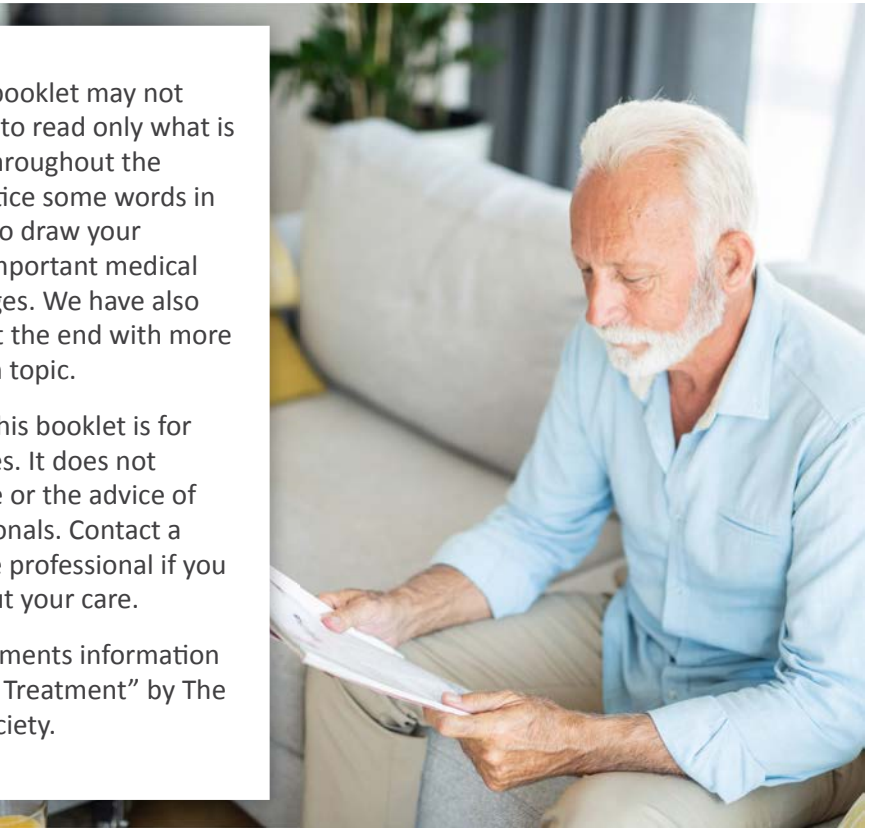
This booklet will help you to:

- Know what to expect now that you have completed your treatment
- Manage side effects caused by your treatment
- Explain your emotions
- Know what to do to live a healthier lifestyle
- Share your feelings with family and loved ones
- Plan your return to work
- Find support

Some topics in this booklet may not affect you. Feel free to read only what is important to you. Throughout the booklet, you will notice some words in bold. This is meant to draw your attention to these important medical terms or key messages. We have also included a section at the end with more information for each topic.

The information in this booklet is for educational purposes. It does not replace medical care or the advice of health care professionals. Contact a qualified health care professional if you have questions about your care.

This booklet complements information in “Life After Cancer Treatment” by The Canadian Cancer Society.



NEXT STEPS

FOLLOW-UP PLAN

Your McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) oncology team will give you a copy of your care plan. This will include your follow-up schedule and a summary of your treatments. Your family doctor (and urologist if you have one) will also get a copy of your care plan.

FOLLOW-UP VISITS

Your follow-up visits will be with the MUHC oncology team during the first five years. **After the 5th year, your follow-up visits will be with your family doctor or urologist.** Many patients do not have a family doctor or urologist. If you do not have a doctor, the oncology team will continue to follow you until you do.

The prostate produces a protein called prostate specific antigen (PSA) which can be traced in the blood. The testing of PSA levels in the blood is used to detect prostate cancer. An increase in the PSA level after treatment may be a sign of cancer returning.

Before each visit, you will have a blood test to check your **PSA level**.

During these visits, your doctor will:

- Ask if you have any **symptoms**
- Review your PSA level
- Do a **Digital Rectal Exam*** if needed
- Request other tests if needed

**A digital rectal exam (DRE) is a test that examines a person's lower rectum, by inserting a finger in the rectum. This test can help your doctor check if the cancer has returned. After treatment for prostate cancer, the DRE is only done if there is a significant rise of the PSA Level.*

If you or your doctors notice a problem, finding it early can help. That's why it is important to go to your appointments.

REMEMBER TO:

- Keep some notes and ask your doctor questions (if you have any)
- Discuss any symptoms or worries you may have
- Continue to see your family doctor at least once a year, or more often if recommended

REDISCOVERING WELLNESS

After your diagnosis, you may have put things aside to focus on your health situation. Take your time to regain your strength and process what you have been through. This is part of rediscovering wellness. Ask yourself what is important to you now. You may realize that you are not the same as when you first started your treatment. There may be changes in your life.

Remember that cancer affects much more than your physical health. It may affect your social life and your mental health. Some of these changes may not end when your treatment ends. In fact, for some people, the impact of these changes may increase at the end of their treatment.

Adjusting to life after cancer, finding a "new normal" may take time for you, your family, and your loved ones. No two people are the same. To help come to terms with your new normal, read the "Managing side effects" section on page 4 of this booklet.

Now that you have reached this transition phase of your life:

- Be patient with yourself and your family
- Expect that there may be changes in your daily life
- Ask for help if you need it
- Be honest with the people around you about how you are feeling

FINDING MEANING AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Your experience with cancer may make you question many things – your spirituality, your outlook on life, or your purpose. You may want to find a deeper understanding of what you've been through. If you are struggling with these feelings, you are not alone. Other patients who have finished their treatment have shared their stories in "Finding meaning after cancer treatment" in the "Life After Cancer" booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society. Reading what they have been through can be helpful.

You may also visit the Cedars CanSupport website at www.cansupport.ca to get more information on this topic.

MANAGING THE EFFECTS OF THE TREATMENT

SIDE EFFECTS AND LATE EFFECTS

You may have **side effects**, which are changes your body experiences because of the cancer treatment. For example, surgery and radiation therapy can affect how often you urinate, have bowel movements, or have erections.

Most side effects happen during or just after your treatment. Some may be treated successfully. Others go away on their own. Some side effects may last months. The severity and duration of these effects vary (can be different) from person to person.

After finishing your treatment, you may also experience **late effects**. They can happen months after you have finished your treatment. In some cases, they might not go away.

Your follow-up care plan has a list of possible side effects and late effects. You will get a copy of the care plan at your follow-up visit.

URINARY CHANGES

Urinary incontinence (UI) is a loss of bladder control. If you have this, you may:

- Have an urgent need to urinate and cannot hold it in
- Leak urine
- Have both

There are two main reasons why this happens.

- **Nerve or muscle damage:** Surgery or radiation therapy can damage the nerves or muscles that help hold urine in or release urine. Nerves send and receive signals between the brain and the body. Nerve damage means that messages can't get through properly. Your brain and nerves can't control your bladder muscles well.
- **Damage to the bladder lining:** Radiation therapy can irritate the lining of the bladder, which can make you want to urinate often.

The most common kinds of UI are stress and urge incontinence.

Stress incontinence

Urine can leak when there is pressure on your bladder. This is called stress incontinence. This can happen during activities like lifting, sneezing, coughing, laughing or exercise. This type of incontinence often happens in the first few months after surgery. It gradually improves over time.

Urge incontinence

Urge incontinence is also called overactive bladder. If you have this, you feel the urge to urinate but can't control it and your bladder empties. People with urge incontinence usually urinate often during the day and night. This type of incontinence can occur after radiation treatments to the prostate but it usually gets better by itself over time.

What can you do?

Kegel exercises (also called pelvic floor exercises) can help improve **stress** incontinence. You can do these in almost any position: lying down, sitting, or standing.

To do a Kegel:

- Tighten or squeezes the muscles around your anus (as if trying to stop from passing gas).
- Hold the squeeze for 2–5 seconds.
- Relax for 2–5 seconds.
- Repeat this 12 to 20 times. This is one set. Do this 3 to 4 times a day.

Kegel exercises:

- Help prevent urine or stool from leaking
- Keep the organs above your **pelvic floor*** in the right place
- Improve blood flow to your pelvic area

** Pelvic floor muscles are the muscles you squeeze to help you hold in your urine. They span (cross) the bottom of the pelvis and support your pelvic organs, the bladder and bowel.*

Use protective pads or underwear. These absorb urine leaks and keep your clothes from getting wet. You can buy them at most pharmacies.

Watch what you drink and eat. Try to **limit** drinks or food that can irritate your bladder, like:

- Caffeine (in tea, coffee, cola drinks)
- Alcohol
- Citrus fruits and juices
- Drinks with artificial sweeteners
- Tomatoes and tomato-based foods
- Spicy foods
- Carbonated drinks

Limit caffeine, citrus fruits and juices.

Drink 6 to 8 cups of water or liquids a day to stay hydrated. (Hydration helps reduce the burning sensation while urinating.)

Limit your fluids 3–4 hours before bedtime.

Behavioral techniques
You can learn to delay urination after you get the urge. Try to schedule trips to the toilet every 2–3 hours while you're awake. With practice, you can stretch out your trips to every 3–4 hours.

Medicines
Some medicines can help control urge incontinence.

Medical devices and techniques
Your health care team may suggest different medical devices or techniques depending on the type and the severity of your urinary incontinence.

Surgery
Some people with severe urinary incontinence that does not improve over time may need to have:

1. Surgery to hold the bladder and urethra in place
2. An artificial **urinary sphincter***

**Your urinary sphincter is a muscle that controls the flow of urine out of your bladder. When the sphincter is contracted (closed), it blocks the opening of your bladder, so urine doesn't leak out.*

Speak to your MUHC oncology team to find out about your options.

SEXUAL HEALTH CHANGES

You may experience sexual health changes as a result of your cancer treatment. If so, we can help. We know that talking about your sexual health may feel awkward, but you do not need to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. No matter what questions you have, your treating team will answer them and try to find solutions that work for you. Dealing with these issues will help with your recovery.

Intimacy and Sexuality

Your sex life will probably be different after having cancer.

Cancer can affect your emotions and the way you feel about your body. These feelings can affect your interest in sex and your relationships.

After your treatment, you may experience some of the following:

- Changes in your feelings and attitudes about sex. For example, pain, fatigue, and difficulty holding an erection can make you less interested in having sex.
- Loss of masculinity (feeling like a man) and sexual desire. For example, your testosterone levels may drop after hormonal therapy. When testosterone levels drop, you have a lower sex drive.

Because of this, you may avoid intimacy and worry about having sex.

Cancer and treatments may also affect your body.

Treatments can cause changes in your:

- Erections
- Orgasms
- Ejaculation (when you orgasm)
- Fertility

Some men may not be able to make semen (fluid that contains sperm) after surgery to remove the prostate and seminal vesicle. This is called “dry orgasm,” “aspermia,” or “anejaculation.” Many of these changes are temporary.

Talk to your health care team. Tell them what you are experiencing. Getting timely medical advice can help you deal with these changes. With time and effort, you may have a good sex life again.

What can you do?

- Communicate openly with your partner about what you are thinking and feeling.
- Spend time touching and talking. Sexuality is about connection. It is not just about sex.
- Be patient and kind to yourself and your partner as you recover.
- Focus on what makes you feel good about yourself. This can help build confidence and reduce anxiety.

RESOURCES:

See “Sex, Intimacy and Cancer” booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society for more information about intimacy and sexuality

https://www.procure.ca

Additional information on page 40 in the Resources section under Sexual Health.

Erectile Dysfunction

After cancer treatment or surgery, you may have difficulty having an **erection***.

**An erection is the ability of the penis to get and stay hard.*

What can you do?

- **Massage the penis**. This will keep your tissues healthy and keep blood flowing to your penis.
- **Try to have frequent erections.** This increases blood flow to the penis even if you are not having sex.
- **Take medication.** Some medication may help you get an erection. Talk to your health care team about what medication is best for you.
- **Do Kegels** to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles.
- **Eat well and exercise** to keep your body at a healthy weight.
- **Quit smoking.** People who smoke are more likely to have problems getting an erection. Ask your health care team or your pharmacist for help with quitting.
- **Cut down** on the amount of alcohol you drink.
- **Talk to your doctor about the medications you are taking.** Some medications can cause erectile dysfunction or other side effects.
- **Consider using implants and devices:** Some devices draw blood into the penis (like a vacuum) to help you get an erection. Another option is a penile implant. These are flexible rods or inflatable tubes inserted into the penis. Talk to your doctor to find out if these may be options for you.

Who can help?

Tell your doctor. Do not let embarrassment keep you from getting medical care. Your doctor may be able to refer you to a special therapist.

If you have a partner, share your feelings with them. Talk about the sexual changes you are experiencing. Work together to make changes to your sex life so that you can enjoy each other and be intimate.

Talk to a close friend or a professional counsellor. They may be able to help you work through your feelings about sexual changes.

Talk to other men. Talk to other men who have had the same experiences. Let your health care team know if you are interested in joining a support group.

If you are gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBTQ+), you may have needs that are not addressed here. Talk to your health care team about how your orientation or identity impacts your situation.

TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS: When your sexual partner has cancer, your role as a caregiver can be challenging. Some partners find that cancer brings them closer together, and others find their relationship more complicated.

What to do when your partner has cancer:

- Be open with your partner about your feelings.
- Talk about your sexual wants and needs with your partner. It is okay for you to have wants and needs even if your partner is not well.
- Be patient with your partner. They may need time to heal or rest before sex feels good again.
- Take care of your health.

Having sex will not make your partner's cancer get worse. For most people with cancer, sex can be safe and enjoyable.

BOWEL CHANGES

You may have **constipation** (fewer bowel movements than usual or hard stools) after surgery, taking hormonal therapy, or because of the pain medications you take.

What can you do?

- Drink at least 6–8 cups of water or liquids every day. Liquids help keep your stool soft.
- Choose foods high in fibre. Prune, apple, grape, pear, green peas, broccoli, and brussel sprouts are good examples. These help you to have more regular bowel movements.
- Do some light exercise after each meal, like walking.
- Practice Kegel exercises.

You may have diarrhea (loose or liquid stool) as a side effect of radiotherapy.

What can you do?

- Try to find out which foods trigger your diarrhea.
- Eat smaller meals more often.
- Peel the skins and remove seeds of fruit and vegetables.
- Sip liquids slowly.
- Practice Kegel exercises.
- Eat more foods with soluble fibre like oatmeal, oat bran, barley, white rice, bananas, white bread, and applesauce.
- Limit drinks that have caffeine (like coffee, tea, or cola soft drinks), or alcohol.
- Limit fatty foods and spicy foods

Speak with your MUHC oncology team if constipation or diarrhea lasts more than 2 weeks after your treatment, it is not improving, or it is getting worse.

Bowel incontinence

Bowel incontinence (or fecal incontinence) is a loss of control of your bowel movements. If this happens, you may accidentally leak stool from your anus.

What can you do?

- Wear protective pads or underwear. Many people use pads. They absorb leaks and keep your clothes from getting soiled. You can buy pads designed for men at most supermarkets or pharmacies. Wear pads only with close-fitting underwear, not boxer shorts. Change them regularly. This will help keep your skin clean and dry to avoid skin irritation.
- Do Kegels. They help strengthen your pelvic floor muscles, which support your bladder and bowels.
- Take an incontinence kit when you leave your home. Include wipes, a plastic bag (e.g., Ziploc), gloves, and a change of clothing.

Who can help?

Speak with your MUHC oncology team or family doctor.

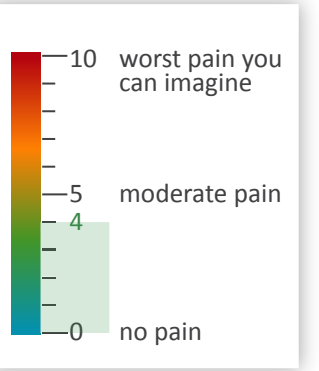
If you need help finding the right products, ask your pharmacist.

PAIN

The pain that you may have experienced after your surgery or radiotherapy should decrease over time. The goal is to keep your pain level **below 4**. It is important to control your pain. Otherwise, this could slow down your recovery.

Read “A Guide to Prostate Surgery” by the MUHC on how to manage pain after your surgery.

Contact your treating team if your pain does not improve or worsens.



FATIGUE

Fatigue is when you feel tired and have no energy. It can be physical or mental. Fatigue is the most common symptom for people with cancer and the most common **side effect** of cancer treatment. Fatigue usually improves after cancer treatment, but for some patients, it may continue for months or years (**late effect**).

If you are fatigued, you may:

- Feel whole-body tiredness or weakness
- Feel exhausted even after sleeping
- Find it difficult to concentrate
- Have less interest in things you enjoy
- Have periods of energy and then lose it suddenly

What can you do?

You can manage your energy:

Be physically active

- Talk to your doctor to find out when you can start exercising. Most people can begin by walking several times a week. Gradually increase the distance and number of walks.

Practice relaxing activities

- For example breathing exercises, yoga, mindfulness*, or listening to soothing music.

**Mindfulness is an activity that focuses on being aware of your thoughts without judging yourself or feeling the need to act. It often involves controlling your breathing, focusing on the present, and clearing your mind of the past or the future.*

Plan and organize

- Plan to do activities when you have the most energy.
- Plan activities that are fun.
- Plan activities that have places where you can sit.
- Ask friends or family to help with chores (cooking, running errands, doing laundry).
- Switch from tasks that use lots of energy to those that use less.

Pace yourself

- Rest before you get tired. This may mean stopping in the middle of a task.

Positioning

- Change your position to lessen your fatigue. For example, try sitting on a stool while cooking or washing dishes.

Prioritize

- Choose the activities that are most important to you and do them first.

Watch what you eat and drink

- Try eating 5 or 6 small meals a day instead of 3 big meals. This helps keep your body energized throughout the day. Read Canada's Food Guide for recommendations about food groups and portion sizes.
- Drink lots of fluids. Most people should drink 6 to 8 cups of fluids each day.

Organize childcare

- Use daycare programs if available. Ask friends or family for help when needed.
- Involve children in chores around the house.

Get enough sleep

- Rest when you feel tired and take a short nap (20-30 minutes) during the day if you need to. Be careful not to nap too late in the day. This could make it more difficult to sleep at night.
- Assess your sleeping environment and make changes if possible. See the section "Sleep Problems" on page 19 for tips.

What can help?

Consider joining a support group for people with cancer. Talking with others who have had the same problem can help you learn new ways to cope.

Speak with your family doctor or your oncology team if you spend a lot of time in bed or if your fatigue is getting worse.

HORMONAL CHANGES

If you get hormone therapy, you will likely get androgen deprivation therapy (ADT). Hormone therapy can help reduce the size of prostate tumors. It shrinks the prostate by lowering the levels of testosterone and other male sex hormones. Side effects due to hormonal therapy vary in intensity and duration from one man to the other. They can include:

- Fatigue
- **Hot flashes**
- Decreased libido (sex drive)
- Erectile dysfunction
- Weight gain
- **Osteoporosis** (bone weakness and bone loss)
- Trouble sleeping
- Depression and occasional mood swings

You may also have:

- Breast tissue growth
- Poor concentration
- Muscle weakness, most often in the legs
- Smaller testicle size

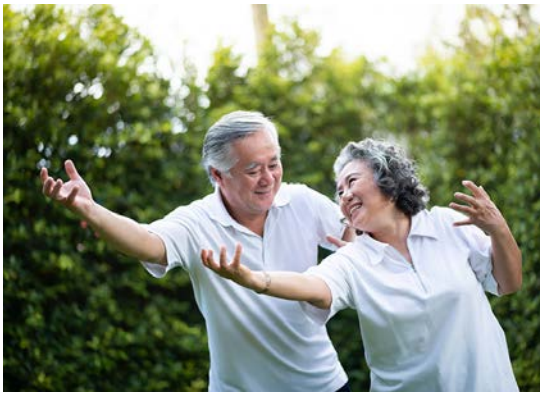
Men who get ADT are also at higher risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart conditions. Your doctor can help prevent or treat most of these side effects.

HOT FLASHES

A hot flash is a sudden warm feeling over your face, neck, and chest that may cause you to sweat. Sweating is your body's way of lowering the body temperature. Hot flashes combined with sweats that happen while sleeping are often called night sweats or **hot flushes**. Many cancer patients have these side effects. You may continue to have hot flashes and night sweats even after cancer treatment.

What can you do?

- Exercise regularly
- Use fans to keep cool
- Wear moisture-wicking fabrics like linen or "active-wear" materials (these draw moisture away from the skin), and dress in layers
- Avoid drinking caffeine and alcohol
- Choose cold food and drinks
- Avoid spicy food
- Sleep in a cool room
- Consider cool pyjamas, sheets, and pillows made of linen or bamboo



What can help?

Medication may help if your hot flashes are extremely uncomfortable. Please discuss this with your treating doctor.

OSTEOPOROSIS AND BONE HEALTH

Osteoporosis is a condition that happens when bones become so weak that they may break easily.

Some hormonal therapies used to treat prostate cancer lower the amount of **testosterone** in the body. You may know testosterone for its role in building muscle and sex drive. It also helps build and maintain strong bones. Lower testosterone levels can cause bone loss, which can lead to bone weakness. If it is more serious, bone loss can lead to osteoporosis and bone fractures (breaks). Cancer that has spread to the bones can also lead to bone weakness and **fractures**.

Symptoms

People can have osteoporosis for years without having any symptoms. A broken bone may be the first sign of a problem. Other symptoms include:

- Loss of height over time
- Stooped posture
- Rounding of the upper back
- Bone tenderness or pain

What can you do?

Finding and treating osteoporosis early can help prevent bone loss and bone fractures. Research also shows that getting enough vitamin D and calcium can help prevent osteoporosis and bone fractures in men treated with hormonal therapy. Your doctor may recommend a bone density test every 1–2 years to monitor your bone health.

What can help?

Your health care team may suggest certain medicines to help decrease bone loss and the risk of fractures.

If symptoms get worse or don't go away, report them to your doctor or health care team. Do not wait for your next scheduled appointment. Early treatment is key to preventing bone fractures.

SLEEP PROBLEMS

You may have problems falling asleep or getting good quality sleep because of worry, depression, or other reasons.

It is important to get restful sleep. It can help with many symptoms like

- Mood changes
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Fatigue

What can you do?

Adjust your sleeping habits

- Choose a regular bedtime and time to wake up
- Avoid long naps and avoid napping late in the afternoon
- Avoid alcohol, coffee, heavy (hard to digest), spicy or sugary foods 4–6 hours before bedtime
- Avoid television/phone/computer screens at least 1 hour before bedtime
- Exercise regularly, but avoid strenuous activities 1–2 hours before bedtime.

Arrange your sleeping environment

- A cool bedroom is often the best for sleep. Choose a comfortable room temperature
- Block out noise and light as much as possible
- Consider earplugs if your partner snores

Set your routine

- Try not to take your worries to bed. Do a relaxing activity before bedtime such as yoga or deep breathing
- Write your to-do list for the next day, so you don't lie awake thinking about it
- Develop a pre-sleep routine like taking a warm bath or reading a book

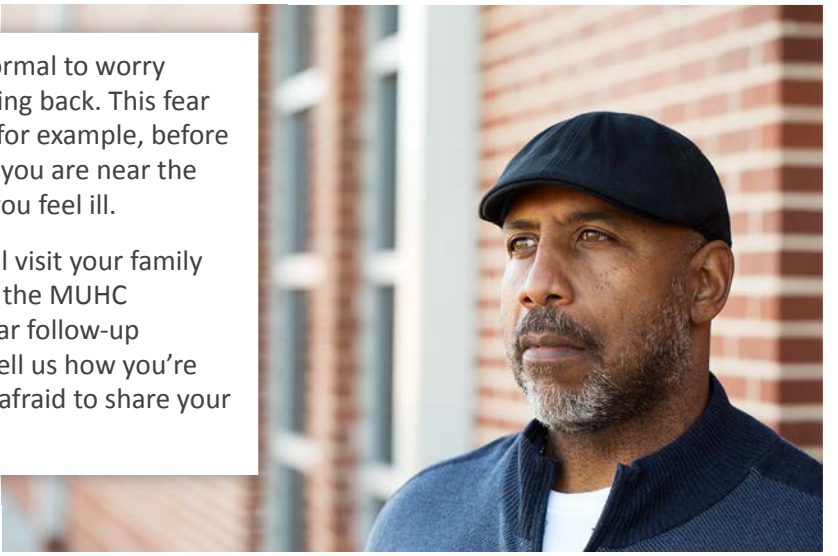
If sleep problems affect your daily life, speak with your family doctor.

Limit your use of sleep medications. They should be used carefully, and only as prescribed by your doctor.

WORRIES ABOUT CANCER RETURNING

After treatment, it is normal to worry about your cancer coming back. This fear may increase at times; for example, before an appointment, when you are near the cancer clinic, or when you feel ill.

Remember that you will visit your family doctor or urologist and the MUHC oncology team at regular follow-up appointments. Please tell us how you're really feeling. Don't be afraid to share your concerns with us.



Tips on how to manage the fear of cancer returning (recurrence):

- Remember that this is a very common feeling to have after cancer treatment. Be aware of what triggers your fears.
- Practice letting your fears go. It is normal to have these thoughts. Some people use imagery or mindfulness techniques to cope with their fears.
- Express your feelings with a friend or counselor. Being open and dealing with your emotions can help you. This may be difficult at first, but may become easier over time.
- Know what healthy behaviours can help reduce your risk of cancer.
- Control what you can. Focus on your wellbeing. Eat well, exercise, establish a routine, get enough sleep, and go to your follow-up medical visits.
- Find ways to relax. Learn to practice mindfulness. Do this regularly for a few minutes every day. Focus on the present, rather than on worries about the future or the past.
- Be informed. Know the symptoms to look out for so that you are not worried about every ache or pain.

SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE RECURRENCE: WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Prostate cancer that returns after treatment is called **recurrent**. It is a **local recurrence** when it returns to the area around the prostate. It is **metastatic** when the recurrent cancer is found in another part of the body. Metastatic prostate cancers often spread to the bones or lungs.

After your initial treatment for prostate cancer, your PSA levels are expected to drop dramatically. In people who have recurrent prostate cancer, PSA levels usually increase. **A PSA level change might be the first and only sign that something is wrong**. Other symptoms of recurrent cancer may depend on where the cancer has spread.

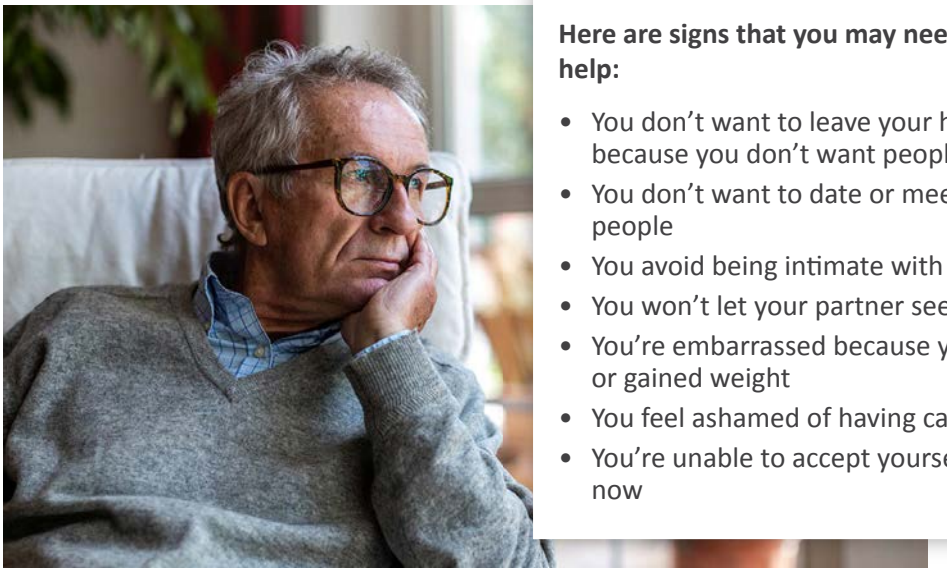
This is why you must do your blood test according to the schedule outlined by your doctor.

If you think of questions, write them down and take them with you to your follow-up appointment so you can discuss them with your doctor.

Read the section “Healthy Living” on page 27 for more information.

EMOTIONAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

The end of treatment can be a confusing time. You may be relieved that the treatment is finally over, but may also feel lonely, angry, worried, or sad. You may also be upset with any changes to your body. It is normal to have these feelings. If you become overwhelmed by these feelings, it is okay to ask for help.



Here are signs that you may need some help:

- You don’t want to leave your house because you don’t want people to see you
- You don’t want to date or meet new people
- You avoid being intimate with your partner
- You won’t let your partner see your scars
- You’re embarrassed because you have lost or gained weight
- You feel ashamed of having cancer
- You’re unable to accept yourself as you are now

The feelings you may be experiencing are normal. What you may need is to find ways to learn how to cope with these feelings. Here are some ideas that have helped others:

- Give yourself time to adjust. Everyone adapts differently. Take things at your own pace and treat yourself with compassion and kindness.
- Be open to accepting your new normal.
- Be patient. The healing process is slow. Take the time you need to rest and recover. You will improve with time. Sometimes change is so gradual that you do not notice it's happening.
- Talk to someone you trust and ask for support from your loved ones, friends, neighbours, and community.
- Find support from those who have lived similar experiences. Support groups, workshops, and online forums are opportunities to meet with others.

Cedars CanSupport at the MUHC offers free workshops, support groups, and one-to-one telephone support. See their contact information in the Resources section.

- Canadian Cancer Society offers support groups
- Hope and Cope offers a stress reduction workshop for you and your loved ones called "Exploring the Mind-Body-Spirit Connection." They also offer several support groups and one-to-one peer support
- Quebec Cancer Foundation has telephone peer matching and offers interactive conferences
- Seek comfort through your spirituality
- Seek counselling. A professional can help you cope with your feelings and physical changes. Ask your MUHC oncology team about the Psychosocial Oncology Program at the MUHC available to you and your family members
- Get physically active. Exercise and physical activity can have a big impact on your mood. Participate in stress-reducing activities (see the "Healthy Living" section on page 27)
- For more information, read the section "Your feelings after cancer treatment" in "Life After Cancer Treatment" booklet by the Canadian Cancer Society

If you are having difficulty coping with change, contact your treating team.

RESOURCES:

Consult PROCURE support line
https://www.procure.ca/en/living-with-cancer/support-for-you/our-health-professionals/

PROCURE Toll free Support line - 1 855 899-2873 with Specialized Nurses

ANXIETY

Some people may feel worried or find it hard to relax after their treatments have finished. This is a common feeling after the end of the treatments. If you are anxious, you may feel that your heart is beating fast. You may also feel nervous, out of breath, or tired. If this happens often, and if it interferes with your everyday life, try some of the tips below. If you still need help, speak with your doctor.

What can you do?

- Remember that it is okay to feel worried sometimes.
- Learn what triggers your anxiety and what helps you relax.
- Try relaxing activities such as yoga, meditation, guided imagery, or listening to calm music.
- Try **deep breathing*** and relaxation exercises.

**You can try your own deep breathing exercises. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Lie down or sit. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable. Breathe in deeply through your nose (this can take between 5 and 10 seconds). Breathe out through your mouth (count to 5 or 10). Focus on your counting and breathing. Repeat 10 times.*

What can help?

- Reaching out to family members or friends
- Joining support groups, or spiritual groups
- Talking with your MUHC oncology team, your family doctor, or therapist

RESOURCES:

Consult the “Emotional/ Psychological Impact” section on page 36 for more resources for counselling, support groups, one-to-one support, and workshops.

DEPRESSION

You may have good days and bad days as you recover. Everyone feels ‘blue’ or sad at times. But if the sadness stays, or if it is combined with other feelings and physical symptoms, this may be a sign of depression.

What are some signs of depression?

- Sadness
- A loss of interest in doing things
- Change in sleep patterns (not enough sleep or sleeping too much)
- Change in appetite (not eating enough or eating a lot)
- Loss of concentration
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling worthless

The stronger these feelings are, and the longer they last, the more you need to pay attention to these signs. **If these symptoms last for more than 2 weeks, or if you have thoughts of hurting yourself, call your treating team right away.**

What can you do?

- Get enough sleep. Most people need 6–8 hours of sleep.
- Include physical activity in your daily life.
- Practice mind-body activities such as breathing techniques, yoga, or meditation.
- Ask your doctor if any of your medications might be causing your depression.
- Spend time outside.
- Spend time with family or friends.
- Join support groups and peer counselling networks.

Who can help?

Talk with your family doctor or the MUHC oncology team about how you are feeling. They may suggest counselling or medication, which may help.

TALKING TO LOVED ONES

Your cancer experience may have shifted your priorities and your sense of self, so it is natural that your relationships may also change. For instance, you may feel differently towards friends and family, or they may act differently towards you. This can sometimes make it difficult for people to talk to one another.

Here are common relationship problems and what you can do:

Family and friends are overly protective of you
People have their own ways of showing their love and support. Some people may offer more "help" than what you want or need. Or, they may be overprotective of you. Be honest about how you feel. Let them know when and how they can help you. You do not have to share everything about your cancer. Keeping them informed and giving them something useful to do may make them feel involved and less worried.

Family and friends avoid you
People may not know what to say, or how to act after you've been diagnosed. Some people feel so uncomfortable they avoid you completely or ignore what you've been through. If you are comfortable, try taking the first step. Talk to them. Tell them exactly what they can do for you, and how you want to be treated. After your treatment is over, some relationships may become less close. You may feel disappointed. Consider telling your loved ones how you feel.

Family and friends think that you should be "over it" by now
It is difficult for people to know what to expect once your treatment is over. Some may want to think about moving forward, wanting you to focus on the positive. They may assume that you will be back to "normal." Let them know that it will take time to figure out your "new normal." Ask them to be patient with you as you settle into this new phase of your life. Be honest with them about how you are feeling.

Intimate relationships don't feel the same
You may notice that sexuality and intimacy are different with your partner. Be open with them. Tell your partner how you are feeling. Consider getting professional counselling. It may help. For more information, read the "Intimacy and Sexuality" section on page 7.

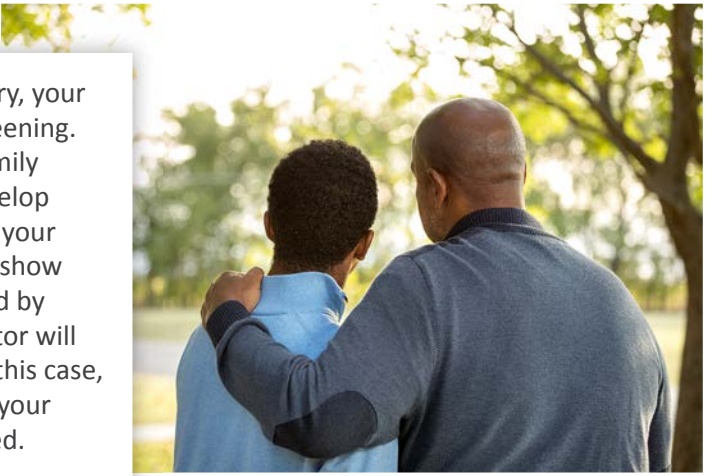
Family and friends need support to deal with their feelings about your cancer experience
Ask your MUHC oncology team about the Psychosocial Oncology Program at the MUHC for family members who are having difficulty coping with your diagnosis.

Consult the "Support and Resources" section on page 34 for more resources for your loved ones.

RISK TO CHILDREN/FAMILY MEMBERS

You may be worried that your children or other family members are more likely to get cancer because of your cancer diagnosis. Although some cancers are **hereditary** (this means that children may inherit the **genes** that cause cancer from their parents), most prostate cancers are not.

In cancers that may be hereditary, your doctor may suggest **genetic** screening. This can help find out if your family members are more likely to develop cancer. The pathologist will test your cancer tumor. If the test results show that your tumor could be caused by something hereditary, your doctor will refer you for genetic testing. In this case, your doctor will let you know if your family members should be tested.



HEALTHY LIVING

After treatment is over, there are things you can do to stay healthy. These healthy habits do not directly affect the chances of your cancer returning. However, healthy behaviours may help lessen your symptoms and help improve your quality of life. For more information, see the section "Healthy Living" in "Life After Cancer Treatment" by the Canadian Cancer Society.

Avoid smoking cigarettes, vaping, and using other tobacco products.

- Go to quebecsanstabac.ca for more information on how to stop smoking

Protect your skin from exposure to the sun and tanning beds.

- Consult the booklet "Sun Protection" by the MUHC patient education office for more information. See page 35 under the Healthy Living section.

Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. Experts suggest that men should have 0 to 3 drinks per day and no more than 15 drinks per week.

- Go to educalcool.qc.ca for more information about healthy drinking habits
- Visit the Quebec Government's official website for more information on changing your drinking habits

Sleep well (6–8 hours per night).

- See page 19 of this booklet.

See your doctor and dentist for regular checkups.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Even if you were not physically active before cancer, you can safely add exercise and physical activity into your life. Physical activity can help with side effects such as fatigue, depression, anxiety, and sleep problems.

What can you do?

Start slowly

- If you are often tired, start with gentle activities such as stretching. Choose a time of day when you are rested and have more energy.
- When you are ready, add other activities, such as walking. This is great to start with, especially if you have not exercised regularly. Stick close to home at first and rest when you need to.
- Pay attention to your body and try not to push beyond your limits. Remember, you are still healing. Forcing your body beyond its limits can slow down your recovery.

Exercise safely

- Speak with your MUHC oncology team to find out when it is safe for you to start exercising.
- Do not lift more than 10kg (about 20 pounds) for the first 2 weeks after your surgery.
- If you have physical challenges, your MUHC oncology team may recommend that you see a physiotherapist. They may suggest a new way of doing an activity that is safe and meets your needs and abilities.

For more advice about physical activity, talk to your family doctor .

Consult the resources section at the end of the booklet for Montreal-based organizations that offer exercise classes or programs for people who have been diagnosed with cancer.

DIET

Eating well and maintaining healthy eating habits can have a positive impact on your quality of life. It helps to:

- Increase energy levels
- Maintain muscle strength
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Manage the side effects of treatment and speed up recovery
- Encourage wound healing and rebuilding of damaged tissues, especially after surgery or radiotherapy
- Improve your body's ability to fight infections

There are no special foods or diets that are scientifically proven to cure or control cancer. Follow the Canada's Food Guide recommendations to find out what food groups and amounts are ideal for a healthy diet. The recommendations also suggest limiting sugary drinks, processed foods, and the amount of salt in your diet.

If you are using or thinking of using complementary medications or alternative therapies, speak with your treating team first. Some therapies may not interact well with your treatments.

RESOURCES:

For more support about diet changes and recommendations, talk to your family doctor.

Montreal-based organizations that can provide more information about a healthy diet:

- **West Island Cancer Wellness Center** offers nutritional cooking classes.
- **Hope and Cope** offers a variety of classes, lectures and programs about nutrition.

For more resources about eating well, consult:

- "Eating Well When You Have Cancer" booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is part our daily life, and everyone has different ways to manage their stress. When facing a stressful situation, we often use coping mechanisms used in the past to deal with the situation. Stress can affect your emotions, mood, and even physical health.

Fortunately, there are things you can do. Lowering your stress levels can help improve your mood and give you the strength to get through the challenging times. Here is a list of activities that may help reduce your stress. Find out what works best for you.

- **Mind-body practices**, like meditation or guided imagery, can help calm your mind and reduce anxiety and stress.
- Gentle types of **physical activity**, like yoga or Tai-chi can also help relieve stress and tension. You can also look for a massage therapist who has experience working with people with cancer.
- **Creative arts** like writing, photography, drawing, painting, and music can also be healing.
- **Social activities**, for example, spending time with friends and family, can help manage stress. Enjoy time outdoors or with pets. Don't be afraid to ask for support from others. Support can come from family, friends, support groups, and online forums. Talk to people about how you are feeling. Sometimes all you need is someone to talk to.

RESOURCES:

For more support regarding reducing stress, talk to your family doctor.

- Consult the “Support and Resources” section on page 34 for access to Montreal-based resources for reducing stress
- See “Coping When You Have Cancer” by The Canadian Cancer Society for more ideas and activities that you can try to manage your stress.
- A guide about “How to Manage Your Anxiety” by Cancer Care Ontario
- “Your new normal” section in Life after Cancer Treatment booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society

WHEN AND HOW TO GO BACK TO WORK

Thinking of going back to work is an important thing to consider after you have finished your treatment. You may feel excited or worried about this next step. Whatever your feelings are, going back to work will take some planning.

Deciding when to go back to work depends on many things. It involves more than just your physical, psychological, or mental strength. Speak with your treating team about the right time to return to work for you. Remember that you do not need to be 100% recovered to start thinking about a plan to return to work. You may also consider working from home.

If you are considering going back to work:

Think about what you can and cannot do now

- How much energy do you have?
- Will your side effects make it difficult to work?
- How did cancer and treatment affect you physically, emotionally, and **cognitively** (your ability to reason and use your judgment)?

Think about how you will return to work

- Can you return to work gradually? For example, starting with a few days a week, or a few hours a day, before moving towards full-time.

- Contact your employer to discuss changes to your workload or full-time/part-time status. Tell them if you have any restrictions.
- Contact your employer to discuss **accommodations*** needed for your return to work.

**Accommodations are adaptations or changes at the workplace that can help you work. This can include doing different duties, working from home, having flexible hours, or finding a place to rest at work.*

Think about possible solutions

- Can your treating team help you find strategies to deal with your side effects?
- Can you change the parts of your job that you do not like? Can you do more of the things you do like?
- Could you return to the same job with accommodations?
- Could you work part-time or work from home?
- Is retirement an option?

Think about the people or programs in your personal and work life that can help you

- Can you renegotiate household chores?
- What help does your employer offer?
- Are you eligible for services from your work insurance, such as **occupational therapy***?

**Occupational therapy is a form of therapy to help you recover or maintain your ability to do the activities you usually do daily.*

Think about how you can prepare at home

- Set a routine.
- Make an activity schedule.
- Slowly increase your activity/housework.

Speak with your family doctor if you do not feel ready to return to work

For more information and tools to assess your work situation, visit Cancer and Work at www.cancerandwork.ca

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

An electronic copy of this booklet is also available. This will enable you to access the links listed in the Support and Resources section.

GENERAL CANCER RESOURCES

- Cedars CanSupport: https://www.cansupport.ca 514-934-4400
- PROCURE : Prostate Cancer - https://www.procure.ca/en/prostate-cancer/: 1-855-899-2873
- PROCURE Resources: https://www.procure.ca/en/living-with-cancer/resources/
- https://www.procure.ca/en/living-with-cancer/support-for-you/our-health-professionals/
- PROCURE Prostate Cancer Webinars - https://www.procure.ca/en/events/webinaire-procure-en-parle/
- “Life After Prostate Cancer” - https://www.procure.ca/en/living-with-cancer/dealing-with-this-cancer/life-after-cancer/
- Canadian Cancer Society https://www.prostatecancer.ca/Prostate-Cancer
- Canadian Cancer Society: https://www.cancer.ca/en/?region=qc 1-888-939-3333
- Hope and Cope: https://hopeandcope.ca/ (514) 340-3616
- Cancer Care Ontario: https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en (416) 217-1816
- Quebec Cancer Foundation: https://fqc.qc.ca/en: : 1 800 363-0063
- Wellspring: https://www.wellspring.ca/ (only available in English) 1 (877) 499-9904
- West Island Cancer Wellness Center: www.wicwc.com (514) 695-9355

FATIGUE

- Informational Booklet titled “How to Manage Cancer-Related Fatigue” with link to 7 short videos: https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/cca/if-cca-managing-cancer-related-fatigue.pdf
- Short video on Cancer Related Fatigue (includes tips on how to manage): https://youtu.be/YTFPMYGe86s

- **Alcohol consumption**
  - https://www.educalcool.qc.ca/
- **Skin protection**
  - Consult “Sun Protection” by the MUHC patient education office for more information: http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca/DATA/GUIDE/
- **Smoking cessation:**
  - Consult Santé Montreal’s website for more information on smoking cessation: https://santemontreal.qc.ca/en/public/advice-and-prevention/smoking-cessation/

Physical activity

- Cedars CanSupport (https://cansupport.ca/support-groups-and-workshops/): offer classes like yoga and reiki
- Happy Tree Yoga (www.happytreeyoga.com): offer services at a reduced price for cancer patients
- Hope and Cope (www.hopeandcope.ca): offer a variety of courses and programs that focus on wellness in the mind, body, and spirit.
- Quebec Cancer Foundation
  - Yoga and walking clubs (https://fqc.qc.ca/en/need-help/others-services)
  - Free meeting with a certified kinesiologist who can create personalized exercise programs tailored to your fitness level (https://fqc.qc.ca/en/need-help/physical-well-ness-programs/kinesiology)
- West Island Cancer Wellness Center (www.wicwc.com): consult their monthly calendar to see the different wellness classes they offer
- Kegels: “Kegel Exercises (male)” by the MUHC https://muhcguides.com/module/kegels-male

Diet

- Canada’s Food Guide: https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/
- Hope and Cope offers a variety of classes, lectures and programs about nutrition
- West Island Cancer Wellness Center (https://wicwc.com/): offer nutritional cooking classes
- “Eating Well When You Have Cancer” booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) https://action.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/resources/publications/eating-well-when-you-have-cancer
- “Healthy Living” section in “Life after Cancer Treatment” booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society

PAIN

"A Guide to Prostate Surgery" by the MUHC Patient Education Office: http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca/DATA/GUIDE/617_en~v~prostate-surgery-glen-site.pdf

PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Written Information

- "Coping When You Have Cancer" booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society
- "How to Manage Your Anxiety" (a guide to manage your anxiety) by Cancer Care Ontario: https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/symptom-management/3981
- "Your new normal" section in Life after Cancer Treatment booklet by The Canadian Cancer Society
- Website by Canadian Cancer Society: https://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/living-with-cancer/your-emotions-and-cancer/coping-with-anxiety-and-stress/?region=on
- "Guide to manage your depression" by Cancer Care Ontario: https://www.cancercare ontario.ca/en/symptom-management/3986
- Psychosocial Oncology Program at the MUHC available to you and family members: https://muhc.ca/psychosocial-oncology/profile/psychosocial-oncology

Activities

- Creative arts classes (writing, photography, drawing, painting, music, etc.)
  - Cedars CanSupport (https://cansupport.ca/support-groups-and-workshops/): offer art therapy workshops
  - Hope and Cope (https://hopeandcope.ca/wellness/#nutrition): offer a variety of classes and workshops to help foster your creativity
  - Quebec Cancer Foundation (https://fqc.qc.ca/en/need-help/psychological-support/art-therapy): offer art therapy
- Guided meditation: https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/body.cfm?id=22&iirf_redirect=1

Support groups and one-to-one peer support

- https://www.procure.ca/en/living-with-cancer/support-for-you/our-health-professionals/
- PROCURE Toll free Support line - 1 855 899-2873 with Specialized Nurses
- Cedars CanSupport (https://cansupport.ca/support-groups-and-workshops/): offer free support groups and one-to-one telephone support
- Canadian Cancer Society

- Hope and Cope (https://hopeandcope.ca/peer-support/#peer): offer various support groups and one-to-one peer support
- Quebec Cancer Foundation
  - Coffee get-togethers: provide people with cancer and their loved ones the chance to share their thoughts and feelings in a warm, friendly atmosphere (https://fqc.qc.ca/en/need-help/others-services)
  - Telephone peer matching (https://fqc.qc.ca/en/need-help/psychological-support/telephone-peer-matching

Counselling

- Find a psychologist on the official site of the order of psychologists:
  - https://www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/ (only available in French)
  - (514) 738-1223
- Find a psychologist by regions in Quebec: https://www.bottinsante.ca/Psychologues-Quebec-1.html

- Find therapy and counseling for you and/or your loved ones at the following Montreal based organizations:

Psychosocial Oncology Program at the MUHC available to you and family members: (514) 934-1934 extension 45502

Argyle Institute
4150 Sainte-Catherine St #328, Westmount, QC H3Z 2Y5
514 931-5629
https://argyleinstitute.org/

Association des art-thérapeutes du Québec (AATQ)
911 Jean Talon St E, Montreal, Québec H2R 1V5
(514) 990-5415
https://aatq.org/en/

Association Québécoises de Musicothérapie
info@musicotherapieaqm.org
www.musicotherapieaqm.org

The Applied Psychology Centre Concordia University (only available in English)
7141 Sherbrooke Street West (Loyola Campus), Psychology Building, PY-111, Montreal, Quebec, H4B 1R6
514-848-2424 ext. 7550
apc@concordia.ca
https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/psychology/facilities-services/apc.html

Centre de psychologie Gouin (only available in French)
39 Boul Gouin O, Montréal, QC H3L 1H9
(514) 331-5530
https://www.cpgouin.ca/

Montreal Therapy Center
2100 Marlowe Ave 2nd Floor, #216, Montreal, Quebec H4A 3L5
514 244-1290
https://www.montrealtherapy.com/

Centre de services psychologiques UQAM (only available in French)
100 Sherbrooke St W, Montreal, QC H2X 3P2
(514) 987-0253
https://psychologie.uqam.ca/centre-de-services-psychologiques-csp/

Centre St-Pierre (only available in French)
1212 Rue Panet, Montréal, QC H2L 2Y7
514 524-3561 (ext.401)
https://www.centrestpierre.org/

Famille Nouvelle (only available in French)
4450 Rue St-Hubert #435, Montréal, QC H2J 1L4
(514) 525-0063
info@famillenouvelle.org
https://famillenouvelle.org/nos-therapeutes/

Counseling and Therapy
https://amiquebec.org/therapy/

Workshops

- Cedars CanSupport (https://cansupport.ca/support-groups-and-workshops/): offer free workshops. See their calendar for more information
- Hope and Cope (https://hopeandcope.ca/wellness/#nutrition): offer a stress reduction workshop for you and your loved ones titled “Exploring the Mind-Body-Spirit Connection”
- Quebec Cancer Foundation (https://fqc.qc.ca/en/need-help/psychological-support/art-therapy): offer interactive conferences

FAMILY SUPPORT

- “Listen First: And 9 other ways to support someone with cancer” by Canadian Cancer Society: https://www.cancer.ca/~/media/cancer.ca/CW/publications/Listen%20First/32100-1-NO.pdf
- Hope and Cope (https://hopeandcope.ca/wellness/#nutrition): offer a stress reduction workshop for you and your loved ones titled “Exploring the Mind-Body-Spirit Connection”
- “How to talk to children and teens about your diagnosis: Start The Talk”: https://startthetalk.ca/en/home
- Psychosocial Oncology Program at the MUHC available to you and family members: https://muhc.ca/psychosocial-oncology/profile/psychosocial-oncology
- Quebec Cancer Foundation (https://fqc.qc.ca/en/need-help/others-services): offer a program called “Coffee get-togethers” that provides people with cancer and their loved ones the chance to share their thoughts and feelings in a warm, friendly atmosphere
- Find psychological support/ counselling for you and/or your loved ones: https://amiquebec.org/therapy/
- Find therapy and counseling for you and/or your loved ones at Argyle Institute
  - https://argyleinstitute.org/
  - 514 931-5629
- Find therapy and counseling for you and/or your loved ones at Montreal Therapy Center
  - https://www.montrealtherapy.com/
  - 514 244-1290

RETURNING TO WORK

- Cancer and Work: www.Cancerandwork.ca

SEXUAL HEALTH

Intimacy and Sexuality

- “Sex, Intimacy and Cancer” by The Canadian Cancer Society: https://www.cancer.ca/~/media/cancer.ca/CW/publications/Sex%20intimacy%20and%20cancer/32061-1-NO.pdf
- Visit the site : Cancer, Sex, and the Male Body
- “Man Cancer Sex” by Dr. Anne Katz is a book written as a self-help guide for men with cancer.
- Sex and couple therapy services: www.sexandcoupletherapy.com

Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

FONDATION DU CANCER DES CÈDRES
CEDARS CANCER FOUNDATION