

## Lifestyle management

You can play the most important role in cancer prevention by optimizing your lifestyle.

Smoking is implicated in many cancers.

If you smoke – consider quitting and talk to your health care professional about supports for smoking cessation. [www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca)

Diet – Aim for a healthy body weight. Eat a balanced diet from the four food groups. Choose more fruits, vegetables, whole grains & legumes. Limit red meat and avoid processed meats or overly refined foods. Limit high calorie foods, including food high in sugar and fats, which are often low in fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Canada’s Food Guide:  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php)

American Institute for Cancer Research:  
[www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)

Dial-a-Dietitian:

Vancouver: 604.732.9191

Toll Free: 1.800.667.3438

Exercise – recommendations suggest 30 - 60 minutes per day of physical activity. This can be broken down into smaller time frames several times per day.

## Other available supports

There may be a Colorectal Cancer Support Group in your area offering education, information and support.

Contact Patient & Family Counselling at the BC Cancer for further information or search the BC Cancer website:

[www.bccancer.bc.ca/emotional-support](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/emotional-support)

The BC Cancer library, also available at this link offers many valuable resources.

### Helpful Websites

[www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

[www.colorectalcancercanada.com](http://www.colorectalcancercanada.com)

[www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org)

[www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net)

## Your follow-up program

Follow-up	Dates
Doctor visit & CEA blood test	Every 3-6 months for 3 years then every 6 months for 2 more years
Colonoscopy	Once in the first year then every 3 - 5 years
Abdominal & Pelvic imaging	Once a year for 3 years
Chest imaging (if rectal cancer)	Once a year for 5 years

BC Cancer - Abbotsford  
32900 Marshall Road  
Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 0C2  
Phone: 604.851.4710  
Toll-free: 1.877.547.3777

BC Cancer - Kelowna  
399 Royal Avenue  
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 5L3  
Phone: 250.712.3900  
Toll-free: 1.888.563.7773

BC Cancer - Prince George  
1215 Lethbridge Street  
Prince George, B.C. V2N 7E9  
Phone: 250.645.7300  
Toll-free: 1.855.775.7300

BC Cancer - Surrey  
13750 96th Avenue  
Surrey, B.C. V3V 1Z2  
Phone: 604.930.2098  
Toll-free: 1.523.2885

BC Cancer - Vancouver  
600 West 10th Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 4E6  
Phone: 604.877.6000  
Toll-free: 1.800.663.3333

BC Cancer - Victoria  
2410 Lee Avenue  
Victoria, B.C. V8R 6V5  
Phone: 250.519.5500  
Toll-free: 1.800.670.3322



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Provincial Health Services Authority

## Follow-up Program after colorectal cancer treatments



[www.bccancer.bc.ca](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca)

## You are part of the team!

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The transition period after completing your cancer treatment can be a time of conflicting emotions. You may be happy to be finished treatment but also a bit worried or anxious about the next steps. You may wonder who will be watching out for you now that your cancer specialists are no longer seeing you on a regular basis.

Follow-up care after treatment is very important and as part of the team, you can take an active part in your care.

There are recommended guidelines for follow-up care after colorectal cancer treatments. The main goals are a healthy lifestyle and surveillance in case of relapse.

The following guidelines will help you take charge of your health and develop an action plan with your primary care practitioner.

## Your medical team

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Your medical team includes your oncologist, family doctor or nurse practitioner, your surgeon and perhaps gastroenterologist. Usually your primary care physician or perhaps a nurse practitioner will be responsible for coordinating the recommended follow-up care. In some cases, your surgeon will be responsible for your follow-up care. Your surgeon may discuss this with you.

It is best to have a consistent health care professional rather than relying on walk-in-clinics.

Your oncologist provides ongoing reports to your family physician while you are receiving treatment and will also provide a summary and recommendations once your treatments are finished. Although there are standard guidelines, there may be some specific recommendations for your follow-up.

Your family physician will contact the oncologist if there are any concerns with your follow-up examination or test results.

## Recommended visits

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Visit your family doctor every 3 - 6 months for the first five years. Your doctor will examine you, review your test results, and discuss any concerns you may have.

Continue to see your doctor annually after the first 5 years.

### Carcinogenic Embryonic Antigen (CEA)

CEA is a tumor marker that can be helpful in detecting a recurrence. A rising CEA may indicate a need to do further investigations.

The CEA is a blood test that should be done every 3-6 months for the first 3 years then every 6 months for the next 2 years. There is no reason to continue beyond this time unless there are other symptoms

### Colonoscopy

Follow-up colonoscopies are important as they may detect polyps or changes inside the bowel that may indicate a recurrence of cancer. You will be referred to a gastroenterologist or your surgeon for a colonoscopy.

It is recommended you have a complete colonoscopy within the first year after your surgery. Repeat colonoscopies are recommended 3 - 5 years thereafter, depending on the findings. These recommendations will differ if you have a diagnosed hereditary cancer syndrome.

### Imaging & X-rays

Imaging is recommended once a year for 3 years. For abdominal and pelvic imaging, this may be by CT scan or ultrasound. For chest imaging (if you had rectal cancer), this may be by CT or chest x-ray