Caring for Colorectal Cancer Survivors

**What to do:**

- Annual physical exam
- Annual digital rectal exam in patients who were treated for anal cancer and received radiation therapy
- Colonoscopy surveillance (per gastroenterologist or clinical genetics recommendations)
  - Generally every 5 years if prior was normal
  - May be more frequent in patients with genetic syndromes
- Assess for and treat long-term and late effects:
  - Distress, depression, and anxiety
  - Peripheral neuropathy
  - Bowel, bladder, sexual dysfunction
- Advise healthy habits (exercise, weight loss)

**What NOT to do:**

- Routine lab tests, including CEA >5 yrs post diagnosis
- Routine imaging tests in the absence of new symptoms

### Management of Long-term and Late Effects

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-term/Late Effect</th>
<th>Management</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bowel/bladder dysfunction (low anterior resection syndrome)</td>
<td>• Chronic diarrhea, incontinence, urgency: consider anti-diarrheal agents, bulking agents (such as Metamucil® or Benafiber®); pelvic floor rehabilitation, protective undergarments&lt;br&gt;• Sphincter dysfunction: refer to a gastroenterologist or rectal surgeon&lt;br&gt;• Other: assess ostomy for changes in stoma color, output; refer to wound ostomy care nurse for management of persistent ostomy issues&lt;br&gt;• Persistent urinary symptoms (e.g. recurrent UTI, urgency, frequency, leakage) refer to urologist for further evaluation</td>
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<td>Distress/depression/anxiety</td>
<td>• Assess for depression periodically&lt;br&gt;• Refer for counseling and prescribe pharmacotherapy as needed</td>
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<td>Sexual dysfunction/sexual intimacy</td>
<td>• Encourage couples to discuss sexual intimacy; refer to counseling as needed; consider sexual health expert referral as needed</td>
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<td>Peripheral neuropathy</td>
<td>• Consider physical therapy or rehabilitation medicine consult&lt;br&gt;• Consider duloxetine for painful neuropathy&lt;br&gt;• Refer to neurologist or pain specialist for persistent or refractory pain</td>
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**RESOURCES:**
MSK Rehabilitation Center (includes physical therapy for pelvic floor dysfunction): 646-888-1900

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**
www.mskcc.org/hcp-education-training/survivorship/provider-education

**CONTACT US:** survivorship@mskcc.org