

# Making Your Health a Priority

Life may be just getting back to normal after surgery. You may want to leave the treatment experience behind you and move on with your life without feeling stressed about starting a new treatment. To help, here are some tips that you may find useful for staying motivated and on track with your medicine.

## Why it is important to take your medicine

After surgery, there is **a chance that some melanoma cells are still in your body**. The reason you are taking your adjuvant treatment is to decrease the chance of your cancer coming back.<sup>1,2</sup>

Following all of your physician's directions, including taking your medication as prescribed is important.

## Work towards your goals

Ask yourself who or what motivates you. Know what you are working towards and why—these are your reasons for sticking to treatment. By keeping up with treatment and taking care of yourself, **you are taking an active role in managing your health**.



- **Set short-term health goals.** Break down your goals for improved health into small steps, like taking your medicine for a week. This is an easy way to feel good about your progress.
- **Track your progress.** Make your achievements visible. A checklist, calendar, or chart serves as a reminder and record of what you've done.
- **Reward yourself.** Set fun rewards for reaching your goals, like going out to lunch or seeing a movie with friends.



Remember that taking your medication as prescribed can give you the **best chance of stopping your cancer from coming back**.

## Make your health and wellness a priority

Stay positive. Negative thoughts and feelings can pull you off track. Make time for things that support your overall health and happiness.



- Keep up with your favorite hobbies and interests.<sup>3</sup>
- Discover ways to unwind and relax, such as reading or taking a walk.
- Enjoy activities and time with family and friends.<sup>4</sup>
- Find humor in everyday life. Laughter can help you relax.<sup>4</sup>
- Join a support group. It helps to connect with others who truly understand what you are facing.

## Stay connected to your health care team

Your health care team is your best resource during this phase of treatment – discuss your doubts, questions, or concerns with them. **Communicate openly and regularly with your doctor and health care team** to make sure all of your questions are answered and your concerns are addressed so that you have all the information you need to best manage your treatment.



- Make sure to go to all follow-up exams and visits.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse to understand and plan for potential side effects. If side effects occur, contact your doctor right away.
- Write down any questions you may have and discuss these with your doctor or nurse for a better understanding.

## Keep moving forward

It may take up to two months to develop new routines and habits,<sup>5</sup> but over time it will get easier knowing that you are taking important steps for your health. Maintaining a positive spirit can help you as you find solutions to any obstacles that may arise in your path forward.

### References

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