End of Treatment

What happens when your child has finished treatment?

Your child has finished their treatment and there are a number of emotions you may feel happy, excited, nervous or even scared. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Many parents express that it is a time with many mixed emotions.

Your child will continue to be carefully and regularly checked, initially the checkups will be more regular and then they will be further apart as you are further from the end of treatment. These checkups will continue for many years to monitor the progress and development of your child.

It is important to remember that you can discuss any problems or ask any questions you may have to your doctor when you come to clinic for these checkups. If you have a problem between your clinic appointments, you can call the clinic to make another appointment or see your family doctor.

Long-Term Effects

Long term effects or late effects refer to problems that can occur as a result of treatment received for cancer.

The development of long term effects following treatment is influenced by your child’s disease, their age at diagnosis, sex, treatment received genetic make-up and the complications experienced during treatment.

- Your child could have had surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, a bone marrow or stem cell transplant, or a combination of these. These late or long-term effects can be mild or can be more serious and they can occur years after treatment. Some of these effects can be easily treated while others may be more serious, so more difficult to treat. For this reason we need to check your child’s progress after treatment has finished. These long-term effects could be physical, emotional or social.

Your child may not have to deal with any long-term effects but regular follow-up will make sure any problems are detected early and treated appropriately.
There are some very good books written about long term effects of cancer treatments and these are available for you to borrow.

**Childhood Cancer Survivors- A Practical Guide to Your Future**
Written by Nancy Keene, Wendy Hobbie, Kathy Ruccione (2000)

**Long-term Effects of Cancer Treatment – a guide for patients and families.**
Written by Dr Margaret Zacharin, Dr Karin Tiedemann, Dr Maree Sexton (2001)
Long-Term Follow-Up Clinic

What is the long-term follow-up clinic?
This is a clinic for your child or adolescent who has finished treatment five or more years ago. Why do we have this clinic? Late effects are rare, but they can occur. We want to offer you and your child the opportunity to see a team of specialists to discuss any problems that you may have. Your own local doctor may not be aware of all the possible long-term effects, and they can be hard to assess or find. The aim of the clinic is to find any problems early and treat them quickly so there is minimal effect. We can offer you information, support and help you plan how to maintain good health. You will be able to ask questions and seek help from different specialists at this clinic.

Who is involved in the clinic?
A team of people are involved in the clinic, and you will be seeing several different specialists. You will be seen by:

- an oncologist and this could even be the doctor who cared for your child during his/her treatment.
- an endocrinologist, who checks your child’s growth and development.
- a dentist is available if your child has problems with their teeth.
- a radiation oncologist if your child had radiotherapy.
- a fertility specialist if you have concerns about your child’s fertility.
- a psychologist is your child is having problems with concentration and/or memory.
- a dietician if your child has a problem with their weight.
- an oncology nurse is also involved and you may wish to direct some questions to her about your child.

What happens at the clinic?
- An appointment time and date will be sent for your child, along with a questionnaire to fill in and return prior to the clinic. If this
date is not suitable for you, you can ring the clinic and change it.

- On arrival the nurse will measure your child’s height, weight, sitting height and take their blood pressure.
- You and your child will be shown into a room where the different specialists will come to you.
- If you are a young adult you may, or may not, wish to have someone with you, this is your choice.
- The specialists you see will vary, depending on the treatment your child had. For example, if your child had radiotherapy, you will see a radiation oncologist.
- Your child will have an appointment made at the Royal Adelaide Hospital to have bone density studies in relation to growth and development. This is not painful and does not take long. If any other tests are needed we will make the appointments for you.
- If you have any questions to ask it may be a good idea to make a list of them, and bring it to the clinic so you don’t forget to ask any of them.

**What happens after the clinic?**

You will be sent a summary of your clinic visit for your own information. This may be useful for the future if you need to see a new doctor. Follow-up care will only get better as we learn more. Much more research is needed in this area, and you and your child will help just by coming to the clinic.

**What if you don’t want to attend clinic?**

If you do not want to come to this Long-Term Follow-up Clinic, you do not have to. Just let us know you don’t wish to attend. We want to offer you a choice to be seen by a number of different specialists and ask any questions you may have. We want you to be aware that delayed effects can occur even though they may not be common. If they occur, we want to help you with information and management.