

Returning to Work: A Guide for Gynecological Cancer Survivors

What do you need to know about returning to work?

While you were going through cancer treatment, you may have decided to stop working for a time. Now that your treatment has ended, you may be looking forward to returning to work.

Going back to work can be an important step in returning to your routines, but it can also present challenges. You may have to make changes to your work routines in order to successfully return to work.

Things that may affect your return to work

Cancer and its treatments can impact many aspects of your life and your physical health. Below is a list of challenges you may experience in returning to work. Please note, this list is for information only. You may or may not experience these issues:

- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Reduced confidence
- Physical limitations (such as, swelling of the arms and legs, nerve damage)
- Difficulty thinking (such as, chemo fog)
- Fear of telling your co-worker(s) about your diagnosis
- Fear of being treated differently because of your diagnosis

How to access support:

- Contact your healthcare team. Your healthcare team can evaluate your needs and provide a referral to other professionals who can help.
- Talk to a registered nurse or find health services using [Health811](#) (formerly Telehealth). You can call 811 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007) or use the [online chat](#).
- Find services in your area with the Canadian Cancer Society's [Community Services Locator](#).

Talk to your employer

Many employers are willing to support you with workplace adjustments so that you can come back to work safely when you are ready. Tell your manager about any workplace accommodations you need to help with your specific needs. Your employer can help you develop a plan for return to work. These could include the following:

- Working part time instead of full time (if this is right for you and what you want)
- Arranging a more flexible schedule
- Gradually increasing the number and intensity of work-related activities
- Working from home

If you have a Human Resources department at your workplace, they can help you make any adjustments to support your return to work. Your employer's insurance provider can provide information on how to access insurance services, benefits, and other resources.

More information

Here are some more resources that you may find helpful:

- [Life After Primary Gynecological Cancer Treatment: A Guide for Survivors and Caregivers](#) by Queen's University School of Nursing can help you prepare for life after gynecological cancer treatment. It provides information for people who are recovering from cancer and care partners. (Information and resources on returning to work can be found on pg. 34-37 and on pg. 48)
- [Cancer and Work](#) gives you up-to-date information, resources, and tools for cancer survivors who are planning to return to work.

The recommendations in this guide are based on published evidence and expert consensus. Information within this document is intended for informational purposes only. Please be advised that this guide does not establish a healthcare provider-patient relationship, nor should it replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, and/or care. Please consult your health care team to address your specific questions or concerns. OH expressly disclaims any responsibility or liability for damages, loss, injury or liability resulting from your reliance on information within this guide. OH retains all copyright, trademark, and all other rights in the guide, including all text and graphic images. Other than for personal use, no portion of this resource may be used or reproduced, or distributed, transmitted or "mirrored" in any form, or by any means, without OH's prior written permission.

Should you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 1-877-280-8538, TTY 1-800-855-0511, info@ontariohealth.ca.

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