

Body Image



Réseau de
cancérologie
Rossy

Rossy
Cancer
Network

Symptom Management Tip Sheet

Let's talk about body image...



- Body image is how you feel about yourself physically and how you believe others see you. Your body image can affect how you see yourself overall as a person. The way your body looks might change because of cancer and treatments, and this can lead to some emotional distress or sadness.
- It is normal to be upset or angry at the way that cancer treatment has changed your body. Some people gain or lose weight. You may have lost your hair, or it has come back a different color.
- Changes to your body can seem like a constant reminders that life is different. You may worry that things will never be "normal" again and it can bring out insecurities about how you feel in public.
- Even if you don't have any physical changes that can be seen, you might still feel that others don't understand you or see you differently.



What you can do

- **Be patient with yourself:** Give yourself time to grieve over any changes to your body. Also give yourself time to adjust to your new body and heal from your treatments.
- **Take care of your body:** Eating well and getting enough sleep is important. Exercise can help improve your mood, reduce fatigue. Check with your doctor before you start a new exercise routine.
- **Be open and creative:** If you cannot do some of the things you used to, be open to trying new things. You may find new activities that you like which can help you build your confidence back.
- **Tell your healthcare team about your concerns:** Ask your doctor or nurse to help you manage any limitations. It may seem hard to bring up some issues but it is important for you to advise your healthcare team so they can help you.
- **Talk about it with people you trust:** Having conversations about how you feel with family and friends who are easy to talk to can be a good way to understand your own emotions.
- **Join a support group:** Talk to other cancer patients about how they coped with their body changes. It can help you overcome body image issues and feel more in control.

This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.

Source : How Body Image Concerns May Affect You - Cancer and Body Image Concerns ©2016 Macmillan Cancer Support. Coping with Cancer: Self-image and Sexuality ©2017 National Cancer Institute ©2020 University Health Network

Other resources

Managing Body Image Concerns After Cancer Treatment

https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Managing_body_image_problems_after_cancer_treatment.pdf

Body Image and Cancer

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wuG0S_jMcM

Look Good Feel Better

<https://lgfb.ca/en/workshop/register-workshop/>

Cedars CanSupport

<https://cansupport.ca/>

In your hospital

Symptom hotlines

Don't hesitate to call!

Hours of operation:

8AM to 4PM



MUHC: (514) 934-1934 ext. 34160

JGH: (514) 340-8222 ext. 25529

St. Mary's: (514) 734-2679 ext. 3622

❖ If you have one, please **speak to your IPO**

Psychosocial Oncology

JGH: (514) 340-8222 ext. 23223

St. Mary's: (514) 345-3511 ext. 6679

MUHC: (514) 934-1934 ext. 45502

MUHC Social Work: ext. 31569

Other resources:

MUHC: Cedars CanSupport

(514) 934-1934 ext. 35297

JGH: Hope & Cope

(514) 514-340-8255

St. Mary's: CanSupport or Hope & Cope