

Tips

Psycho-oncology support

The physical changes caused by the disease and its treatment can be very difficult to deal with.

Talking to a psychologist who specializes in cancer or doing cognitive- behavioral therapy can help you learn to accept the physical changes you are going through.

Couples therapy can also help you deal with a difficult time in your relationship.

Ask your healthcare team for advice.

Additional offers

Free make-up workshops «Look good feel better»

Programme for those affected: «Learning to live with cancer»

Further information on this topic

Selection of brochures from the Swiss Cancer League:

- «Cancer therapy has changed my appearance»
- «Male sexuality in cancer»
- «Female sexuality in cancer»
- «Physical activity in cancer»



New body image

Good to know

Cancer can cause a variety of physical changes because of the disease and its treatment. These include changes in appearance (e.g. hair loss, scarring, weight loss, weight gain), sensory changes (e.g. pain, numbness) or functional problems (e.g. difficulty swallowing, difficulty speaking, erectile dysfunction). Some changes are temporary, while others may last a long time or stay forever.

You may feel that your body doesn't belong to you anymore because of these changes, and you may feel bad about yourself. Sometimes you isolate yourself for this reason or you stop doing the things you like to do. These are normal reactions that other people with cancer also experience. Everybody's experience with adjusting to new body sensations is different and it can take some people more time than others.

New body image

You feel...	Or you notice...	What you can do for yourself...
	- You don't think your physical changes are important - You can get used to physical changes	- Take time for yourself. - Keep doing the things you enjoy (e.g., sports or social activities). - Talk about your feelings: what you need, what you want and what you can't do. This can help to avoid misunderstandings with the people around you.
	- You find it hard to accept physical changes - You find it hard to look at yourself in the mirror	- Specialists like physiotherapists, occupational therapists or speech therapists can help you with your everyday life even if you have some limitations. - Talk to people on the healthcare team you trust about how you're feeling and any physical changes you're noticing. - The healthcare team or the Cancer League can refer you to a specialist in counselling people affected by cancer. - Therapies such as music, painting or sport can help you to develop a new attitude towards your body. The healthcare team and/or the cantonal or regional Cancer League can give you information on this subject.
	- You can't accept physical changes - You feel you have no control over your body - You are ashamed, embarrassed or nervous	Contact your healthcare team.