

After Treatment: Sexuality

Information Sheet



What is sexuality?

Sexuality is the ability to have sexual feelings or a desire to have sex or engage in sexual activity.

Why would my sexuality change after treatment?

Your cancer treatment may change your body. These body changes may affect your interest to have sex. Your cancer treatment may affect your emotions, which also could affect your interest to have sex.

How might my body change after treatment that would affect my sex drive?

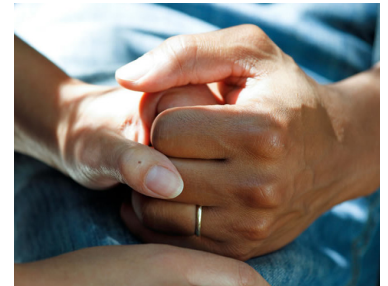
Everyone reacts differently to cancer treatment. Cancer treatment may change your body. These changes could be short-term or may last a long time. Your appearance may also have changed with scars, skin changes, or a change in weight.

In what ways could my sexuality be affected?

Sexual problems are usually caused by body changes and emotions after cancer treatment. Some of the sexual problems that people have after cancer treatment are:

- Decrease in sex drive
- Arousal disorders – inability to achieve or maintain sexual arousal
- Orgasmic disorders – delay or absence of orgasm following normal arousal
- Pain during sexual intercourse

Remember that it is normal to experience changes in sexuality after cancer treatment. Talk to your health care provider if you are having sexual problems. Medication and other help may be available.



How can I cope with my body changes?

Remember that you just beat cancer and that is great! Your body has been through a lot during your journey with cancer. Here are some ways you can cope with these changes:

- Find new ways to improve your appearance. Try getting new makeup, a haircut or new clothes.
- Focus on the ways your journey with cancer has made you wiser and stronger.
- It's okay to be sad about body changes. These changes are real.
- Talk to your doctor about ways to care for certain changes such as changes to your skin.

After Treatment: Sexuality

What are important things to remember about feeling intimate after treatment?

- Respect your body. Your body helped you get through treatment so be proud of it!
- Intimacy means other things than just sex. You can show intimacy by kissing, hugging and cuddling your loved one. Be open to change and you may find new ways to enjoy intimacy.
- Be open and talk to your partner about what you are feeling and experiencing. Talking and being honest can relieve tension.



Where can I get more information?

The National Cancer Institute provides accurate and up-to-date information about clinical trials, cancer types, prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment, survivorship, and end of life care.

Phone: 1-800-4CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

Website: www.cancer.gov

The American Society of Clinical Oncologists provides patient information for those living with cancer and for those who care for those with cancer.

Phone: 888-651-3038

Website: www.cancer.net



Carbone Cancer Center

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH



ruralcancernetwork.org



**Cancer Health
Disparities Initiative**

For more local information, please contact:

Place label here

For educational and non-commercial purposes only.
Information adapted from the National Cancer Institute.
v. January 2017