

CANCER SURVIVORSHIP AND SUPPORTIVE CARE SERVICES

BODY IMAGE

A patient education handout



People of any age experience changes in their bodies, self-image and sexuality during and after cancer treatment. These changes can affect your body image, leading to emotional and physical challenges. Others may not be aware that you are facing these new challenges.

WHAT DOES "BODY IMAGE" MEAN?

Body Image is defined as how we believe our body looks and works. Your body image and feelings of self-worth are often linked.

Cancer patients may see a change in their body image as a result of the **symptoms of your illness** or from **treatments like radiation, systemic therapy (chemotherapy or immunotherapy) and/or surgery.**

CHANGES PEOPLE MAY SEE INCLUDE:

- Mastectomy (having a breast removed)
- Hair loss
- Skin and nail changes
- Drains
- Lymphedema (swelling)
- Amputations (having an arm or leg removed)
- Tumors
- Changes in weight

CHANGES PEOPLE MAY NOT SEE INCLUDE:

- Changes in how your body functions
- Fatigue
- Early menopause (loss of your period)
- Decrease in sexual desire
- Ability to have sexual relations
- Decrease in your energy
- Brain fog or difficulty focusing
- Tumors



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HOW TO GET SUPPORT IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH YOUR BODY IMAGE:

It is important to talk about your concerns because these changes can impact your mental health and relationships during and after treatment.

You are already dealing with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis and treatment. Adding the challenge of dealing with your body image can make you feel overwhelmed, anxious and/or depressed.

Often, people find coping with these changes challenging. Remember:

- There are resources that can help if you're struggling with any body image issues
- Your medical team can help you with these changes and improve your confidence by providing resources for support and education
- To give yourself time to recover and adapt to all the changes you are experiencing
- To be open with your friends and family about your feelings and the changes you are experiencing

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PROVIDER WHO CAN HELP CONNECT YOU WITH MORE SUPPORT AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

Our **Cancer Survivorship and Supportive Care Services** can help you with body image changes by providing resources, emotional support and coping strategies.

Some of our services include:

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▪ Art Therapy | ▪ Oncology Social Work |
| ▪ Music Therapy | ▪ Support Groups |
| ▪ Psychology/Psychiatry | ▪ Spiritual Care |
| ▪ Nutrition Counseling | ▪ Massage Therapy |
| ▪ Exercise Physiology | ▪ Acupuncture |
| ▪ Yoga | |

Discuss with your medical team which services may help you with the changes you are going through.

For additional information, contact **Cancer Survivorship and Supportive Care Services** at **305-243-4129** or visit **Sylvester.org/CancerSupportServices**

SCAN TO LEARN MORE



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