Life After Surgery for Cancer

Cancer Connections
November 21, 2015

Anthony D. Yang, MD
Assistant Professor, Division of Surgical Oncology
Surgical Outcomes & Quality Improvement Center
Department of Surgery / Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
Life After Surgery for Cancer

• Congratulations!

• But it’s years later and I still don’t feel “normal”

• You’re not alone...

• There may be a reason you’re not feeling right

• And there might be a solution
Outline

• Common Problems After Different Types of Surgery
• Possible Solutions
• Who Can Help
Life after Abdominal / Pelvic Surgery

• Problem: *Altered bowel habits*

  ➢ *Possible Solutions:*
    ➢ Dietary Adjustments
    ➢ Behavioral Adjustment
    ➢ Exercise
    ➢ Medications

  ➢ *Who Should I See:*
    ➢ Dietician
    ➢ Gastroenterologist
    ➢ Surgical / Radiation / Medical Oncologist
    ➢ PCP
Life after Abdominal / Pelvic Surgery

• **Problem:** *Bowel Obstruction*

❖ **THIS COULD BE AN EMERGENCY**

❖ Danger Symptoms

❖ **Possible Solutions:**
  ➢ Non-Surgical
  ➢ Surgery

❖ **Who Should I See:**
  ➢ Call your PCP / Surgeon
  ➢ Emergency Room?
• **Problem:** *Muscle Weakness / Impaired Function*

- **Possible Solutions:**
  - Physical Therapy
  - Massage

- **Who Should I See:**
  - Call your PCP / Surgeon
  - Physical Therapy referral
  - Physiatrist referral
Life After Breast and Chest Surgery

- **Problem:** *Chronic Pain*

- **Possible Solutions:**
  - Physical Therapy
  - Massage
  - Medications
  - What about alternative therapies?

- **Who Should I See:**
  - PCP / Oncologist
  - Referral to Physical Therapy
  - Pain Specialist
Problem: **Swallowing Difficulties / Voice Problems**

- **Possible Solutions:**
  - Speech / Laryngeal Therapy

- **Who Should I See:**
  - PCP / Oncologist
  - Speech Language Pathologist referral
Problem: **Lymphedema**

*Possible Solutions:*

- Graded compression
- Massage
- Physical Therapy and Exercise
- Weight loss
- Medications
- Surgery (last resort)
• Problem: **Lymphedema**

- **Who Should I See:**
  - Certified Lymphedema Therapist
  - Lymphedema Specialist Physician
  - Surgery only within specialized centers
A Word About Patient Centered Outcomes

Dietary and Behavioral Adjustments to Manage Bowel Dysfunction After Surgery in Long-Term Colorectal Cancer Survivors

PATIENT-CENTERED OUTCOMES RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Summary

• You may not feel “normal” even years after your cancer surgery; this is normal.
• Your symptoms may have a solution
• Find the right provider
• The Cancer Survivorship Institute is available to help!

Cancer Survivorship Institute
Enhancing quality of life and health of patients, families and caregivers beyond cancer diagnosis and treatment
Thank you!

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Survivorship after Surgery for Cancer

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