

## 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

- **«Sexuality, Intimacy and Cancer»** (Cancer Council Australia, 2022) – Comprehensive guide addressing how cancer and its treatments can affect sexuality and intimacy, offering advice on managing changes and maintaining relationships
- **«Body Image and Cancer»** (MacMillan Cancer Support, 2025) – Comprehensive guide addressing the emotional impact of visible changes due to cancer treatment and offering practical advice on managing these changes and maintaining self-esteem
- **«Exercise for People Living with Cancer»** (Cancer Council Australia, 2023) – Guide outlining the benefits of exercise before, during, and after cancer treatment, with practical tips and example exercises

## 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...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You don't think your physical changes are important</li><li>• You can get used to physical changes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take time for yourself.</li><li>• Keep doing the things you enjoy (e.g., sports or social activities).</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You find it hard to accept physical changes</li><li>• You find it hard to look at yourself in the mirror</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specialists like physiotherapists, occupational therapists or speech therapists can help you with your everyday life even if you have some limitations.</li><li>• Talk to people on the healthcare team you trust about how you're feeling and any physical changes you're noticing.</li><li>• The healthcare team or the Cancer League can refer you to a specialist in counselling people affected by cancer.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You can't accept physical changes</li><li>• You feel you have no control over your body</li><li>• You are ashamed, embarrassed or nervous</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact your healthcare team.</li></ul>