Follow-up Care for Women Who Have Been Treated for Gynecologic Cancer

This information explains follow-up care for women who have been treated for gynecologic cancer at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

Now that you have finished your treatment for gynecologic cancer, you will begin follow-up care. These visits are an important part of your care. They let you and your doctor discuss any new findings or symptoms and make sure you’re healing from your treatment. They also help increase the chance of finding any sign of the cancer returning.

Don’t wait for a scheduled visit if you have new symptoms. Call your doctor’s office to discuss any concerns in between visits.

Early Follow-up Care

Once your treatment ends, you will begin your follow-up care with your doctors at MSK. You may see different doctors at your follow-up visits. For example, you may see your surgeon at the first visit and your medical oncologist (cancer doctor) at your next visit. If you had radiation therapy, you may see your radiation oncologist at the third visit.

At these visits, you will have tests done, such as a physical exam, a pelvic exam, a Pap smear, or blood work. Your doctor may also order other tests, such as scans and tumor markers. Tumor markers are blood tests that look for proteins that may show if the cancer has come back.
Ongoing Follow-up Care

After the early follow-up care period, you may receive care from a nurse practitioner (NP) in our Survivorship Program instead of your MSK doctors. Survivorship NPs are part of MSK’s gynecologic cancer team. Like your doctors, your NP will examine you and order tests during your visits. They will also coordinate with other healthcare professionals, such as dietitians, sexual health specialists, and integrative medicine providers to enhance your health.

Your NP will also address your long-term physical and emotional needs you may have. This can include helping you deal with any side effects of treatment and making sure that you’re getting all the care that you need. After each visit, your NP will send information about your care to your local primary care doctor.

Routine Healthcare

In addition to your follow-up care at MSK, you should have routine healthcare for the rest of your life. See your primary care doctor for regular check-ups and for problems not related to cancer.

Your primary care doctor should discuss general health issues with you. These include managing your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, eating well and exercising, sexual health and fertility issues, and quitting smoking (if you smoke).

Other routine healthcare includes:

- A mammogram every year beginning at age 40, or as recommended by your doctor.
- A bone density scan as recommended by your doctor
- A colonoscopy every 5 to 10 years beginning at age 50.
- A blood test measuring the lipid (fat) levels in your blood, including cholesterol and triglycerides. Your doctor or nurse will tell you if you need to have this done each year.
- A flu vaccine every year.
- Pneumonia vaccination
Other tests and cancer screenings recommended by your doctor.

Your doctor may recommend a different schedule based on your medical history and physical exam. Follow the instructions given to you by your doctor.

Resources for Survivors

Our MSK Resources for Life After Cancer (RLAC) Program offers social support, education, and counseling for people who have finished treatment. For a list of services, go to: www.mskcc.org/experience/living-beyond-cancer/services-survivors or call 646-888-8106. For more information on survivorship, go to: www.mskcc.org/experience/living-beyond-cancer.

You won’t see your healthcare team as often as you did during treatment. You may feel anxious about this but most people tell us that this feeling decreases over time. There are resources to help you with these feelings. RLAC and the MSK Counseling Center offer a variety of counseling services. For more information, go to www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/counseling-support/counseling-outpatients or call 646-888-0100.

Your well-being is important to us. Please keep all of your follow-up appointments. If you have any questions or concerns, talk with your doctor or nurse.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.