

What are the common feelings after breast cancer treatment?

Going through a life-changing experience often affects your perspectives and priorities. It is normal to feel shock, loss of control, independence and confidence, guilt and sadness. Allow yourself a few months to adjust and recover emotionally. Some may find it helpful to:



- Talk to your loved ones or a nurse



- Pace your activities and allow rest periods



- Keep to a well-balanced diet



- Maintain regular exercise and sleeping patterns



- Be socially active and pick up a new hobby



- Join a support group or be a volunteer

Please contact your doctor and/or nurse if you frequently feel down or experience persistent lack of interest in leisure activities, difficulties in sleeping and/or eating.

Resources for more information:

National University Cancer Institute, Singapore:
www.ncis.com.sg

Breast Cancer Foundation:
www.bcf.org.sg

Livestrong Foundation:
www.livestrong.org

Location and Contact Details

Outpatient Facilities	Level @ NUH MC
Radiation Therapy Centre	8
Breast Care Centre	8
VIVA-University Children's Cancer Centre	9
Stem Cell Therapy Centre	9
Chemotherapy Centre	9
Cancer Centre	10



Appointment Line : (65) 6773 7888*

Fax : (65) 6777 4413

Email : CancerApptLine@nuhs.edu.sg

Cancer Line : (65) 9722 0569* (free counselling hotline)

Email : CancerLineNurse@nuhs.edu.sg

Address : 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

*Mon - Fri (Except PH): 8.30am - 5.30pm

Information is correct at time of printing (Jan 2016) and subject to revision without prior notice. The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions.

Beyond Breast Cancer

Life Post-Treatment



What is the routine follow-up care after the initial breast cancer treatment?

A team of Breast Surgeons, Medical and Radiation Oncologists, Advanced Practice Nurses, Oncology Nurses, and Breast Care Nurses may continue to see you regularly for continuation of treatment, early detection of cancer recurrence, monitoring and management of side effects after treatment, and monitoring of health. Depending on the stage of your cancer and treatment received, your routine follow-up care may include:

- Monthly breast self-examination
- 3 to 12 monthly review by the doctors and/or nurses:

* _____

* _____

* _____

- Yearly mammography
- Other tests or referrals may be arranged if needed:

* _____ yearly colorectal cancer screening

* _____ yearly cervical cancer screening

* _____

Apart from the above, talk to your doctor and/or nurse about the risks of hereditary breast cancer and how to take care of yourself and your loved ones if you:

- Were diagnosed with breast cancer at a young age (< 40 years old)
- Have many family members with breast cancer
- Have family members with breast and ovarian cancers
- Have family members with other types of cancers
- Have a male family member with breast cancer

What are the common side effects and symptoms after breast cancer treatment?

In the first few months, mild redness, thickening of the skin over the scar, numbness and tingling sensations or pain over the scar are common. If you have had a mastectomy or axillary lymph node dissection, your arm or shoulder may also feel sore and stiff. These sensations may slowly improve over time.

Depending on the stage of your cancer and treatment, you may experience some of the following symptoms:

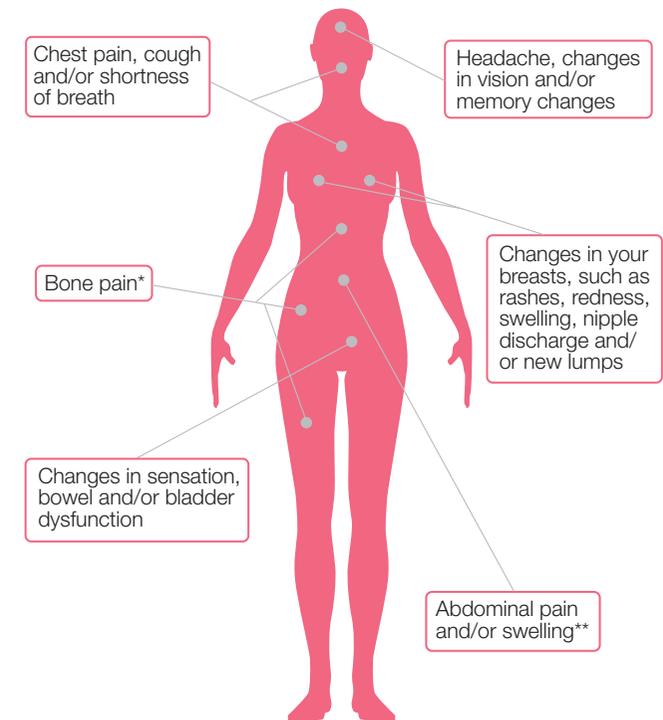
Side-effects and Symptoms	Prevention and Self-care Strategies
Lymphoedema (heavy feeling and/or swelling of the arm on the breast surgery side)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your skin clean and apply moisturiser daily. • Cover up affected arm and use sunscreen (SPF 30 and above). • Wear gloves when doing household chores or gardening. • Wash small cuts or insect bites straight away, apply antiseptic cream and cover if needed. • Avoid wearing tight clothing or jewellery. • Avoid having injections, blood-taking, or your blood-pressure taken on affected arm.
Menopausal symptoms (hot flushes, sweats, vaginal dryness and/or emotional symptoms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear clothing in layers. • Use non-hormonal moisturisers and water-based lubricants to reduce dryness and discomfort during intimacy.
Changes in fertility and sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your doctor and/or nurse to learn more about contraception, pregnancy, fertility and/or sexuality concerns.

Osteoporosis (low bone mass that results in weak bones)

- Eat a well-balanced diet and foods rich in calcium (e.g.: milk, green vegetables).
- Be out in the morning sun for 15 to 20 minutes daily.
- Do 30 minutes of weight-bearing exercises daily (e.g.: walking).

What are the signs and symptoms of breast cancer recurrence?

Cancer recurrence is **not common**. The following signs and symptoms may or may not mean that your breast cancer has recurred. If you experience any of these signs and symptoms and they are not improving, please contact your doctor. Call 995 or go to the nearest Emergency Department if your symptoms are severe.



*Bone pain may occur in any part of your body.

**Abdominal pain may occur in any part of the upper and lower abdomen.