

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

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

American Institute for Cancer Research:
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 BCCA for further information or search the BCCA web site:

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/default.htm>

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

Helpful Websites

www.cancer.ca

www.colorectal-cancer.ca

www.coloncancer canada.ca

www.livestrong.org

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 5 years
Chest imaging (if rectal cancer)	Once a year for 5 years

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

Sindi Ahluwalia Hawkins Centre
for the Southern Interior
399 Royal Avenue
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 5L3
Phone: 250.712.3900
Toll-free: 1.888.563.7773

Fraser Valley Centre
13750 96th Avenue
Surrey, B.C. V3V 1Z2
Phone: 604.930.2098
Toll-free: 1.523.2885

Centre for the North
1215 Lethbridge Street
Prince George, B.C. V2N 7E9
Phone: 250.645.7300
Toll-free: 1.855.775.7300

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

Vancouver Island Centre
2410 Lee Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8R 6V5
Phone: 250.519.5500
Toll-free: 1.800.670.3322

 **BC Cancer Agency**
CARE + RESEARCH
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

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BC Cancer Agency

CARE + RESEARCH

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Follow-up Program after colorectal cancer treatments



www.bccancer.bc.ca

You are part of the team!

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

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

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)

The 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 5 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.