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After Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumor Treatment

Get information about how to live well after pancreatic neuroendocrine tumor (NET) treatment and make decisions about next steps.

Living as a Cancer Survivor

For many people, cancer treatment often raises questions about next steps as a survivor.

- [Living as a Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumor Survivor](#)

Living as a Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumor Survivor

- [Keeping health insurance and copies of your medical records](#)
- [Can I lower the risk of my cancer progressing or coming back?](#)
- [If the cancer comes back](#)
- [Second cancers after treatment](#)
- [Getting emotional support](#)

For some people with a pancreatic neuroendocrine tumor (NET), treatment can remove or destroy the cancer. Completing treatment can be both stressful and exciting. You may be relieved to finish treatment, but find it hard not to worry about cancer coming back. This is very common if you've had cancer.

For other people, the cancer might never go away completely, or it might come back in another part of the body. These people may stay on drug therapy or get regular treatments with chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or other therapies to help keep the cancer under control for as long as possible. Learning to live with cancer that does not go away can be difficult and very stressful.

Follow-up care

When treatment ends, your doctors will still want to watch you closely. It is very important to go to all your follow-up appointments. During these visits, your doctors will ask if you are having any problems, examine you, and order lab tests or x-rays and scans if needed to look for signs of cancer or treatment side effects. Almost any cancer treatment can have [side effects](#)¹. Some may last for a few weeks to months, but others might last a long time. Some side effects might not even show up until years after you have finished treatment. It's important for all pancreatic NET survivors, to let their health care team know about any new symptoms or problems, because they could be caused by the cancer coming back or by a new disease or [second cancer](#).

Doctor visits and follow-up tests

Your schedule of doctor visits, exams, and tests will depend on the original extent of your cancer, the specific type of pancreatic NET you had, how it was treated, and other factors.

Doctors often advise most people who have had their pancreatic NET completely removed to return in 6-12 months for a complete physical exam and certain imaging tests to look for any signs of recurrence. Blood and or urine tests may be helpful for some patients. One year after surgery, further visits with labs and imaging may be recommended every 6-12 months to continue for 10 years.

Follow-up visits and imaging tests may be slightly more frequent if your cancer could not be completely removed with surgery, or if the cancer has spread to other organs like the liver or is growing very quickly.

Ask your doctor for a survivorship care plan

Talk with your doctor about developing a [survivorship care plan](#)² for you. This plan might include:

- A suggested schedule for follow-up exams and tests
 - A list of possible late- or long-term side effects from your treatment, including what to watch for and when you should contact your doctor
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in [Second Cancers After Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumor](#).

Getting emotional support

Some amount of feeling depressed, anxious, or worried is normal when pancreatic NET is a part of your life. Some people are affected more than others. But everyone can benefit from help and support from other people, whether friends and family, religious groups, support groups, professional counselors, or others. Learn more in [Life After Cancer](#)¹⁴.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/survivorship-care-plans.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/screening.html
4. www.cancer.org/cancer/financial-insurance-matters/understanding-health-insurance.html
5. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/keeping-copies-of-important-medical-records.html
6. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco.html
7. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/eat-healthy.html
8. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/get-active.html
9. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/take-control-your-weight.html
10. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco.html
11. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/complementary-and-integrative-medicine/dietary-supplements.html
12. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/pancreatic-neuroendocrine-tumor/treating/pnets-by-extent.html

Tumors: A Case-Control Study. *Scientific Reports*. 2016;6:36073. doi:10.1038/srep36073.

Harms of Cigarette Smoking and Health Benefits of Quitting was originally published by the National Cancer Institute. NCI website. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/cessation-fact-sheet#q9>. Reviewed December 19, 2017. Accessed October 9, 2018.

Haugvik SP, Hedenström P, Korsæth E, et al. Diabetes, smoking, alcohol use, and family history of cancer as risk factors for pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Neuroendocrinology*. 2015;101(2):133-42. doi: 10.1159/000375164. Epub 2015 Jan 22.

Leoncini E, Carioli G, La Vecchia C, Boccia S, Rindi G. Risk factors for neuroendocrine neoplasms: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Ann Oncol*. 2016 Jan;27(1):68-81. doi: 10.1093/annonc/mdv505. Epub 2015 Oct 20.

National Comprehensive Cancer Network. NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology: Neuroendocrine and Adrenal <https://www.nccn.org/guidelines/pdf/1.2017-1>

Second Cancers after Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumors

People who have or had a pancreatic NET can get any type of second cancer, but they have a higher risk than the general population of developing:

- [Prostate cancer](#)¹
- [Female breast cancer](#)²
- [Colon and rectal cancer](#)³
- [Lung cancer](#)⁴

What can you do?

Many people with a pancreatic NET are treated with medicines that keep the disease in check without curing the disease, so they need to see their doctors regularly. Let your doctor know if you have any new symptoms or problems. They could be from the pancreatic NET getting worse or from a new disease or cancer.

All people with a pancreatic NET should [avoid tobacco smoke](#)⁵. Smoking is linked to an increased risk of many cancers and might further increase the risk of some of the second cancers seen in patients with pancreatic NETs. They should also keep up with [early detection \(screening\) tests](#)⁶ for other types of cancer.

To [help maintain good health](#)⁷, pancreatic NET survivors should also:

- Get to and stay at a healthy weight
 - Keep physically active and limit the time you spend sitting or lying down
- Follow a healthy eating pattern that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and limits or avoids red and les11r1s6occreatic NET can get any 429n you do?,sQ BT 1 0

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer.html
3. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colon-rectal-cancer.html
4. www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lung-cancer.html
5. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco.html
6. www.cancer.org/cancer/screening.html
7. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity.html
8. www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/alcohol-use-and-cancer.html
9. www.cancer.org/cancer/survivorship/long-term-health-concerns/second-cancers-in-adults.html

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medical writing.

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