

Returning to Work after Cancer Treatment
Tips for knowing what to do and say
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Did you know each year the rate of cancer survivors increases? There are an estimated 11 million in America today! Once considered a death sentence, the National Cancer Institute has reported that 80 percent of people with cancer return to work after diagnosis. In the NCI publication *Facing Forward*, the author notes: "Cancer survivors are as productive on the job as other workers and aren't absent any more often." The pamphlet is also available in Spanish at www.cancer.gov or call 1-800-4-CANCER. If you're completing your treatment and looking for a new job, here are tips and resources to help you reach your goal:

- **Prepare and practice for interviews.**
Like any candidate would do, prepare for your interview. Research the company, know the job requirements and be prepared with questions to ask, not just answer. This will demonstrate your interest and confidence.
- **Request a letter from your doctor.**
You may not need it. However a letter on hospital or office stationery verifying your good health and ability to do the job may reassure a prospective employer. Your doctor might add statements about the documented work ability of cancer survivors nationwide.
- **Be truthful.**
When asked about cancer, you needn't respond nor volunteer information. Like other illegal questions (age, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, etc.) asking about cancer is also considered an illegal question. If asked respond with positive statements about your current health or refer to your doctor's letter. If in doubt or for additional help answering questions specific to your situation, contact the [Job Accommodation Network](http://www.jobaccommodationnetwork.org) at (800) 526-7234.
- **Consider working with a career counselor.**
A qualified career counselor can coach you through the process. If you decided to change jobs or industries, this can be particularly helpful. And, if you want to confirm or explore a new field, a qualified counselor will administer vocational assessments offering options. To locate a counselor in your area, contact the [National Board for Certified Counselors](http://www.nacacnet.org).
- **Know your rights.**
To increase your confidence, learn about your rights. Federal, state and local agencies via the [Department of Labor](http://www.dol.gov) and the local American Cancer Society are available to help you identify whom to contact for your particular situation.

For additional resources contact:

- [The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship](http://www.nccs.org), NCCS serves as a clearinghouse for information. Call (301) 650-8868.
- [The American Cancer Society](http://www.americancancer.org) offers a free booklet called: *Cancer: Your Job, Insurance, and the Law*. Call (800) ACS-2345.
- [National Rehabilitation Information Center](http://www.naric.org) (NARIC) provides information regarding job rehabilitation. Contact NARIC at (800) 34-NARIC (Voice/TDD).
- The [Cancer Information Service](http://www.cancer.gov) answers in English or Spanish at (800) 4-CANCER.