

MOVING FORWARD:

A guide to life beyond cancer treatment



**Hi! Congratulations
on completing your
cancer treatment.**

As you transition into life after treatment, we're here to support you every step of the way. This brochure is written especially for Adolescents and Young Adults (AYA) like you, offering guidance, resources, and encouragement as you embrace the next phase of your life.

For many people, the end of treatment is a time you look forward to since someone first told you that you have cancer. Now that it is here, how are you feeling? Some AYAs feel happiness and a sense of accomplishment that they made it through this experience and are ready to get on with their lives. Others feel worried or anxious about what life will be like now that treatment is over. Fear of recurrence may be on your mind. Bottom line ... most AYAs feel a mix of emotions.

Whatever you are feeling, we are here to support you in this next step.

You will be receiving information about follow-up care and ways to keep yourself healthy as you move forward. Sometimes AYAs experience ongoing side effects of treatment, known as late effects. Fatigue is a common late effect after treatment and it may take a while for you to build up your energy and stamina again. Issues with memory or processing information can also occur. Some late effects resolve over time while others may linger. In addition to physical late effects, there is the emotional impact to consider. We often hear that AYAs are so focused on getting through the physical challenges of treatment that it is only after treatment ends that they fully experience the emotional impact of having cancer. You have just gone through a lot! Please share any physical and emotional concerns you are experiencing with your team during follow up visits or whenever you need support. Even if it seems small or unimportant, let us know what is going on. **We want you to live your best life after treatment and we are here to help.**

Here are a few suggestions to help you take the next step from surviving to thriving:



Physical Health:

- **Follow-Up Care:** Know your diagnosis and types of treatment you received. Stay on top of your follow-up appointments with your healthcare team to monitor your health and address any concerns that may arise. If you don't have one, establish care with a primary care provider.
- **Healthy Lifestyle Habits:** Maintain a balanced diet, engage in regular exercise, get enough sleep, use sunscreen, and avoid tobacco, alcohol, and recreational drugs, to support your overall health and well-being.
- **Managing Late Effects:** Be aware of potential late effects of your cancer treatment and discuss any symptoms or concerns with your healthcare team right away. Keep and maintain health insurance to help ensure you can continue to get the follow up care you need.

Emotional Wellness:

- **Coping with Emotions:** Understand that it's normal to experience a range of emotions as you transition off treatment. Don't hesitate to reach out to loved ones, support groups, or mental health professionals for guidance and support. Working with a therapist can help you learn techniques and strategies to process your feelings and emotions and address issues like anxiety and depression.
- **Setting Realistic Expectations:** Be patient with yourself as you adjust to life after treatment. Set achievable goals and celebrate small victories along the way.
- **Self-Care Strategies:** Prioritize self-care activities that promote relaxation and well-being, such as exercise, mindfulness, creative outlets, and spending time with supportive friends and family. Find things that you enjoy and do them often.

Relationships and Social Life:

- **Communicating with Others:** Be open and honest with friends, family members, and romantic partners about your cancer experience and how it has impacted you.
- **Building Supportive Relationships:** Surround yourself with people who uplift and encourage you, and don't be afraid to seek professional support if you're struggling with relationships or social interactions.
- **Navigating Intimacy:** If you're navigating romantic relationships or intimacy after cancer treatment, communicate openly with your partner and seek support from healthcare professionals if needed.

Education and Career:

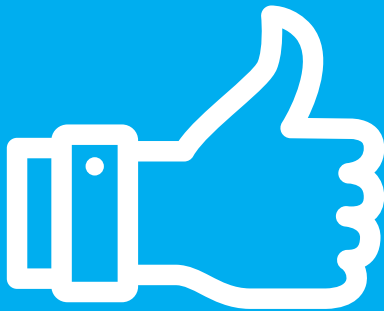
- **School:** If you had home tutoring or took a leave from college, work with your school's guidance counselor or academic advisor to create a plan for returning to school successfully. Ask about special accommodations that you may be eligible for as a cancer survivor. These may include extra time on tests and assignments, special seating, or other things you identify that would be helpful for your academic success. In college, reach out to Student Accessibility Services for support.
- **Pursuing Career Goals:** Explore vocational or educational opportunities that align with your interests and aspirations. Perhaps your cancer experience will influence your future career choice. Consider seeking guidance from career counselors or mentors to help you navigate your career path.



Remember, you are not alone on this journey.

Reach out for support whenever you need it, and remember to celebrate your strength and resilience!

**Some helpful
resources as
you move into
survivorship.**



elephantsandtea.org
cactuscancer.org
firstdescents.org
stupidcancer.org
dearjackfoundation.org
cancerandcareers.org
triagecancer.org
canceradvocacy.org
ayacanceralliance.org
teencanceramerica.org

