

# Transfer of Care Letter

Hematologic Cancer

Patient



[DATE]

Re: Transfer of Care

Dear [ARIA: Insert Name],

You have finished your treatment and follow-up for indolent lymphoma at the Cancer Centre. Finishing cancer treatment is a time of change. We want you to know that even when you finish your treatment(s) and are no longer being seen at the cancer center regularly, you are not alone! Help and support is available.

There are things you can start or continue to do to manage your health care and improve your well-being. The information in this letter, along with the supports, resources and suggestions in the book [After Treatment: Information and Resources to Help You Set Priorities and Take Action](#), can help prepare you to move forward and live your best.

## Follow-up Appointments and Tests

Since we feel you are doing well, we will use a **Primary Care** model for your follow-up. This means that your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) can safely do your lymphoma follow-up. Your primary health care provider will:

- arrange tests to check for cancer (sometimes called **surveillance**)
- continue to see you for any health conditions you have or any new problems
- refer you back to a specialist or your cancer doctor (oncologist) if they have any concerns about lymphoma recurrence

For your lymphoma follow-up:

- We recommend a **physical exam with your family doctor or nurse practitioner**. This may also include other tests or procedures such as blood tests, x-rays, screening for other cancers and vaccinations.
- Your follow-up needs change depending on how long it has been since your cancer treatment:

0-5 years after treatment	5 or more years after treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical exam every 6 months</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yearly physical exam and assessment by family doctor</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blood tests</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blood tests, only as needed</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Skin examination</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue annual skin examination</li></ul>

**Remember, it is your responsibility to book your follow-up visits with your primary care provider so they can arrange the tests you need. Indolent lymphoma can reoccur years or even decades after prior treatment.**

## Continue to See Your Primary Health Care Provider

Continue to see your primary health care provider (such as your family doctor or nurse practitioner) for your regular health exams. We will send them a summary of your cancer treatment and follow-up recommendations so they are aware of what to do for follow-up.

If you need a family doctor, you can find one by calling Health Link Alberta (811) or going to: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page13253.aspx>. Once you have a doctor, let them know they can view the health care provider follow-up recommendations at [www.ahs.ca/guru](http://www.ahs.ca/guru).

## Manage Side Effects from Past Treatment

Most side effects will get better by a few months after treatment, but it is important to tell your care team about any ongoing physical or emotional concerns so they can help you. The [After Treatment](#) book has suggestions for managing common side effects. If you need more information, your Cancer Centre has detailed patient education materials for many different side effects.

Side effects specific to indolent lymphoma treatment can include:

- If you had radiation treatment to your head or neck, you may not have enough saliva. This means you may have a dry mouth and get cavities very easily. It is important to brush and floss your teeth often and have regular visits with your dentist. You can buy artificial saliva and other products to help with dry mouth (such as Biotene®) at your local pharmacy. Pick up a copy of the **Mouth and Dental Care for Cancer Patients** booklet for other strategies to manage this.
- If you've had radiation to the neck, your thyroid gland may not work as well as before and may not produce the right amount of hormones. Your doctor will monitor your thyroid function at your follow-up visits and may prescribe you medication if needed.

Treatment for lymphoma can increase the chance that you could get a different type of cancer in the future. It is important to talk to your doctor about what other cancer screening you need and to attend all your appointments.

## Know the Signs and Symptoms of Indolent Lymphoma Recurrence

Review the list of general symptoms to watch for in the [After Treatment](#) book. Below are some symptoms specific to lymphoma. If these symptoms start and do not go away, call your primary care provider. They may do tests to see if the cancer has come back or refer you back to the Cancer Centre.

- Recurrent infections
- Any other symptoms that do not go away after 2 weeks
- Drenching night sweats
- New or enlarging lymph node(s)

## Support and General Recommendations

As you move forward, you may have questions about what is next, what you should do to take care of yourself, or how to improve your well-being. We hope that along with your primary care physician, the [After Treatment](#) book will help you during this time of change, answer your questions, and give you the information and supports you need.

### Recommended Resources:

- [After Treatment: Information and Resources to Help You Set Priorities and Take Action](#) (book)  
— the oncology care team will give you this book at the end of your treatment

### Counselling and Support:

Many patients find counselling services or support groups helpful when adjusting to life after cancer. They can help with things such as communication, stress management, coping with treatment side effects, mood changes, quality of life, body image, sexual health, or loneliness. If you would like to set up a counselling appointment, please pick the closest location from the list below and call to make an appointment:

Calgary: 587-231-3570	Lethbridge: 403-388-6814	Other Communities visit <a href="http://www.ahs.ca/cpn">www.ahs.ca/cpn</a> and click: Provincial Cancer Patient Navigation
Edmonton: 780-643-4303	Medicine Hat: 403-529-8817	
Grande Prairie: 825-412-4200	Red Deer: 403-343-4485	

## Healthy Lifestyle Recommendations

You will find recommendations and information on ways to improve your well-being in the [After Treatment](#) book.

## Specific Concerns for Lymphoma Patients

### Risk of Recurrence

Indolent lymphomas are likely to return after several years of treatment and remission, monitor for new lymph nodes and report to your doctor if you notice a new enlarging lymph node.

### Cardiovascular Health Concerns

Chemotherapy and radiation treatment to the chest wall may increase your chance of heart problems, it is important to stay at a healthy weight, reduce or quit smoking, eat healthy and keep active.

### Sexual Health Concerns

Treatment for lymphoma can impact your sexual function, health, relationships, and sometimes causes distress over body image. Some cancer treatments may impact your ability to have children. If

you are concerned about any other sexual health issues, talk to your doctor. You may be referred to a fertility or sexual health specialist.

Other strategies and support are available to help you and your partner with intimacy problems, distress, and adjusting to these physical changes. See the Counselling and Support numbers listed in the section above or contact the **Oncology and Sexuality, Intimacy, and Survivorship** (OASIS) program at 780-391-7664.

Sexual health resources for low sexual desire, women's and men's sexual health issues and fertility are available at your Cancer Centre or online at [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca) (search "cancer and sexuality").

## Ongoing Care

If there are any concerns about your cancer returning, your family doctor will refer you back to us.

Sincerely,

**Your Hematology / Lymphoma Care Team**