What Does Remission Mean for Kidney Cancer Patients?

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Coping With Kidney Cancer Remission

You've got the wonderful news you've been dying to hear; your cancer is in remission. Why don't you feel elated?

It's not uncommon for worrying thoughts to eclipse your relief in the days, weeks and months following your doctor's report. It can be frustrating to live with these feelings of anxiety, but there are ways to return to a balanced, positive outlook, and take back emotional control for a better quality of life.

Defining your Post-Cancer Concerns

Before you can begin to change things, you need to clearly understand the problems of your post-cancer life. Specific concerns will differ from person-to-person, but some common sources of anxiety after treatment include:

- **Loss of support**. You have been in close contact with your medical team since your diagnosis, and now you only connect with them every few months. This sense of loss can be difficult to handle, and you'll need to regain trust in yourself and turn your focus to more immediate resources.
- **Returning to your routine**. Your diagnosis brought swift and steady change for everyone, and now those changes have become the new norm. You'll need to adjust your expectations and fine-tune your role in the household, social circle and workplace.
- **Fear of recurrence**. Perhaps the largest concern for people who have dealt with kidney cancer and are currently in kidney cancer remission is the fear that it will come back. Unlike other, more superficial forms (such as certain skin cancers), there is a chance that kidney cancer can return, but that chance rests on a variety of factors. The worst-case scenario may be less probable for *you* than you think.

If your cancer was caught early and eradicated with surgery or other targeted methods, the likelihood of your cancer returning is extremely low. But there are several stages and dozens of outcomes depending on your fitness level and response to kidney cancer treatment.

While you can familiarize yourself with statistics and talk to your doctor about closer monitoring for your own peace of mind, one thing is for sure; you will need to learn how to live with some uncertainty.

Steps to a Better Quality of Life

Mental health is just as important as physical health, and it can be your biggest challenge during kidney cancer remission, after your cancer treatment has disappeared. However, a few helpful approaches can ease your stress, restore your optimism, and gain some helpful perspective on life after cancer:

- **Ask the right questions.** Find out what lies in your control, and what doesn't. Consult with your doctor about the possibility of your cancer returning, what you can do to lower those chances, as well as

symptoms to look out for. Don’t expect absolute answers, but it’s fair to request a well-informed and honest outlook from your medical expert.

- **Focus on your relationships.** Strengthening your relationships can give you a sense of confidence, compassion, and a better sense of well-being. The people in your life can help you realize your potential and instigate positive changes, encouraging you to make the most out of every day.
- **Find support in your peers.** You can learn a great deal from other cancer survivors, like stress coping styles and new perspectives on common hardships. Specially trained therapists and coaches can also help you adapt to life after treatment.

Although nobody can predict whether or not your cancer will come back, positive lifestyle changes are always a good form of insurance. Experts suggest adopting a diet rich in wholesome food and regular exercise, the same recommendation for cancer prevention, in order to keep your whole body strong and healthy.