

# Insight

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## NED, Remission or Cure?

**Dancing with NED may sound fun at a disco. But when it comes to cancer survivorship, NED stands for No Evidence of Disease, also called complete remission. It means that the signs and symptoms of cancer are no longer found.**

But that doesn't necessarily mean one is cured. Cancer cells might still be present at a level that can't be detected. A complete absence of cancer cells means one is in complete remission (NED). In near-complete remission, some abnormalities exist even if tests show no clear evidence of disease and the person is symptom-free. In partial remission, cancer is still present but is greatly reduced.

Some doctors may say you are cured if you remain in complete remission for at least five years. But even then, some cancer cells may exist in your body and may return years later. The chance of recurrence depends on the kind of cancer. For example, breast cancer might return decades after complete remission, but some leukemias are considered cured after five years. A survivorship care plan tells the best ways to monitor for any cancer recurrence.

Five-year cancer survival rates were introduced in the 1930s, when living beyond that benchmark was considered near-impossible. In 2014, the five-year survival rate for all cancers taken together was 66.9 percent.

### Who is a Cancer Survivor?

The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship says you are a cancer survivor from the time of your diagnosis through the rest of your life. Survivors also include family, friends and caregivers.



### What is a Survivorship Care Plan?

A survivorship care plan (SCP) is a blueprint tailored to each individual. It takes effect after active cancer treatment ends and can be used by your full medical team. An SCP organizes the following:

1. Medical information about cancer treatments;
2. Recommended follow-up care, including tests and physical exams;
3. Ways to maintain your health and wellbeing;
4. All of your support needs

by the numbers

**5**  
million

The estimated number of cancer survivors in the U.S. in 1986.

**15**  
million

The estimated number of cancer survivors in the U.S. in 2017.

**1,735,350**

The estimated number of new cancer cases that will be diagnosed in the U.S. in 2018

**\$35**  
billion

The cost of cancer treatment within Medicare.

## Financial Survival



Cancer is expensive, not only for treatment but for related costs like transportation, lodging, child care, home care and respite care. As more people survive cancer for longer periods of time, those costs can create financial hardship. That hardship can impact survivorship, especially if one skips medication or appointments just to get by.

Resources are available at the local, regional and national level. They include H.U.G.S. in Marion County and the Citrus Aid Cancer Foundation in Citrus County. You can also get help through the American Cancer Society, Cancer Care, Cancer Support Community, National Cancer Institute, National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, NeedyMeds and elsewhere.

## From Victim to Survivor

The term "Cancer survivor" was controversial when Harold Benjamin coined it in 1986, the year he co-founded the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship. Before then, people were "cancer victims." After lobbying by NCCS and other advocates, the National Cancer Institute established its Office of Cancer Survivorship in 1996. The office spearheads survivorship research and supports patients and caregivers, often partnering with groups like the American Cancer Society, LiveSTRONG, Living Beyond Breast Cancer and NCCS.

quick quote

**"Cancer didn't bring me to my knees. It brought me to my feet."**

— Michael Douglas



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