

Information From The Experts

Survivorship

What should I tell my doctor during my follow-up visits?

When you complete your cancer treatment, you may want to ask your doctor some questions about follow-up visits:

- ▶ How often will I have a follow-up visit?
- ▶ What tests will I need during follow-up?
- ▶ What symptoms should I watch for?
- ▶ Do I need to see any other doctors?

Your follow-up visits may involve a physical examination and tests that could include:

- ▶ CT scans
- ▶ Ultrasound scans
- ▶ PET Scans
- ▶ Blood tests

These visits are a good time to talk to your doctor about any problems or concerns you may have, such as pain, lingering side effects, or changes in your emotional health. If there are changes in your medical history or medications you are taking for other conditions, alert your doctor to these changes during your follow-up visits. Also, speak with your doctor before adding new approaches to your management routine, such as dietary supplements or initiating an exercise programme. If you notice any new symptoms, let your doctor or nurse know as soon as possible. You do not have to wait for your next appointment.

Some people find it helpful to keep a journal of how they feel and any side effects that occur after treatment is complete. This can help doctors and nurses get a clear picture of how you are coping after treatment. You can also use a journal to make a list of questions or concerns that you want to discuss at your follow-up visits. You may want to take your journal to the follow-up visits to remind you of things to tell your doctor, or to make notes of information the doctor gives you.