

Prostate Cancer Survivorship Guidelines

What Are American Cancer Society Survivorship Guidelines?

Survivorship guidelines are advice from the American Cancer Society to help doctors, nurses, and other professionals take care of cancer survivors who have finished their cancer treatments. The survivorship guidelines presented here address issues that can occur in men after the treatment of prostate cancer.

Why Are Prostate Cancer Survivorship Guidelines Needed?

- Each year, about 240,000 men in the United States are diagnosed with prostate cancer. Most of these men will be treated for their cancer and survive for many years. In fact, most men diagnosed with prostate cancer will likely die of something other than prostate cancer.
- Starting at diagnosis and until the end of treatment, men with prostate cancer receive most of their health care from specialists such as a urologist, radiation oncologist, etc. Once treatment is finished, most of the medical care for these men will be given by their primary care clinician.
- Prostate cancer occurs mainly in older men. Many of these men have other health issues that are treated by primary care clinicians.
- There are some side effects and complications that can go on and even occur after treatment is finished. These can be caused by the cancer or by some of the treatments. Here are some examples:
 - Distress, depression, and anxiety.
 - Difficulty getting an erection.
 - Blockage or leakage of urine flow.
 - Diarrhea, blood in stool, or other bowel problems.
 - Thinning of bones (osteoporosis); broken bones.
 - Hot flashes.
- Some primary care clinicians do not know which side effects can happen, or they do not know how to treat them. Or they might know about the side effects of prostate cancer treatment but they did not know to watch for them because they were not aware you had

prostate cancer or did not know which treatments you received. The American Cancer Society prostate cancer survivorship guidelines were developed to help primary care clinicians give you the best care.

What Is Included in These Guidelines?

The guidelines address some issues related to the care and follow-up of men who have been treated for prostate cancer. The guidelines provide:

- Suggested approaches to improve the coordination of your care between your specialists and your primary care clinician.
- Recommendations to help you maintain your health through physical activity, a healthy diet, and quitting tobacco if you use it.
- Guidance on how to watch for prostate cancer recurrence and the use of screening tests to look for other types of cancer.
- Advice on what to watch for, such as side effects or complications.

How Should I Use These Guidelines?

The guidelines give you important information that you should discuss with your doctors. You should talk to your doctor about the following:

- Did my specialist (urologist, radiation oncologist, etc.) give a written survivor care plan to my primary care clinician that told them about my treatment, possible side effects, and important follow-up steps?
- How often will I need checkups? What tests will I need to watch out for side effects, complications, or the cancer coming back?
- How low should my prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level go? What does it mean if it starts to rise?
- Is there anything I can do to help my erections come back after cancer treatment? If so, when should I start taking these steps?

- What should I do if I have trouble with my urine (trouble starting or stopping flow, dribbling, or leaking after I finish)?

As you complete your treatment, think about the care you will be receiving as you move forward. You will want your primary care clinician to know about your

prostate cancer and how it was treated. You will also want them to know what to watch for and how often to see you. And most important, you will want them to work with you so that you are getting the care that is right for you. ■

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