

A patient's guide to

FUCKCANCER™

SEX & RELATIONSHIPS AFTER CANCER



INTIMACY AFTER CANCER

Cancer can affect your sex life in many ways, like your physical ability to engage in sexual activity, your interest in sex (AKA being in the mood), increased emotions such as fear, anxiety, or anger, and new feelings about your body.



Here are a few tips to navigate it all:

Flex your muscles

Moving your body releases endorphins, which in turn can help you think more positively.

Communicate, communicate, communicate

How else is your partner going to know what you're thinking? Having open and honest conversations can help you work through your feelings. Your partner will only know how to support you if you share with them.

Find support

Talking to people who understand what you're going through can help you feel more supported. Try connecting with a support group or mental health professional in your area.

Think outside the box

It's not all about sex. Finding alternative ways to experience pleasure and intimacy can help you adjust. Try kissing and cuddling, using pornographic content, getting a vibrator or other toys, setting the mood with candles, or playing out a sexual fantasy.

Be patient

Give yourself space, this is a new part of life. It might take a few tries to find a position that is comfortable or to work up enough energy for sex.

Talk to your doctor

You're probably happy to be seeing your doctor less frequently these days, but if you have questions about your sex life after cancer, your doctor is your best resource.

COMMON CHANGES & TIPS TO HELP



Research has found that after completing treatment, many people struggle with physical and mental changes that impact their sex lives. Here are some common physical and mental changes that you may experience, as well as tips to address them in relation to your sex life.

Physical Changes

- Pain during sex
- Difficulty achieving orgasm
- Decreased sexual interest or desire
- Numbness in previously sensitive areas
- Hot flashes / night sweats
- Nausea & vomiting
- Weight gain
- Increased vaginal dryness or irritation
- Inability to get or maintain an erection
- Premature ejaculation, urination during ejaculation, retrograde ejaculation, or dry orgasm

Mental Changes

- Struggling with your body image
- Decreased or loss of sexual desire
- Feeling blindsided by changes to your life
- Embarrassment about changing sex life
- Worry that your cancer will return

WHAT IF I'M SINGLE

and (Maybe) Ready to Mingle?

Dating can be nerve racking on a regular day, even when you don't have to think about cancer. But, when you are ready to start dating, consider these tips.

Communicate openly and honestly

You might want to prepare what you're going to say to your new love interest beforehand – write it down, read through it a few times, or practice saying it in the mirror. It can also be helpful to have some answers prepared for questions they might ask.

Talk to a trusted friend or family member

If you're comfortable, show them any scars or changes to your body. This can help you feel more confident when you're ready to show your body to a new partner.

Share how your body has changed

You might want to share with them the changes that your body has gone through before initiating sexual activity so you can gauge how you both feel before becoming intimate.

Don't forget about fertility

Your fertility (including the ability to have children) may have changed due to your cancer treatment. Figuring out how to tell a new partner about this aspect of your cancer might be hard, but it's an important conversation to have.

There's more to it than sex

If you are uninterested or unable to engage in sexual activity, you can still have romantic feelings, and you and a new partner can focus on showing each other affection by talking, cuddling, kissing, and spending time together. Sex is not the only important piece of a romantic relationship.

TIPS

- Try experimenting with different methods of intimacy that don't require penetration, like hugging, holding hands, massages, and oral or manual stimulation
- Use a lubricant, vaginal moisturizer, vaginal estrogen, or dilator to increase comfort during sexual activity
- Try using a new vibrator or sex toy to increase pleasure
- Communicate openly and honestly with your partner before and after sex
- Work together to find what satisfies you both.
- Talk to your doctor about treatments that may benefit your sex life
- Find a support group or mental health professional
- Learn a new skill or pick up a new hobby
- Focus on what makes you feel good. Look in the mirror and tell yourself all the things you find attractive about yourself
- If you're feeling self conscious during sex, try wearing clothing that makes you feel good to shift focus away from the areas that you feel less confident about, or dim the lights during sex
- Learn relaxation techniques





LEARN MORE ABOUT SEX, RELATIONSHIPS, AND CANCER

CHECK OUT THE FULL GUIDES:

[LETSFCANCER.COM/SEX-AND-RELATIONSHIP-GUIDES](https://letsfcancer.com/sex-and-relationship-guides)

