

After Cancer Treatment: Health Tips Everyone Needs To Know

(NAPSA)—If you or someone you know has a history of cancer, it is important to be aware of the potential health consequences from cancer and its treatment. Frequently, patients and families are not informed or do not recall discussions that occurred during the stress-filled days after diagnosis about such potential problems as pain, depression, infertility and other physical and emotional changes. Regardless of whether problems are temporary or permanent, most can be managed.

To begin to address the many and varied health-related needs of long-term cancer survivors, the *American Journal of Nursing (AJN)* recently released a report, based on a July 2005 symposium, that offers action strategies and recommendations.

“The late effects of cancer and treatment for survivors diagnosed as adults remain poorly documented,” said Pamela J. Haylock, MA, RN, symposium co-director, cancer care consultant and doctoral student at the University of Texas Medical Branch School of Nursing in Galveston, TX. “Yet up to 75 percent of survivors have some health deficits related to their cancers and therapies. Knowing about potential risks and learning and using risk reduction strategies are important steps in survivors’ recovery.”

Nurses recommend that cancer survivors heed the following advice:

- Incorporate regular exercise, stress management, a healthful diet and weight control as part of a healthy lifestyle.

- Schedule regular health checkups.

- Ask your oncology team for a written summary of your cancer diagnosis, treatments, tests and recommended follow-up once treatment is complete. Create a



folder to organize diagnostic and laboratory reports, and give it to your current health care provider to make a copy for his or her records.

- Ask your nurse or physician to help you and your caregivers learn about possible long-term effects of your cancer therapy and ways to prevent or minimize them. Effects differ from person to person; therefore, educating yourself is important.

- Inform physicians and nurses about your previous cancer history, treatment, current medications and long-term effects you may experience, including infertility, early menopause, indigestion, dry mouth or taste changes, constipation, diarrhea, sleep issues, fatigue, dry skin, memory loss, changes in thinking, vision or hearing problems, depression, relationship/sexuality issues, anxiety, confidence issues, pain, tingling, or numbness or swelling in the fingers and toes.

- Look for resources to assist with any physical, emotional or financial issues that you may experience. Helpful Internet sites are www.acor.org, www.cancer.org, and www.canceradvocacy.org.

For more information about the AJN report, please visit <http://www.NursingCenter.com/AJNcancersurvivors>.