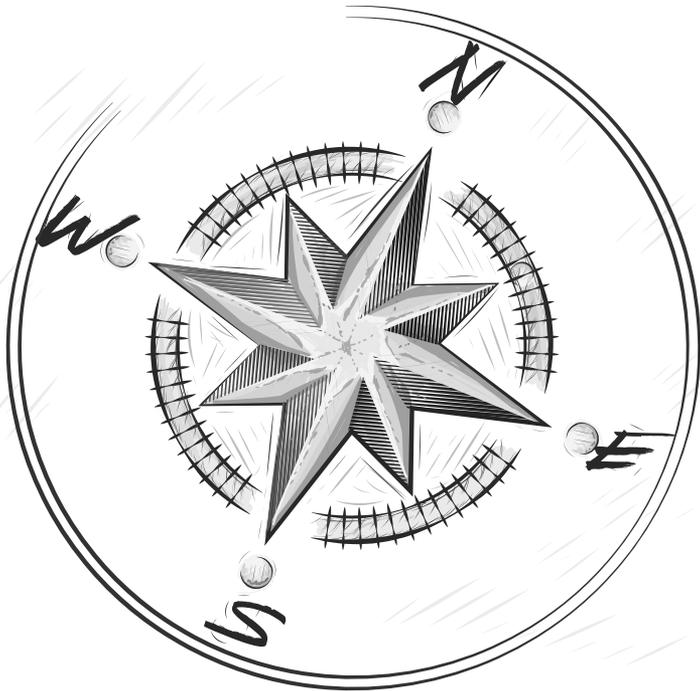




# WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER TREATMENT?

## MANAGING SIDE EFFECTS AND THEIR SYMPTOMS



**"Look UP not down,  
Look FORWARD not back,  
Look OUT not in."**

*Author unknown*

## 2. WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER TREATMENT? MANAGING SIDE EFFECTS AND THEIR SYMPTOMS

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Your cancer treatment is over; now you can begin to think about what lies ahead for you. During this post-treatment period, and depending on your diagnosis and the treatment you received, you may experience what is called late or long-term side effects. Some of these effects can be painful or troublesome; however, in many cases they are temporary or they can be successfully managed.

After your treatment is complete, it is important to be aware of the potential side effects you could face and to maintain communication with your healthcare team. At assessment and follow-up appointments, your doctor will most likely tell you more about what to expect at this stage, and what signs you should look out for (if any) in your particular case.

This chapter presents the most common side effects and symptoms you may encounter after treatment, information on how to manage them, and services you may find useful.



weight concerns

**Side Effects**  
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fatigue  
others...

pain

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WHERE ARE YOU?

## MEET THE EXPERTS



### Dr. Tarek Hijal, Radiation Oncologist

Dr. Tarek Hijal is a radiation oncologist at the McGill University Health Centre. His clinical interests include breast cancer, colorectal cancer and hematologic malignancies. His research mainly focuses on decreasing treatment durations in breast cancer radiotherapy.

### Karine Gimmig, Pivot Nurse

Karine Gimmig received her nursing degree from the Université de Montréal. She has worked as a pivot nurse in cancer care, specializing in breast cancer and palliative care, at St. Mary's Hospital since 2012.



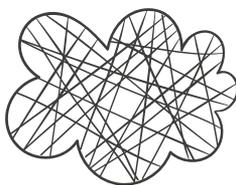
## SECTION I. AFTER TREATMENT LATE AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

With treatment over, you may be anxious to get back to normal life; however, you may be finding this difficult as a result of side effects that you are experiencing. It is important to be aware of what is happening or may happen to your body, so that you can take the necessary steps to manage any possible or actual side effects.

Try to get into the habit of thinking about the state of your health on a regular basis. For example, pay attention if you are experiencing forgetfulness, headaches, pain, difficulties concentrating, or anything else that makes up part of your health and wellbeing. Being aware of any side effects can make a difference in how well they can be managed and, ultimately, your recovery.

There are many possible effects to the body and mind after treatment, but not everyone will experience them in the same way. Someone who had the same diagnosis and treatment as you may not have the same physical or psychological reactions to treatment. Your situation is unique to you.

In general, there are side effects that occur immediately after treatment, and there are also late-term effects that can arise in the months following treatment. Symptoms of side effects can pass relatively quickly or may have to be managed for a longer period of time, sometimes for years. This is why it is important to know what to look out for in order to be able to recognize and deal with any side effects successfully.



*When you see this symbol, it means that if you are concerned about this topic, you may wish to have a discussion with your healthcare team.*

## WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS?

### FATIGUE

#### What is it?

You are probably familiar with cancer-related fatigue, as this is the most common side effect experienced by people going through cancer treatment. Perhaps you had to deal with it yourself during your treatment. Now, however, you may have to take a step back from that experience to consider if fatigue seems to be continuing since your treatment ended – and if it is, how it is affecting you.

Similar to fatigue during treatment, with post-treatment fatigue, you can feel extremely tired and without energy, both in body and mind. This side effect occurs most often during the first year after the end of treatment. It can improve quickly or continue for a few years. It may also not feel the same all the time: some days it may be quite severe and other days very mild. The length of time it lasts and how it feels can vary from person to person.

#### Why does it happen?

Many things can cause cancer-related fatigue, or add to the fatigue experienced post-treatment:

- Cancer therapies, including surgery and hormone therapy
- After treatment side-effects such as anemia, a weakened immune system, or hormonal changes
- Medications, such as pain relievers
- Poor nutrition or dehydration
- Lack of sleep
- Pain
- Depression or anxiety
- Emotional distress
- Not enough physical activity
- Other health problems



"Fatigue is the most common side effect of radio-therapy. Although most patients experience mild fatigue, patients who receive radiation to the brain tend to experience more severe fatigue, as well as sleepiness."

- Dr. Tarek Hijal, Radiation Oncologist

#### How do I manage it?

There are a number of things that you can do during this time that can help reduce the severity of fatigue symptoms.

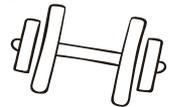
## 1. USE YOUR LEVEL OF ENERGY WISELY

You may feel that you don't have enough energy to get through the day, but this can be improved by planning and prioritising. Think about what is most important to you, and keep your energy for those activities. Plan your day accordingly by being active when you have more energy and by modifying some of your activities. Here are some examples:

- Sit on a stool while cooking rather than standing up for an extended period of time.
- Organize to have your shopping delivered to your home – this is often at a low cost or at no charge – instead of carrying your own bags.
- Ask those close to you for help with household chores or childcare.
- Rest or take naps between activities.

Support groups for patients post-treatment can offer many tips and strategies to optimise your energy and organize your daily activities to reduce fatigue. Programs for people who have completed cancer treatment are available at certain hospitals in the Montreal region.

**See section IV Programs to help you move forward, page 31.**



## 2. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REDUCES FATIGUE

Did you know that one of the best ways to cope with fatigue is by being active? It may sound confusing, but it has been proven that an effective way to increase energy levels is to be physically active, not just to rest. Begin at a pace that is comfortable for you, and aim for what the experts recommend: 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. You can start slowly with an activity like walking around the block for 10 minutes, and eventually move on to other activities that you enjoy as your strength and endurance increase. Eventually you can mix things up a bit to get both aerobic activity and strength training into your routine.

**For more information on physical activity, see chapter 4 Regaining function.**

"The level of post-treatment fatigue will vary from one person to the next. Listen to your body, include activities in your daily routine, and allow yourself the time you need to rest. Over time, you will come to understand your body and be able to manage your energy levels."

- Karine Gimmig, Pivot Nurse

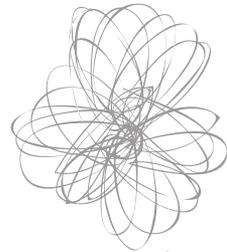


### 3. GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

If you are having trouble falling asleep or sleeping well once you do get to sleep, you are not alone. Small changes in sleep habits can go a long way to improving your quality of sleep. Here are some strategies that may help:



- Go to bed when you feel sleepy – your body will let you know when it's time for bed.
- Relax before bedtime by doing an activity that you enjoy – read a book, listen to music, meditate, take a warm bath. It is best to turn off the TV or computer at least 1 hour before bedtime.
- Get your planning or problem solving done in the early evening.
- Get up and do a relaxing activity if you can't fall asleep after 20 to 30 minutes.
- Use your bedroom only for sleep and intimacy.
- Wake up at the same time every day and let natural light into your space.
- Limit your intake of alcohol and caffeine (from beverages and food such as chocolate) especially in the afternoon and evening.
- Limit napping during the day. Napping for less than 1 hour during the afternoon (between 12 and 3) may help you have more energy, and probably won't interfere with sleeping at night. If possible, take a nap or rest in a room that is not your bedroom.



### 4. MANAGE STRESS

Although it's always easier said than done, try to manage any stress you have as best as you can. Stress can contribute to feelings of tiredness; reducing stress can, in turn, reduce fatigue. Talking about your concerns and emotions can often help reduce stress. You can speak with a friend, a professional, or contact a post-treatment support group, where you can speak with other people who are going through the same experiences as you. **Programs for people who have completed cancer treatment are available at certain hospitals in the Montreal area. See section IV *Programs to help you move forward*, page 31.**

Stress-reducing activities may also help with fatigue. Exercise, relaxation techniques, and complementary therapies, such as massage, yoga, music therapy, reiki and healing touch, may help reduce stress levels and improve your emotional health. **For more information, see our section on *complementary therapies* on page 30.**

## 5. EAT WELL



Good nutrition, which means eating a variety of healthy foods and drinking enough water to stay hydrated, will go a long way to help improve your energy levels. **For more information, and tips and strategies, see section II Nutrition in chapter 4 Regaining Function.**

### **SPEAKING TO YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM ABOUT FATIGUE**

Try to explain to your doctor as clearly as you can how you've been feeling and what the symptoms are that you've been experiencing. Think about when your fatigue began, how bad you feel it is, how it's affecting your life, and what you have tried to do about it. Ask questions about the possible causes: medications, pain, stress, diet and hydration – anything and everything that could affect your energy levels. Also ask about the best ways for you to deal with it. Depending on your particular issues, exercise and relaxation techniques may work. It is also possible that your doctor will refer you to a specialist, such as a physiotherapist, dietitian, or psychologist for professional help.

### **RATE YOUR FATIGUE**

You can use the following descriptions to rate and describe your fatigue when speaking to your healthcare team:

#### **MILD FATIGUE:**

You feel a bit of fatigue, but are still able to perform your regular daily activities, such as cooking, cleaning, or going to work.



#### **MODERATE FATIGUE:**

Some fatigue is present, causing you moderate distress. It is difficult for you to perform your daily activities, and you have trouble with more active tasks, such as climbing stairs or walking.

#### **SEVERE FATIGUE:**

Fatigue is strong and always present, causing high levels of distress. You cannot perform regular daily activities and you feel the need to rest or sleep all day. When resting, you may feel some of the following symptoms: sudden fatigue, shortness of breath, rapid heart rate.

Symptoms you should pay attention to:

- Dizziness or unusual falling
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained or continual bleeding
- Sudden rapid heartbeat, or shortness of breath
- Feelings of being unable to cope, of anxiety, or being depressed.





## TOP TIPS

- **Pace yourself** and prioritise activities – give yourself time to rest during the day.
- **Aim to be active for 30 minutes a day** with an activity you enjoy.
- **Relax** before bedtime to improve your quality of sleep.
- **Manage stress** by focusing more on what you can control.
- **Speak to others** who have been through this experience, such as support groups in your community.
- **Eat a balanced diet.**

## MEMORY AND CONCENTRATION ISSUES

### What is it?

'Brain fog' is another common effect after cancer treatment (also called 'chemo brain' by many patients). This term refers to memory or concentration problems, such as difficulties finding a word, remembering something you recently learned or concentrating for a length of time. Memory and concentration effects are also known as 'cognitive difficulties' or 'cognitive dysfunction'.

### Why does it happen?

The main cause of post-treatment cognitive difficulties is still unknown, as is the reason some patients have cognitive problems and others do not. It seems that people who have undergone chemo therapy or head and neck radiation treatment are more susceptible to cognitive difficulties. Other factors may include (but are not limited to): hormone therapy; immunotherapy or other medications; fatigue or sleep problems; anxiety or depression; or nutritional imbalances.

### How do I manage it?

Cognitive problems may disappear over time or they may persist for years. However, depending on their severity and the factors causing them, you may be able to improve memory or concentration problems with organisational strategies, lifestyle adaptations or cognitive exercises.

**For more information, top tips and expert advice, go to page 24 (section II Coping with cognitive changes).**



## PAIN

### What is it?

There are different types of pain that can develop after cancer treatment. This pain can range from mild to severe; it can last temporarily or it can be present for longer periods of time.

The experience of pain is very personal; people feel and tolerate pain differently. If you experience any pain after your treatment is over, you should discuss it with your doctor.

Some types of post-treatment pain include:

- Bone pain – aching or pulsing pain
- Piercing or sudden pain
- Pain due to nerve damage – burning, shooting pains or tingling
- Visceral pain – a dull or squeezing pain that comes from the organs inside the body (difficult to identify)
- Painful scars from surgery
- Pain in a missing limb – called 'phantom pain'

Pain can generally be described in 3 ways:

#### MILD PAIN:

You have some pain but can perform your regular daily activities such as bathing, cooking, cleaning or going to work.



#### MODERATE PAIN:

With moderate pain it is difficult for you to do your regular daily activities, which is causing you some distress. If you take medication for the pain, it does not always bring you relief.

#### SEVERE PAIN:

You are in pain all the time, and it is causing you a lot of distress. You cannot do any of your regular daily activities. You can also feel as if your muscles are weak.

### Why does it happen?

Post-treatment pain can happen for a number of reasons. To give some examples, radiation treatment can cause skin sensitivity that can last for several months. Chemotherapy, radiation treatment, or surgery can damage nerves (a condition called neuropathy). Steroid medication can cause bone pain. Surgery scars can be painful, and 'phantom pain' from a missing limb is also real pain. Pain can be made worse by stress, anxiety, and emotional upheaval.

## How do I manage it?

If you are experiencing any pain after cancer treatment, talk to your doctor so that they can identify the source of the pain and recommend the appropriate pain relief therapy for you. Treating pain effectively can positively impact your quality of life, and let you enjoy your activities and sleep better at night – which are all essential to your recovery.

### **PAIN MEDICATION**

If you are prescribed pain medication, carefully follow the instructions about how much to take and when to take it. Make sure that you follow up regularly with your doctor so that your medication can be adjusted if your pain changes in any way. Talk to your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking any unprescribed medication for pain. If your pain continues even with medication, your doctor may refer you to a pain management specialist.

### **PHYSICAL THERAPY**

Physical therapy may help with pain relief. A physical therapist can advise you on how your pain may be relieved through massage, heat or cold therapy, or exercise, to give some examples.

### **COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES**

You may also want to inform yourself about how complementary therapies, such as acupuncture, meditation, relaxation, and hypnosis may be able to help reduce your pain. **For more information, see our section on *complementary therapies* on page 30.**

### **EXERCISES**

Although it may be surprising, exercise can actually help relieve certain types of pain, especially the overall aches, pains and fatigue that people can experience after treatment. Gentle activities such as walking, swimming, yoga, and simple stretching exercise may be helpful.

**For more information on physical activity, see chapter 4 *Regaining function*.**



### **RELAXATION TECHNIQUES**

Doing relaxing activities that you enjoy is a well-known coping strategy, including for pain management. It could be listening to music, enjoying nature, reading a good book – whatever helps you relax. Meditation and breathing exercises may be another helpful option, as well as talking about your pain with people you trust. Stress can aggravate pain, so anything that helps you feel relaxed is a positive step.

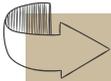
### **PACE YOURSELF**

Organize your activities to make them as easy as possible for you to handle. Don't take on too much and try to keep tasks short.



Speak with your healthcare team immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Pain is getting worse or not going away
- You have a new pain
- It is painful when you take a deep breath
- You have sudden leg weakness, especially if the pain is in your back



## GO FURTHER

TIPS ON HOW TO TALK ABOUT PAIN TO YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM:

- Use a scale, such as 1-10 (1=hardly any pain, 10=worst possible pain)
- Be as precise and clear as you can with your words when you describe your pain: sharp, dull, gnawing, steady, stabbing, etc.
- Explain how your pain has affected your daily activities. What does it prevent you from doing? What does it make it difficult for you to do?
- Explain when your pain started, ended (if this applies to you), and what makes it less or more severe
- List your medications
- Start a daily journal to track your pain

## PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY



### What is it?

Peripheral neuropathy (also known simply as 'neuropathy') occurs when the nerves in the body are damaged. Damaged nerves do not send and receive messages to and from the spinal cord and brain to the rest of your body properly. Neuropathy can develop during or after your treatment, it can last for a very short time or for months, and, in some cases, it can be permanent.

### Signs and symptoms:

The first signs of neuropathy generally begin in the fingers and toes. Common signs and symptoms include:

- Tingling or numbness
- Stabbing or burning pain
- Sensitivity to touch
- Sensitivity to heat and cold
- Loss of balance
- Difficulty walking
- Difficulty picking up small objects



When you see this symbol, it means that if you are concerned about this topic, you may wish to have a discussion with your healthcare team.

## Why does it happen?

Some cancer treatments can damage the nerves. Certain chemotherapy drugs increase the risk of developing neuropathy. Post-treatment neuropathy can also be made worse by pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or alcoholism, which carry their own risk of nerve damage.

## How do I manage it?

If you experience any of the symptoms of neuropathy, you should speak to your doctor as soon as you can.

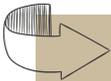


Your doctor will be able to plan the treatment that is appropriate for you.

Strategies for managing neuropathy include:

- Pain relievers (topical creams, patches, or oral medication)
- Physical therapy and exercise (to help with balance and strength)
- Occupational therapy (to help improve coordination, and to help make your home environment safe for you)
- Acupuncture (to help relieve symptoms)

It is also important to protect your hands and feet from extreme heat or cold, and from sharp objects. For example, it may be a good idea to wear gloves and warm socks on a cold day although your hands and feet may not feel cold. You may want to wear work gloves and shoes when working around the house to protect yourself from cuts and injuries.



## GO FURTHER

### DAILY JOURNAL AND APPOINTMENT PREPARATION

**Track your symptoms and feelings in a daily journal for at least a week before you see your doctor.**

- Record differences in tingling, numbness, balance, pain, sensitivity to heat and cold
- Reflect on the number of times your neuropathy interrupted your daily life
- Track any sleep problems or changes to your normal sleep patterns
- Also note the following about your neuropathy:
  - How it makes you feel emotionally – e.g., sad, down, anxious, doesn't bother you
  - How it affects you physically – e.g., loss of balance, inability or difficulty to complete tasks or normal daily activities
  - How it affects your social life – e.g., avoid certain activities



SUZANNE, recovered from breast and uterine cancer, age 58

"When it looked like the neuropathy symptoms in my feet were going to be permanent, I was a bit discouraged. I was expecting them to go away eventually and it was difficult to accept that they wouldn't. My toes always feel like they're a bit frozen and they are sensitive – if I stub my toe it's very painful. But I focus now on how to work with it – it's easier than being angry about it."



## LYMPHEDEMA (SWELLING)

### What is it?

Lymphedema is swelling resulting from the build-up of fluid in body tissue, most commonly in the arms, legs or neck. People most at risk for lymphedema are those who have had lymph nodes removed during surgery (for example, breast cancer patients often have lymph nodes removed under their arm during surgery) and those who have had radiotherapy to treat breast or prostate cancer, melanoma of the arms or legs, or gynecological cancer (e.g., ovarian, uterine).

Lymphedema can be mild and improve quickly, or painful and last longer. It can occur right after surgery, or it can develop several months or years after treatment.



In addition to swelling, signs and symptoms of lymphedema include redness and pain. Fever could indicate that there is also an infection present.

### Why does it happen?

The removal of lymph nodes and radiotherapy, as well as the cancer itself in some cases, can damage the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system is basically a series of tubes, similar to blood vessels, that helps drain and circulate fluid throughout the body. If the system is damaged, fluid can collect in places where it shouldn't. Injury to the skin of the affected area (e.g., arm), such as a cut, burn or an insect bite, can increase the risk of lymphedema developing.

### How do I manage it?

Talk to your doctor about ways in which you can minimize the risk of developing lymphedema, and how you can relieve the pain and discomfort caused by the swelling if it does develop. You should always contact your doctor at the first sign of infection.

"Although lymphedema can occur in up to 30% of patients treated for breast cancer, it is important to remember that most patients won't develop lymphedema, and the majority of those who develop it will only have a mild form."

- Dr. Tarek Hijal, Radiation Oncologist



Some strategies for management include:

- Keep your skin clean and moisturized. This can help reduce the risk of bacteria getting into damaged skin and causing an infection.
- Wear gloves during activities that could damage the skin, to avoid cuts and burns that may cause an infection.
- Avoid getting injections or blood tests in the area that is affected, even if there is no swelling.
- Do exercises that will encourage circulation and help your body to drain the fluid. A therapist can give you advice about this, but examples include raising your arms or legs.
- Try regular massage therapy. Special massages called manual lymphatic drainage technique (provided by a licensed therapist) encourage circulation to help reduce swelling.
- Compression garments may help relieve symptoms or control lymphedema. Garments should be fitted by a specialist.

#### **LYMPHEDEMA THERAPY:**

##### **By referral**

The Lymphedema Support Centre of the Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation (5252 de Maisonneuve in Montreal) is the only medical centre in Quebec that specializes in the evaluation and treatment of lymphedema resulting from breast cancer. The centre offers evaluation, consultation and referral services to Quebec residents who are affected with primary or secondary lymphedema. Services are available upon referral by a doctor to the Lymphedema Support Centre of the Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation, by fax: [514 489-2178](tel:5144892178).

The JGH Lymphedema Clinic at the Segal Cancer Centre of the Jewish General Hospital is available to patients of the JGH. For information: tel: [514 340-8222](tel:5143408222) ext. 4287 or fax: [514-340-8727](tel:5143408727).

The Breast Clinic of the MUHC provides a Lymphedema Prevention and Therapy program to patients of the Breast Clinic of the MUHC and Royal Victoria Hospital. For information: tel: [514 934-1934](tel:5149341934) ext: 32829 or fax: [514 843-1692](tel:5148431692).



### **Private services**

The Lymphedema Association of Quebec offers information, support and clinical resources, as well as a list of certified lymphedema therapists. [www.en.infolympho.ca](http://www.en.infolympho.ca).

### **Compression garments**

The Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) offers a Compression Garments Program for the treatment of lymphedema. Coverage is available for those with primary or secondary lymphedema. For more information: tel: 1 800 561-9749.

[www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca/en/citizens/aid-programs/compression-garments-lymphedema/Pages/compression-garments-treatment-lymphedema.aspx](http://www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca/en/citizens/aid-programs/compression-garments-lymphedema/Pages/compression-garments-treatment-lymphedema.aspx).

## MOUTH AND TEETH PROBLEMS



### **What is it?**

Depending on the type of cancer involved, mouth or teeth problems may develop after treatment. Problems can include dry mouth, more cavities than normal, changes in, or loss of, sense of taste, discomfort or pain in the gums, stiffness in the jaw, and infection.

These issues often improve quickly, or they may go away slowly over a longer period of time. In some cases, they may be permanent.

### **Why does it happen?**

Radiation or surgery of the head or neck may interfere with the normal functioning of the salivary glands (that produce the saliva in your mouth), which affects the ability of your mouth to stay hydrated. This lack of normal hydration can lead to mouth and teeth problems. Some types of chemotherapy, as well as bone marrow transplants, may also cause these problems.

### **How do I manage it?**

- Speak with your doctor if you are experiencing any of the mouth or teeth issues described above.
- Make an appointment to see your dentist when you complete your cancer treatment to get advice about dental health.
- Drink lots of water to help keep your mouth hydrated.
- Try increasing your saliva by chewing sugarless gum. There are also saliva substitutes that can help hydrate your mouth.



## WEIGHT GAIN AND LOSS

### What is it?

Many people experience weight gain and/or weight loss during cancer treatment, although weight loss is more common.

### Why does it happen?

There are a number of reasons why people may gain weight during cancer treatment, such as: hormone therapy medications that slow the metabolism (how your body breaks down food) so that calories can't be burned by the body as quickly as normal; chemotherapy drugs that can cause fluid retention; steroid medications that can increase fatty tissue; eating more food due to cravings, anxiety, or to control nausea; or a decrease in activity because of loss of energy. Some people who gain weight during treatment find it difficult to lose when treatment is over.

Weight loss may result from a reduced appetite and a lack of interest in food, which is common for many patients during treatment. A lack of appetite may result from a change in metabolism because of medication, or from other side effects of treatment such as nausea, loss of taste, or pain.



KATIA, recovering from Hodgkin's Lymphoma, age 30

"I had lost all the weight that I gained from the steroids and now, for some reason, it's all back."

### How do I manage it?

Because you did not gain weight under normal circumstances, the way in which you will approach losing weight may be different from other weight loss programs. You may want to speak to your doctor, nutritionist or dietitian about the best ways for you to manage a healthy weight. Remember to be patient with yourself, and focus on the things that you can control, such as a healthy diet that will appeal to you.

If you need to regain your appetite and put on some weight, speak to your doctor, nutritionist or dietitian in this case as well; you may have digestion problems due to your

treatment that need to be addressed. There are also a number of strategies that you can try to help make food interesting again. Begin by eating foods that you like in small quantities. Light physical activity, such as walking, before you sit down for a meal may help increase your appetite. If you have difficulty swallowing, drinking small amounts of water while eating, eating softer foods such as bananas, soups and applesauce, or putting hard foods through a blender, should help make eating easier. **Find more information on nutrition in chapter 4 Regaining function.**





“Weight gain or weight loss can be worrisome for some patients. If this is a preoccupation for you, know that you can request to see your cancer centre’s nutritionist for a post-treatment consultation. You can also ask for a referral from your oncologist to the Cancer Rehabilitation Nutrition program or the Cancer Rehabilitation and Cachexia Clinic at the MUHC.”  
- Karine Gimmig, Pivot Nurse

## INCONTINENCE (LOSS OF BLADDER AND BOWEL CONTROL)

### What is it?

The loss of control of bladder or bowel function can persist after treatment. These issues are among the most unwelcome and bothersome for people who are trying to return to their normal daily lives.

### Why does it happen?

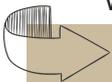
Treatment for cancers such as bladder, prostate, colon, rectal, and ovarian (among others) can affect the normal functioning of the bladder or bowels, which can result in a lack of control. You may find that you need to go to the bathroom suddenly or often. In some cases, surgery may result in complete incontinence.

### How do I manage it?

Speak with your doctor if you have any bladder or bowel difficulties, or have experienced any changes to bladder or bowel function. There are also a number of strategies that may help you manage or reduce the symptoms and awkwardness of these issues. These include:



- Kegel exercises ([www.canadiancontinence.ca/pdfs/en-pelvic-floor-exercise-stimulator.pdf](http://www.canadiancontinence.ca/pdfs/en-pelvic-floor-exercise-stimulator.pdf))
- Medication
- Incontinence pads and other hygiene products
- Adjusting your diet – a lot of foods can make loose bowels worse
- Emptying your bladder more often
- Creating a schedule for your outings and activities, and noting where toilets are located
- Support groups can also help you cope with incontinence and the stress that comes with this side effect, or if you need help coping with an ostomy.



## GO FURTHER

- The Canadian Continence Foundation  
705 750-4600 [www.canadiancontinence.ca](http://www.canadiancontinence.ca)
- Ileostomy/Colostomy Association of Montréal  
514 255-3041 [www.aicm-montreal.org](http://www.aicm-montreal.org)

## MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS (WOMEN)

### What is it?

Some women who undergo chemotherapy, radiation therapy to the pelvis, or hormone therapy experience menopause symptoms, such as irregular periods, hot flashes, vaginal dryness, weight gain, irritability or mood problems. These symptoms can be more severe than when menopause occurs naturally with age. In addition, menopause that is brought on by cancer treatment can put women at a higher risk of osteoporosis and heart problems.

### Why does it happen?

Menopause symptoms normally occur between the ages of 45 and 55 when a woman's body produces less estrogen and progesterone hormones. Women can experience early menopause when hormone production is reduced due to treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation treatment in the pelvic area, and hormone therapy.

### How do I manage it?

Many of the strategies for managing menopause symptoms brought on by cancer treatment are the same as for managing these symptoms in general:

- Avoid alcohol and caffeine as much as possible.
- If you are having hot flashes:
  - Drink lots of water throughout the day
  - Dress in layers so that you can remove clothes easily if you get too warm
  - Wear clothes that allow your skin to breathe (e.g. loose fitting, breathable fabric)
  - Sleep in a cool room
  - Use cotton sheets
  - Exercise regularly



In addition:

- Plan to meet with your gynecologist to find out about approaches that are best suited to reduce menopause symptoms in someone who has gone through cancer treatment. For example, women who have had certain types of breast cancer cannot take hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to manage menopause symptoms.
- Ask your doctor about strategies to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and heart problems. Your doctor may recommend a bone density test to check for osteoporosis.
- Ask your doctor if it is still necessary for you to use birth control if your period stopped when you started cancer treatment, which often happens in young women. It is also possible that with time your period will start again.



“Chemotherapy can bring about sudden menopause or similar symptoms. Don't hesitate to speak about your symptoms with your oncologist or family doctor.”

- Karine Gimmig, Pivot Nurse

## CHANGES IN SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY



### What is it?

Sexuality is a part of everyday life, like breathing, eating and sleeping. It includes the desire to be close and intimate with another person as well as the act of sex itself. Cancer treatment can affect this part of life, and may change sexual desire and sexual function in the short or long term, for both men and women.

### Why does it happen?

The desire for sex and the ability to engage in sexual activity can be affected by both physical and emotional changes to the body because of treatment.

- **Changes to the body or sex organs.** Sexual desire can be affected when a person is not feeling good about the changes to their body because of treatment, such as in the case of scars, weight change, a mastectomy or a loss of a limb, for example. Also, some treatments may change the function of the sex organs. Men who have had prostate cancer, or cancer of the penis or testes may experience erectile dysfunction (unable to have or keep an erection) because of nerve or blood vessel damage. Some women may experience pain during intercourse or a decrease in sensation due to surgery or treatment in the genital area.
- **Menopause symptoms.** For women, side effects such as vaginal dryness and hot flashes that can occur with early menopause brought on by treatment can reduce sexual desire, or make it more difficult to engage in sexual relations.
- **Emotional issues.** Some people may also be dealing with challenging emotions after treatment. Feeling stressed, anxious or depressed can affect sex drive.
- **Medications.** Some medications, such as hormone therapy, can have an effect on sexual desire.
- **Side effects.** Treatment side effects, such as fatigue, pain, and incontinence, can get in the way of sexual activity and intimacy.



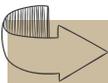
When you see this symbol, it means that if you are concerned about this topic, you may wish to have a discussion with your healthcare team.

## How do I manage it?

Intimacy is an important part of life. Sharing your feelings with your partner can make a big difference in helping to successfully include any changes related to sexuality into your intimate life. By speaking honestly, you and partner will be more able to talk through your concerns and find new ways to connect physically. Some of the things you can bring up include: sharing your fears or worries, telling your partner about any pain you are experiencing, and talking about trying different ways to be intimate. If you feel your emotions may be causing the changes to your sexuality, it may also be helpful to speak with a counselor or psychologist. If talking about sex with your partner is difficult, a sex therapist may be able to help you and your partner to speak more openly, and to find solutions. Speak to a trusted member of your healthcare team who should be able to find you the appropriate help you may need.

It may also be worth discussing any of the following issues with a professional:

- **Women.** You can ask your doctor about the various options that may be available to you if you are experiencing vaginal dryness and irritation, such as lubricant, creams, and vaginal dilators.
- **Men.** There are many different approaches available for men affected by erectile dysfunction, such as medication, counseling, and assistive devices.
- **Women and men.** Kegel exercises can help with muscle weakness in the genital area ([www.canadiancontinence.ca/pdfs/en-pelvic-floor-exercise-stimulator.pdf](http://www.canadiancontinence.ca/pdfs/en-pelvic-floor-exercise-stimulator.pdf)).



## GO FURTHER

For more detailed **information on sexuality and cancer**, see the publication from the Canadian Cancer Society:

[www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/living-with-cancer/sexuality-and-cancer/?region=qc](http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/living-with-cancer/sexuality-and-cancer/?region=qc).





## SECTION II. COPING WITH COGNITIVE CHANGES

The terms 'brain fog' or 'chemo brain' (for those who have had chemotherapy) describe symptoms of cognitive changes that can occur with cancer treatment. 'Cognitive' refers to mental activities such as thinking, understanding, organization and memory. The exact reasons for these changes are not clear; experts are still studying what causes cognitive changes with cancer treatment. Also, some people who have undergone cancer treatment are not noticeably affected by cognitive changes at all.

**Cognitive changes and their symptoms can be experienced in many different ways**, but people who have experienced cognitive changes with cancer treatment describe it basically as thinking more slowly and less effectively. They find that they cannot study, read, or watch an entire movie as they used to without getting tired, and difficulties sleeping are also common. These changes can affect life on a daily basis, at home and at work, by interfering with the ability to do or complete everyday tasks and activities. However, most of the time cognitive changes experienced because of treatment are not permanent.

If you feel you are experiencing cognitive changes, notify your doctor as soon as possible as they can help you find solutions to manage these symptoms. Note anything that seems different or unusual to you in a daily journal, even if it seems like you've made a simple mistake. This will help you when you are discussing the situation with your doctor. Depending on your doctor's evaluation of your symptoms, you may be referred to a cognitive specialist.



"The loss of concentration caused by chemotherapy treatment is normal and reversible, but can be frustrating for patients. Give yourself time, and trust that you will get better. If needed, your doctor or pivot nurse can refer you to a post-chemotherapy rehabilitation clinic."

- Karine Gimmig, Pivot Nurse



## **WHEN COGNITIVE CHANGES APPEAR – SUDDEN VS. GRADUAL**

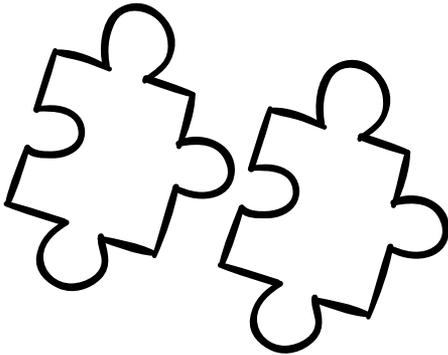
Cognitive changes can appear during cancer treatment, whether suddenly right after treatment, or gradually after treatment as a late effect.

### **Sudden cognitive changes**

The symptoms of sudden cognitive changes usually include the following: difficulty concentrating and understanding things, changes in sleep, feeling agitated, confusion, and memory loss. Sudden cognitive changes happen for only a short time for most people.

### **Gradual cognitive changes**

These changes develop slowly over time, sometimes not appearing until after treatment, and can last longer as a long-term effect. The symptoms of gradual cognitive changes include: memory problems, difficulties with multi-tasking, problem solving, and making decisions, personality changes, trouble with organization or following directions, and confusion. Gradual cognitive changes are not always reversible, but there are techniques and strategies that can be used to lessen their effect on function and daily life.



## **MANAGING COGNITIVE CHANGES**



If you are dealing with cognitive changes, it is best to try to be as relaxed as possible – stress can make the symptoms worse. It may also help to talk to people you trust about what you are experiencing: friends, family or a professional. Although cognitive issues can be very challenging, try to stay optimistic. In general, these kinds of changes are temporary and can be managed effectively.

# TOP TIPS



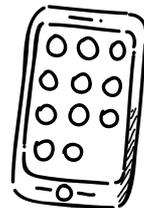
## Coping techniques:

- **Cognitive exercises** are recommended to help improve cognitive ability. These include crosswords, puzzles, painting, playing an instrument or learning a new hobby. See [www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/brain\\_games.html](http://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/brain_games.html) for more examples.
- **Prepare your day in advance** and organize what you need to do for that particular day.
- **Maintain a regular daily routine.** Don't try to fit too many things into your day and avoid multi-tasking.
- **Write everything down.** Work with lists and reminders in your agenda or smartphone. Highlight important information and emergency contacts. Put sticky notes in your home or office in strategic places where you will see them – to remind you to take out the trash, go grocery shopping, email an important document, etc.
- **Try new methods to memorise things,** such as singing the thing you need to remember or repeating it several times.
- **For people facing 'brain fog' at work,** an occupational therapist or a rehabilitation consultant can help guide you through your return to work and help you maximise your skills. Ask your doctor if a referral is possible, and find out if your insurance provider offers coverage for this kind of therapy. **See section IV Programs to help you move forward, page 31 for more information on available services.**
- **Talk to your employer about the best ways for you to work,** from home or part-time for instance. Plan to return to work gradually, one step at a time. **For more information, refer to chapter 5 Back to work.**
- **For people dealing with long-term cognitive changes,** it may be helpful to get rehabilitation and cognitive training from a professional.

## GO FURTHER

### **DIGITAL TOOLS FOR LISTS, NOTES, DIARIES, ETC. (SMARTPHONE APPS)**

- Evernote  **EVERNOTE**
- Any.Do  Any.DO
- Remember the Milk  *remember the milk*
- Wunderlist 
- Google Tasks 



# SECTION III. MANAGING SIDE EFFECTS WITH HEALTHY LIVING

Nutrition, physical activity, sleep and emotional balance are key areas to focus on to help effectively manage side effects.

## **NUTRITION**

Nutrition is central to your recovery. Feeding and hydrating yourself well results in better physical and mental health. It can also help minimize side effects, such as fatigue, anemia, and digestive problems. Good nutrition includes eating a healthy balance of fruits, vegetables, proteins and whole grains. If you have specific needs or require a special diet, talk to your doctor, a nutritionist or a dietician. **For more information about nutrition, see chapter 4 Regaining function.**



## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Physical activity produces chemicals in the body that help the brain to regenerate and promote wellbeing. By being active, you can help improve many symptoms such as pain, fatigue, anxiety and depression, and perhaps, in certain cases, prevent them. Physical activity can include anything from walking and yoga to aerobics and jogging – whatever you feel capable of doing. Even mild physical activities like walking may help reduce stress and anxiety caused by side effects. Yoga uses a combination of breathing exercises, meditation, and poses to stretch and flex various muscle groups. Researchers have found that yoga may relieve chronic pain, headaches, and insomnia.

## **MENTAL ACTIVITY**

If you are dealing with cognitive side effects – difficulties with concentration, memory, organization, etc. – it is important to exercise your mind as well as your body. **Find out more about cognitive exercises in the Top Tips, page 26.**

## **SLEEP**

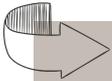
Sleeping well and for as long as you need to feel rested will help improve your ability to focus and concentrate during the day. **See page 8, Get a good night's sleep.**



*When you see this symbol, it means that if you are concerned about this topic, you may wish to have a discussion with your healthcare team.*

## EMOTIONAL BALANCE

It is important to pay attention to your emotional wellbeing when you look at how to best manage your side effects and symptoms. During and after treatment, you may find that your emotions change more – and more often – than usual. It is not uncommon to feel relief about finishing cancer treatment and anger about having to go through cancer treatment all in the same day. Depending on your experience, your emotions may be more positive (grateful to be alive) or they may be mostly negative (anxious for the future) – it's all normal. Talking about your emotions may be an effective way to help achieve a balance for all the feelings you may be experiencing, and allow you to express and acknowledge them. This can be an important step to understanding and working on all these feelings if needed. You may also benefit from support groups at this point in your life.



## GO FURTHER

- **Cedars CanSupport:** post-treatment support group
- **Hope & Cope:** peer-mentoring, support groups, seminars
- **Fondation Virage:** programs for post-treatment patients

**See section IV *Programs to help you move forward*, page 31 for information about these programs.**

### ONLINE :

[www.CancerConnection.ca](http://www.CancerConnection.ca): peer support and discussion groups

[www.cancerchatcanada.ca](http://www.cancerchatcanada.ca): online program offering emotional and psychological support for people with experiences of cancer

[www.rubanrose.org](http://www.rubanrose.org): discussion forum offered by the Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation

**For more information about feelings and emotions after treatment, see chapter 3 *Emotions, fears, and relationships*.**

**Communication** can also be a significant part of healthy living and managing side effects. It is not only important to communicate effectively with your family and friends about what you are going through physically and emotionally, but also with your doctor and healthcare team. By letting them know what is bothering you, and describing your issues as accurately as possible, they will be able to provide you with the best possible support.

# TOP TIPS



## HOW TO SPEAK EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS

Your treating doctor\* is the best person to advise you about the possible symptoms and effects of your particular treatment. They are also able to evaluate the effects of your treatment in terms of your specific health situation. Prepare yourself in advance to speak to them about your side effects and how to manage them, by thinking about the details of what you have been experiencing. The goal is to be well prepared so that you can meet the challenges of potential side effects by understanding the causes and planning how to manage them.

The following are some suggestions about how to **communicate effectively** with your treating doctor, or with your family doctor when you return to regular care.

- Use a daily journal to keep track of any effects and symptoms you notice. Note in your journal how these symptoms are affecting your life. Be as detailed as possible. You can then use this information to summarize clearly what you have been experiencing for your doctor.
- Bring your journal with you when you see your doctor. To help you describe your symptoms, ask yourself the following 3 questions, adapting them to your situation, and write down your answers.
  1. Are my \_\_\_\_\_ problems getting in the way of enjoying my life? If yes, how?
  2. How bad are these problems?
  3. Which symptoms are the most stressful?

To also help with your discussion with your doctor about side effects:

- Ask about other signs and symptoms to watch out for and how to manage them.
- Ask about specialist(s) that could be recommended to treat the side effect(s), and if a referral is possible.
- Inform your family physician about your treatments. Bring a list of all the treatments and medications so far received to your next appointment.



\* By treating doctor we mean the doctor who is most responsible for your care when you are getting ready to return to work. This might be your oncologist or it could be your GP for example.



Complementary therapies are treatments that are used in addition to conventional medical treatment. These types of therapies usually use a holistic approach, which means they consider the whole person in evaluation and treatment, not only a symptom or the part of the body that is affected. The goal of complementary therapies is to help improve the individual's overall physical and emotional health.

Research has found that complementary therapies may help relieve some symptoms and side effects of cancer treatment. Some examples of these therapies include:

### **Acupuncture**

Acupuncture uses very tiny needles and/or pressure (acupressure) to stimulate points on the body. This is thought to release chemicals in the brain, such as beta-endorphin and serotonin, that may help relieve pain. Acupuncture may also help reduce chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, and help relieve hot flashes, dry mouth, headaches, fatigue, sleep problems, appetite loss, diarrhea, constipation, weight changes, anxiety, swallowing difficulties and lymphedema.

### **Massage**

Massage may be very helpful to reduce pain, tension, stress, anxiety, depression, sleep problems and fatigue.

### **Meditation**

Meditation is a way of focussing attention to calm the mind and relax the body. It may help decrease chronic pain, and has been seen to improve mood and other aspects relating to a person's quality of life. There are many different types of meditation; it can be done alone or guided by someone else in a group setting.

### **Music therapy**

In music therapy, a therapist who is familiar with the emotional and physical concerns of the patient uses music to help the patient achieve a sense of general wellbeing and move through recovery.

For more information about complementary therapies, see the link and the sections of this kit listed below.

**Canadian Cancer Society** booklet on complementary therapies at [www.cancer.ca/en/support-and-services/resources/publications/?region=qc](http://www.cancer.ca/en/support-and-services/resources/publications/?region=qc).

**See section IV *Programs to help you move forward*, on the following page to find available resources in the community.**

## SECTION IV. PROGRAMS TO HELP YOU MOVE FORWARD

Programs and support groups can be very effective in helping people understand and manage side effects after cancer treatment. It is also important to remember that it may be easier to maintain an emotional balance during your recovery if you are supported by professionals and people who have had similar experiences, as well as by family and friends. Below are some resources available in the community.

### COMMUNITY SERVICES

**CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY** The CCS can help find access to free or private specialists to help you with symptom management, and help you find accredited complementary therapists: 1 888 939-3333, or use the online Community Services Locator at: [www.info.cancer.ca/CSD/searchCon.aspx?id=3172&Lang=F&sri=N](http://www.info.cancer.ca/CSD/searchCon.aspx?id=3172&Lang=F&sri=N).

**CARREFOUR MULTISPORTS** offers Programme *Activie*, which is a partnership between Hôpital de la Cité-de-la-Santé in Laval and Carrefour Multisports. This rehabilitation program, directed by a kinesiologist, helps people regain function after cancer treatment. The program is primarily for Hôpital Cité-de-la-Santé patients, but if you reside in Laval or north of the island of Montreal you may be able to join if there is space available. For more information, call Julie Théberge at Carrefour Multisports 450 687-1857.

**CEDARS CANSUPPORT** (at the McGill University Health Centre) provides a wide variety of English and French support programs at no charge, such as educational and practical services, support groups and complementary therapies. Services and workshops include massage therapy, meditation, yoga, art and drama therapy, reiki, as well as the *Look Good Feel Better* program, and *Brain fog* program. Find their schedule online at [www.cansupport.ca](http://www.cansupport.ca) or contact them at 514 934-1934 ext. 31666 for more information.

**QUEBEC CANCER FOUNDATION** offers physiotherapy and rehabilitation services for post-treatment patients (up to one year). [www.fqc.qc.ca](http://www.fqc.qc.ca) or 514 527-2194.

**FONDATION VIRAGE** (Hôpital Notre Dame) offers a personalized exercise program for people who have completed treatment. The program includes assessment and individual follow-up with a physiotherapist and group classes. See [www.viragecancer.org/services/activites/kinesiologie](http://www.viragecancer.org/services/activites/kinesiologie).

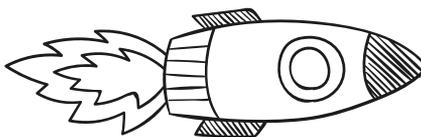
**HAPPY TREE YOGA.** The Gentle Yoga classes are complementary for people undergoing or recovering from cancer treatment. Get more information at [www.happytreeyoga.com](http://www.happytreeyoga.com).

**HOPE & COPE WELLNESS CENTRE – LOU'S HOUSE** (Jewish General Hospital) offers different bilingual programs and support groups that range from practical services, complementary therapies, exercises and rehabilitation to peer mentoring.

- **Activonco:** setting you on the path to wellness – rehabilitation program for people living with cancer or up to one year after diagnosis with a physiotherapist team and exercises physiologists. Rehabilitation can help to cope with some side effects as fatigue, nausea, swelling, pain and physical changes.
- **Nutrition:** *Hope and Cope* offers an 8-week series on weight loss called 'Eating well as part of a healthy lifestyle', which covers nutrition and exercise for people who have finished their cancer treatment.
- **Complementary Therapies:** *Hope and Cope* offers stress reduction courses (meditation, relaxation, exploration) and creative arts (choir, DIY, painting, etc.) as a way to express your feelings and emotions.

For more information, contact *Hope and Cope* at [www.hopeandcope.ca/wellness](http://www.hopeandcope.ca/wellness). To speak to the Exercise Program Coordinator for **Activonco** you can call the Exercise Program Coordinator at 514 340-3616, ext. 2120. For information about other wellness programs call 514 340-8222, ext. 5531.

**WEST ISLAND CANCER WELLNESS CENTRE** They offer free services for people up to one year after cancer treatment, including private counseling, reflexology, healing touch and acupuncture. Find more information on their website: [www.wicwc.org](http://www.wicwc.org).



## PRIVATE SERVICES

### **MCGILL COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CHIP)**

Health professionals from the McGill University teaching hospitals work with recovering patients to help them improve long-term health and quality of life through exercise, nutrition, and psycho-social programs. Check with your insurance company about coverage, or contact **CHIP** to inquire about financial assistance.

[www.chiprehab.com/english/main.html](http://www.chiprehab.com/english/main.html) or 514 489-6630.

**CLINIQUES D'ÉVALUATION ET DE RÉADAPTATION** – post-cancer treatment program. The Cliniques d'Évaluation et de Réadaptation (CERs) are private clinics dedicated to interdisciplinary occupational rehabilitation. They offer **VITALITY**, a post-cancer treatment program that includes physical and cognitive rehabilitation, psychological counseling, occupational therapy for return to work, personalised exercise programs, and workshops on various themes of interest to people in recovery. The professionals at the clinic work in communication with treating doctors, insurance companies, and employers. There are 6 clinics across the Montreal region. For information about the program: [www.evaluation-readaptation.com/services/programme-vitalite-post-cancer/#](http://www.evaluation-readaptation.com/services/programme-vitalite-post-cancer/#) or 514 335-3373.

**MONTREAL THERAPY CENTRE** offers individual, couples, and family counseling at sliding fee scale rates determined by gross salary income. For information: [www.montrealtherapy.com](http://www.montrealtherapy.com) or 514 244-1290.

**THE ARGYLE INSTITUTE** offers individual, couples, family counseling. Rates are determined by household income. For information: [www.argyleinstitute.org](http://www.argyleinstitute.org) or 514 931-5629.

## BY REFERRAL

It is also helpful to speak to your doctor about symptom management and possible referrals to specialists who may be able to help you. Ask if visits to these specialists are covered under the provincial healthcare plan (**RAMQ** 514 864-3411 or 1 800 561-9749), and verify what services are covered under your private insurance plan. Following are clinics and programs available to post-treatment patients on referral by their oncologist.

**THE MCGILL CANCER NUTRITION - REHABILITATION PROGRAM**, available at the Jewish General Hospital and the MUHC, provides nutritional counseling and physical rehabilitation to help combat common symptoms associated with cancer.

Information: [www.mcgill.ca/cnr/about-program](http://www.mcgill.ca/cnr/about-program).

Jewish General Hospital: 514 340-8222 ext. 3150.

MUHC: 514 934-1934 ext. 31837.

**THE CANCER REHABILITATION AND CACHEXIA CLINIC** at the MUHC offers rehabilitation, nutritional counseling, and psycho-social services.

[www.muhc.ca/cancer/page/cancer-rehabilitation-and-cachexia-clinic](http://www.muhc.ca/cancer/page/cancer-rehabilitation-and-cachexia-clinic).

**LYMPHEDEMA THERAPY SERVICES.** See page 16 for information about available lymphedema support services.

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS AFTER CANCER TREATMENT:

### QUEBEC CANCER FOUNDATION

[www.fqc.qc.ca](http://www.fqc.qc.ca)

[www.fqc.qc.ca/en/information/after-cancer/medical-follow-up-2](http://www.fqc.qc.ca/en/information/after-cancer/medical-follow-up-2)

### CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

- Life after cancer:

[www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/life-after-cancer/?region=qc](http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/life-after-cancer/?region=qc)

- Late and long-term effects of treatment:

[www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/life-after-cancer/late-and-long-term-effects-of-treatment/?region=qc](http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/life-after-cancer/late-and-long-term-effects-of-treatment/?region=qc)

- Detailed information of symptoms, their causes and management:

[www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/diagnosis-and-treatment/managing-side-effects/?region=qc](http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/diagnosis-and-treatment/managing-side-effects/?region=qc)

- Treatment of pain:

[www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/diagnosis-and-treatment/pain/?region=qc](http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/diagnosis-and-treatment/pain/?region=qc)

- Complementary Therapies:

Practical Guide [www.cancer.ca/~media/cancer.ca/CW/publications/Complementary%20therapies/Complementary-therapies-2014-EN.pdf](http://www.cancer.ca/~media/cancer.ca/CW/publications/Complementary%20therapies/Complementary-therapies-2014-EN.pdf)



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The information included here is offered for your education and guidance, and should always be considered in conjunction with your personal situation and medical condition. Readers should not delay seeking or disregard professional medical advice because of information encountered in this kit. This information is intended to help prepare you to address challenges you may have during your recovery, and to create a plan, set realistic goals, and be able to discuss them with your healthcare team, as well as with family and friends.

All care has been taken to ensure that the information contained here is accurate and based on current evidence at the time of publication. Please note that we are not responsible for the quality of the services or information provided by other organizations listed in the booklet. We do not endorse any particular service, product, treatment or therapy. If the website you are accessing is no longer active, please use the bolded part of the address and then search the particular topic you want. Some of the URLs (website addresses) included in this booklet may change as organizations update their information.

The names of patients have been changed to protect their privacy.



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Rebuilding your life after cancer treatment

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