

Tips for Young Adult Survivors

Whether you are heading to college, entering the workforce or just developing independence from your parents, it is important for you to take charge of your health.

As you prepare to leave home and begin a life on your own, here are some important tips to help you take care of your health.

- **Survivor Healthcare Plan (SHP)—know where to find it**

A SHP is a document created by your cancer survivor team. It includes a summary of your cancer treatment, a list of your potential late effects and a surveillance plan to monitor for late effects. You may have received a paper copy of your SHP at one of your clinic visits. You can also store an electronic copy of your SHP on SurvivorLink at www.cancersurvivorlink.org. SurvivorLink allows you to access your SHP easily from anywhere via the internet.

- **Cancer history—know the basics**

You should be able to answer the following questions:

- What type of cancer did you have?
- Did you receive chemotherapy and/or radiation?
- Did you have a bone marrow or stem cell transplant?

- **Late effects—know if you are at risk**

Know if you are at risk for serious late effects, such as:

- Heart problems
- Lung problems
- Secondary cancers
- Attention and learning problems
- Fertility problems

- **Medicines—know which ones you take and why you take them**

You should also know how and when to get medicine refills, what medicines you are allergic to and what type of reaction you have if you take certain medicines.

- **Health insurance—keep a copy of your insurance card in your wallet**

If you are still on your parents' health insurance policy, start making plans for your own health insurance once you are no longer covered by your parents. Visit www.healthcare.gov for information about health insurance options.

- **Emergencies—be prepared**

Make sure your roommates and friends know who to call if you get sick. Consider wearing a medical alert bracelet if you have or are at risk for serious late effects.

- **Adult survivor care—talk to your survivor team about where to go**

You may be followed in a young adult survivor program or by a primary care provider who has access to your SHP.

- **Adult primary care—plan to see an adult primary care provider**

Ask your pediatrician for a referral to a family physician or an adult internal medicine doctor or plan on going to your parents' doctor. If you are going to college, schedule a visit at their health center.

- **Healthy lifestyle—eat right and stay active**

Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables will help improve your health and keep you feeling good. Because regular exercise is important, aim for 60 minutes of exercise most days of the week.

- **Rest and relax—maintain a good balance**

Young adults are often busy balancing new responsibilities, friends, romantic relationships, school and work. Try to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night. If you are feeling stressed out or depressed, seek counseling and support. Visit <http://locator.apa.org> for student health resources at your college or in your community.

Adapted from *Heading for College with Special Health Care Needs*, www.gotransition.org/families-resources