

Breast Cancer Education Intervention

Teaching and Support Materials with Tip Sheets

Karen Meneses

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FATIGUE

A Look at Fatigue

Fatigue is a common and distressing problem among breast cancer survivors. Fatigue is a feeling of being worn out, exhausted, and not having enough energy to do normal daily activities. Fatigue can have a great impact on self-care activities and quality of life. Fatigue can last long after treatment has ended.

Most people feel tired at times but expect it to go away after a good night's sleep. Fatigue occurs when one feels more tired than usual or tires more quickly after doing usual activities. Fatigue after breast cancer may also occur when not doing anything.

Fatigue is more than just a feeling of being tired. You may have some trouble doing everyday things such as housework, bathing, and cooking. You may have some problems walking, talking, concentrating, and making decisions. These are all symptoms of fatigue. Sometimes you may not feel like yourself. It may be hard dealing with family members or other people who may be trying to help you.

With fatigue you may feel weak after physical activity, bored, or sleepy during the day, unable to focus, teary or weepy when you don't usually feel this way, and irritable. Even daily routine tasks such as housework, bathing, walking up or down stairs, food shopping, paying bills, or driving may be more tiring or harder to do.

Some women may talk more slowly or give shorter answers to questions. Some may feel that they're sleeping too much or too little. Some say they feel "fuzzy" or "droopy." Many are surprised that fatigue is so intense. Others may feel angry and upset because they can't do what they used to do. Without eating well, staying active and getting enough rest, your body can become fatigued and may stay that way for some time.

Remember:

It is normal for breast cancer survivors to feel fatigued after treatment is over.

Other Causes of Fatigue

Sleep, diet, and medicines can add to fatigue. Breast cancer survivors may also have mental fatigue and fatigue in the workplace.

Lack of Sleep

Changes in sleep patterns or a lack of sleep can cause fatigue. A lack of sleep can also cause fatigue. This may surprise you because you may think that if you are fatigued you will be able to fall asleep easily. A sleep problem can be either a problem of falling asleep or staying asleep.

Sleep problems can include:

- Taking 30 minutes or longer to fall asleep.
- Waking up several times during the night.
- Taking at least 30 minutes or longer to return to sleep after waking up during the night.

Diet and Fatigue

A healthy diet can help offset fatigue. Eating foods that are rich in iron such as green leafy vegetables and liver, and having a good caloric intake are helpful in fighting fatigue. Many women are also surprised to find that weight gain is a side effect of the medicines that they have taken. They find it distressing that they are not able to lose weight as quickly as they would like after treatment ends.

Eating a number of small meals a day and regular exercise may be helpful in dealing with weight and fatigue problems after treatment.

Medicines and Fatigue

Some medicines can make fatigue worse. For example, medicines for pain, depression and allergies can make you feel drowsy. If you are taking any of these medicines, it is very important for you to talk to your health team and see what you can do to help you reduce your fatigue. If you can, take these medicines close to bedtime when you are ready to go to sleep.

Mental Fatigue

Mental fatigue can affect your mood and how you think and function. Breast cancer survivors who suffer from mental fatigue often report that they feel weighed down and have trouble staying organized and being efficient in their daily lives. Survivors also report that activities that once were routine now take more time and effort.

Mental fatigue is different from physical fatigue. Survivors with mental fatigue may not be physically tired, but may have trouble doing things that require mental focus such as problem solving, planning, and carrying out purposeful activity. Being able to concentrate is needed to function well, particularly during tough times in life. When survivors are not able to focus or concentrate, it is harder to learn new information and resume valued family roles.

Fatigue in the Workplace

Fatigue may hinder a person's ability to work. Making changes in work schedules such as decreasing hours and tasks may be needed. In a few instances, stopping work or going on disability may be needed. However, most breast cancer survivors are able to keep working. You may need to talk with your employer if fatigue interferes with your daily work schedule. The more your employer knows

and understands fatigue and cancer, the better your employer can support you at work.

About Your Fatigue

Fatigue is measured based on your self report. The best way to talk about fatigue is to learn a common language and have a common scale to measure your fatigue. Using this same language with your family members and friends can help them too.

- Share your true feelings about your fatigue; don't try to hide them.
- Tell your family members your level or degree of fatigue. Use a scale from 0 = no fatigue, to 10 = as bad as you can imagine.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No fatigue							As bad as you can imagine			

Answer these questions to help you to better understand your fatigue and communicate with others:

- When did it start?
- When did you first notice that you were fatigued?
- Has the fatigue become worse?
- How is fatigue affecting your daily living?
- How is fatigue affecting the activities that give meaning and enjoyment to your life?
- Are there times when you feel confused or cannot think clearly?
- Do your arms and legs feel heavy?
- Do you sleep more than usual? Do you sleep less than usual?
- Have you changed your bedtime routines?
- Are you able to take part in family activities?
- Have you changed your eating habits?
- Have you changed your exercise and activity habits?
- Are routines getting harder?

- Have you stopped doing anything because of fatigue?
- Does it take more mental effort to perform usual activities than before your treatment?
- Do you have trouble doing more than one thing at a time? Do you feel weighed down? Do you feel that too much is going on at once? Do you work in a setting where too many things to distract you?
- Is it hard for you to focus and concentrate for any period of time? Do you have problems meeting deadlines? Are you able to be efficient as you do your work?
- Do you feel that you think slower so that you're missing points in a conversation or cannot take notes during a lecture?
- Are you anemic or taking medications that can cause anemia and worsen mental fatigue?

Talking about Fatigue

In talking with your family, these tips may be useful:

- Tell your family members how your fatigue is affecting your emotions.
- Ask your family members how your fatigue is affecting them.
- Ask your family members for their ideas on managing your fatigue.

It is vital that you talk openly with your family and healthcare team about your fatigue. Your healthcare team needs to know your concerns about fatigue so that any changes in treatment or medication may be made. It is also important to share your concerns to help you have the strength and focus to maintain your health. Fatigue after cancer is real. Fatigue should not be ignored. Expect that your fatigue can be treated.

Lack of understanding within a family about cancer fatigue can lead to communication problems, resentment and feeling guilty. Sometimes survivors may assume that they just have to live with it. Here are some things to consider sharing with your family:

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- Tell your family members how your fatigue affects your emotions.
 - Tell your family members how your fatigue affects your daily life.
 - Share your true feelings about your fatigue; don't try to hide it.
 - Discuss how fatigue affects your being able to do the things that you enjoy and add meaning to your life.
 - When you don't feel like doing anything, how do you tell your family?
 - If you are unable to continue your prior level of activities, how do you tell your family?
 - How do you tell your family that fatigue may last a few more weeks or months?
 - How do you respond to your children/grandchildren when they want you to join in what they are doing?
 - How useful do you feel in general?
 - Do you feel a sense of isolation because of your fatigue?

Your Action Plan

- 👍 Over the next few weeks, work on your action plan:
- 👍 Read the section on Fatigue in your workbook.
- 👍 Review your Fatigue Tip Sheets and try the suggestions.
- 👍 What Tips helped?
- 👍 Try the following actions:

- 👍 Describe how these actions were helpful or did not help.
- 👍 Call your Research Team for any questions.
- 👍 Talk with your family about these issues in Fatigue:

- 👍 Talk with your healthcare team about these issues:

Sleep and Wakefulness Tip Sheet

After breast cancer treatment, many women have changes in their sleep habits. Some want to sleep all the time, while others have trouble sleeping. Most complain of fatigue. Good habits that promote a good night sleep often help. Keep in mind that what works for some individuals may not work for others. Here are a few tips that may help you improve your sleep:

- **Go to bed and wake up about the same time every day.** This sets your body's internal clock so it will be ready for sleep when you are.
- **Make sure your bedroom is as pleasant,** comfortable, dark and quiet as you can.
- **Start relaxing pre-sleep rituals,** such as a warm bath, a light bedtime snack or 10 minutes of reading. This will allow you to unwind and send a "signal" to your brain that it's time to sleep.
- **Avoid being around bright light before bedtime.** Light signals your body to wake up.
- **Exercise regularly** in the morning or afternoon, not at night because exercise causes a temporary rise in endorphins, which can keep you awake.
- **Maintain regular times for meals,** taking medicine, doing chores and other activities. This helps keep your "internal clock" running smoothly.
- **Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol** in the late afternoon and evening. Caffeine and nicotine can delay your sleep, and alcohol may interrupt your sleep later in the night.
- **Avoid** drinking liquids before going to bed.
- **Avoid exciting or stressful mental or physical activities** close to bedtime.
- **Don't watch TV, eat or read in bed.** Use your bed only for sleep and sex. This way your bed will be associated with sleep.
- **Don't take over the counter medications** for sleep without talking to your healthcare provider.

- **Take prescription pain medicines** as directed. Pain keeps you awake and fatigue worsens pain. You must break the cycle by taking your medicine before your pain is bad.
- **If you take naps, try to do so at the same time every day.** However, sleeping too much during the day can make getting to sleep at bedtime harder. So, don't take a late afternoon or early evening nap. If you find yourself very tired in the afternoon, take a walk, instead of a nap.
- **Take a deep breath and just relax** when you go to bed. Feel your muscles relax. Become one with your mattress.
- **Think about a pleasant experience** once you're in bed; repeat it to yourself over and over.
- **Don't stay in bed tossing and turning.** If you can't go to sleep after 30 minutes get up and take part in a quiet activity until you are relaxed and ready for sleep.
- **Keep a sleep/wake journal/diary** if you have tried the above interventions without success. This may help you identify things that are keeping you awake.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Poor sleep can be a sign of other problems such as sleep apnea or depression. If you keep having sleep problems, or if being sleepy interferes with the way you feel or function during the day, talk to your doctor or nurse. Bring your sleep diary with you to help them decide the best ways to help you sleep.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Sleep disorders and management

http://www.cancersupportivecare.com/sleep_disorders.html

American Cancer Society: Getting a good night's sleep may be challenging for a cancer patient

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_2_1x_Getting_a_Good_Nights_Sleep_May_Be_Challenging_for_a_Cancer_Patient.asp

Cancer: Home treatment for sleep problems

<http://health.yahoo.com/sleep-resources/cancer-home-treatment-for-sleep-problems/healthwise--tv4084.html>

National Sleep Foundation: Healthy sleep tips

http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.huIXKjM0IxF/b.2419247/k.BCB0/Healthy_Sleep_Tips.htm

Tricks to help you fall asleep at night

http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/fatigue/sleep_tricks.jsp

Nutrition to Fight Fatigue Tip Sheet

A poor diet and or not eating enough calories aren't the only reasons for fatigue or tiredness. A good diet can improve your fatigue. Think of food as a needed part of your healing. Remember, you need to eat enough food so that your body can have the energy to heal itself. The National Cancer Institute recommends eating the following types of foods:

- A variety of foods every day.
- Fruits and vegetables—raw or cooked. These give you vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Grains – whole grains such as cereal, bread, and pasta. These give you vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Low fat dairy products—milk, cheese, yogurt, and ice cream – These supply protein, calcium, and several vitamins.
- Lean meats such as poultry, such as turkey or chicken or lean cuts of beef or pork. These supply protein.

Here are some tips for eating to increase your energy:

Start your day with a good breakfast. Try to include at least 1/3 of your protein requirements in this meal such as eggs or lean meats. Unlike carbohydrates (toast, cereal), proteins provide you with long lasting energy, and will help you keep your energy throughout the day.

- **Increase protein** food sources such as lean meat, fish, and low-fat dairy products.
- **Eat plenty of iron rich foods** like lean red meats, poultry, dark green vegetables and dried fruits.
- **Eat several small meals** rather than three large meals.
- **Exercise lightly** prior to meals to improve your appetite. Some people find that a walk before meals is a good way to improve the appetite.
- **Drink plenty of liquids** (8-10 glasses of fluid/day). Lack of fluids will increase your feelings of fatigue. But don't drink *with* your meals—fluids can make you feel full faster. Instead drink most of your fluids between meals.

- **Eat when you are hungry.** Try to take advantage of the times when your appetite is best.
- **Eat what you like**, within reason. You can't expect a diet of milkshakes alone to make you feel better. Try to keep a well balanced diet, but pick the foods you like from each food group.
- **Avoid caffeine and white or refined sugars** (cookies, cake or candy). While these products are OK in control, (they may even give you a quick boost!) they tend to cause a rapid rise and fall in your blood sugar, and will leave you more tired.
- **Limit** foods high in fat, salt and sugar.
- **Limit** alcohol intake.
- **Limit** foods that are smoked or pickled.
- **If you are losing weight**, try a nutritional supplement such as Ensure between meals (not in place of them).
- **Try** lower fat cooking methods such as broiling, steaming and poaching.
- **Make mealtime an enjoyable activity.** Share meals with family and friends. Put flowers on the table. Candles or soft music can make mealtime more pleasant.
- **Vary your diet/try new recipes.** Some people find foods taste differently after cancer treatment— trying new foods or different seasonings may make foods tastier.
- If you find you are not eating because you are too tired to prepare your meals:
 - Consider pre-packaged/frozen meals at least once a week.
 - Ask friends and family for help with meals.
 - Prepare larger amounts when you do cook and freeze the extra food in single serving containers for easy reheating.
 - Use paper plates and cups to cut down on cleanup.

- **Keep a diary** of what and when you eat every day and how it affects your fatigue.
- **Ask your doctor or nurse** for any brochures/booklets that give advice about diet. You can also ask your doctor to refer you to a dietician, who can give you helpful ideas.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

You should always keep your doctor or nurse informed about feelings of tiredness. Be sure to notify them at once if you are unable to eat for a day or more, lose more than 5 lbs, experience pain while eating, vomit for more than 24 hours, are unable to urinate for 24 hrs or if your urine is bad smelling or rare and very thick.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

Both of these sources have booklets about nutrition that can be set to you.

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

From *Supportive Cancer Care* by Ernest H. Rosenbaum, MD & Isadora R. Rosenbaum, MA

www.cancersupportivecare.com/nutrition.html

Breast cancer survivors: Nutrition and fitness tips

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=50498>

Eating to reduce fatigue

http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition/nutr_treat/fatigue.jsp

National Cancer Institute: Nutrition suggestions for symptom relief

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/nutrition/Patient/page5>

Nutrition: Eating Right during cancer treatment

<http://www.webmd.com/solutions/nutrition-cancer/eating-right?page=1>

Medicines that Cause Fatigue Tip Sheet

Fatigue, the feeling of extreme tiredness, is the most common side effect of cancer treatment. Symptoms of fatigue include not being able to focus, not being able to remember things, mood changes and an overall feeling of being tired. Some medicines may cause the fatigue to get worse. Sometimes, if you take more than one medicine, two of them may work together to make you feel more tired. Here are a few tips to help you know more about medicines that cause fatigue.

- **These kinds of medicines can make you feel tired:**
 - Medicines for pain
 - Medicines for depression
 - Medicines for allergies
- **If you can**, take these medicines at night before you go to bed. This may help you to have less daytime fatigue.
- **Pain medicine may cause drowsiness.** Drowsiness should go away after about three days when your body gets used to the medicine.
- **Some people find** that drinks with caffeine such as coffee, tea, or sodas help them feel less drowsy.
- **Review both prescribed and over the counter pain medicines** with your doctor to see if any changes can be made to decrease fatigue.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse about ALL the medicines you are taking. If any of them are causing you to be tired, that medicine may be able to be changed.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Coping with Side Effects of Cancer:

National Cancer Institute (click on “Cancer Topics”, then “Coping with Cancer”)
www.cancer.gov

Fatigue: When to rest, when to worry
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fatigue/HQ00673>

Cancer related fatigue
<http://www.webmd.com/cancer/fatigue-cancer-related>

Breast cancer: Home treatment
<http://body.aol.com/conditions/breast-cancer-major-1/home-treatment>

Mental Fatigue Tip Sheet

Fatigue, the feeling of being very tired can affect both your body and your mind. Mental fatigue affects your mood. It may also affect how well you are able to organize your day and your ability to focus. People who have mental fatigue report feeling weighed down. If you are having mental fatigue, here are some tips to help you cope with its effects:

- **Make a list of what you plan do each day.** Include only the things that must be done that day. Keep a second list of things you'd like to do if you have the extra energy. Save your energy for the things that mean the most to you. Plan what you will do for the times or days you feel your best.
- **Check your goals.** Being careful and realistic in what you choose to do will reduce mental as well as physical fatigue.
- **Learn to pace yourself.** You can do more by spreading what you need to do over the entire day. Take rest breaks as you need. Rest breaks save energy for the things you want to do.
- **Take a mental break** between activities and walk or sit quietly in a peaceful setting. Being in a peaceful setting can help counter mental fatigue. Watch birds or other wildlife, gaze out at a peaceful view from a window, garden or tend to plants.
- **Pamper yourself** with a bubble bath, get your nails done or a massage, listen to your favorite music, or watch a sunset.
- **Take time** for prayer and meditation, which can help you think about your true priorities.
- **Save time** for the things you really enjoy like reading, drawing, listening to music or spending time with your family.
- **Listen to your body** and rest when you need to. Don't take naps in the late afternoon or evening since this may affect your nighttime sleep.
- **Exercise.** Take short walks or do light exercises such as stretching if you can. Stay as active as you can, many people find that light exercise such as walking can really decrease their fatigue.
- **Enjoy what you are able to do**, even the small things such as a short walk or taking a shower without help.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Keep the right levels of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals to ensure good nutrition.
- **Reduce stress** (e.g., relaxation, deep breathing, hypnosis, guided imagery, or distraction) to restore energy.

- **Talk to your family** about your fatigue. If your family does not know about your fatigue it can lead to communication problems, anger, and feelings of guilt.
- **Remind yourself: Cancer Fatigue is real!** - It is not in your head.
- **Keep a fatigue journal of your progress.** Note when fatigue occurs, lifts or lingers. This can help you to make a realistic daily schedule.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse about your fatigue. Tell them at once if you think you are depressed, can't get out of bed for 24 hours or notice your fatigue is getting worse. If you keep a fatigue journal bring it with you to help them decide what can be done to help your fatigue get better.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

National Cancer Institute: fatigue and treatment

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/fatigue/Patient/page6>

Lifestyle changes for fatigue

<http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/fatigue/lifestyle.jsp>

Mental fatigue

<http://www.betterhealthusa.com/public1235.cfm>

How to treat fatigue (tips)

http://www.ehow.com/how_2132440_treat-fatigue.html

Fatigue in the Workplace Tip Sheet

Fatigue or feeling very tired is a very common and long lasting side effect of cancer treatment. You may find that you are not able to keep working due to fatigue. You may have to cut down how much time that you spend at work for a while. If you do want or need to keep on working, here are some tips to help make your work less tiring.

- **Work with your boss** to set sensible goals for yourself and what you can manage now. Tell your boss about how tired you feel. Be sure he/she knows that you are doing all that you can so that you will have more energy. Also make sure he/she knows that you would like to remain a useful worker.
- **Ask for a change** in your current job duties. Things that your boss can do to help include:
 - Change your hours. It may be that you can go to and from work at less busy times (outside the rush hour).
 - Ask others to help with some of your work.
 - Find a close place to park.
 - Take a short break every now and again to lie down and rest if needed.
 - Work from home, if that is an option.
 - Learn a new job skill that might be less stressful on your body and mind.
 - Plan your workload to use your high energy times wisely.
 - Try to set up your work area so that you are close to the things that you use a lot.
- **Talk openly** with your boss and fellow workers about feeling tired because of cancer. This may help them to know about your lack of energy or changed work schedule. The more they know, the better they can support you.

- **Do not feel embarrassed** about asking others for help. Keeping others in the loop about how you feel and what help you need prevents confusion, mistrust, and anxiety.
- **Eat well; drink fluids and exercise (take short walks)** as you feel that you can. This will help you to keep energy through the workday.
- **Talk to your company's human resources department** to find out if your health plan provides referrals that can assist you in dealing with your fatigue. They might include a nutritionist, physical or occupational therapist, exercise physiologist, or mental health or alternative health practitioner.
- **Get to know your own company's rules** about sick leave, disability, flexible work times, and options to retrain.
- **Know the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act** and the Family Medical Leave Act so that you know your rights in the workplace.
- **If you are self-employed** it can be useful to talk to the Department of Social Security about benefits that you may be able to claim.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-277-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

Job Accommodation Network: 800-ADA-WORK (800-232-9675) (The Job Accommodation Network is a free service that helps employers makes special plans like flexible hours for workers who need them)

The Cancer Resource Center: (415) 885-3693 (The Cancer Resource Center can give you more facts about your legal rights)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Cancersymptoms.org

<http://www.cancersymptoms.org/fatigue/workplace.shtml>

Cancer related fatigue body-to combat cancer related fatigue

<http://www.uihealthcare.com/topics/medicaldepartments/cancercenter/fatigue/crbody.html>

Coping with fatigue in the workplace

<http://www.cancerbackup.org.uk/Resourcessupport/Symptomsideeffects/Fatigue/Copingintheworkplace>

Fatigue (Tiredness)

<http://www.peninsula.org/body.cfm?id=342>

Exercise to Fight Fatigue Tip Sheet

After breast cancer treatment, many patients have fatigue and are told to get more rest. But too much rest can result in *more* fatigue. If you want to try exercise to fight fatigue, here are a few tips that may help. Before starting a program, talk with your doctor or nurse to find out if there are any special safety measures you should take. Exercise is one of the few actions shown to help improve fatigue, sleep and mood.

- **Exercise within your own limits** and set realistic goals.
- **Start with regular, light exercise** such as walking. Begin with 5-10 minutes, once or twice every other day. Over time increase how long you walk.
- **Try new kinds of exercises**, then choose those that help to keep or increase your energy.
- **Do something** that you like to do. Decide on something that you enjoy, that will work your heart, and make you stronger and more flexible. Walking can work your heart. Lifting weights will make you stronger. A stretching program will make you more flexible.
- **Keep a diary** of your activity. Include how you felt during and after your exercise sessions as well as how your sleep was affected.
- **Drink plenty of liquids** before, during and after exercise. Dehydration or thirst will increase feelings of fatigue.
- **On days you feel good**, exercise a little longer; on days you feel tired, shorten your exercise schedule or select an easier activity, such as stretching or a gentle movement program.
- **Build up slowly, but be steady**. Try to do a little something each day. If you feel very tired, take the day off. But if you just feel a little tired, go ahead and exercise.
- **Wear comfortable clothing**, such as a loose-fitting cotton shirt and sweat pants, shorts, or a full skirt. Try to avoid tight outfits especially those with elastic in the sleeves.
- **Do not bounce or jerk your arms** when doing any exercise. Your movements should be slow and smooth.
- **If exercise is not possible** try to plan some gentle activity in your daily schedule and slowly increase it at your own pace.

- **Include stretching** and relaxation practices at the end of each exercise session.
- **Stop exercising** if you have nausea, feel dizzy, have an irregular heartbeat, have pain or any shortness of breath during exercise.
- **Lie on your bed** to stretch if you can't get down on the floor. Choose a bed with a firm mattress.
- **Find an exercise partner** who will help keep you motivated.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse before starting an exercise program. Ask if there are any measures you should take based on your health or treatment. Also let your doctor or nurse know if you have nausea, feel dizzy, have an irregular heartbeat, have pain or any shortness of breath during exercise. If you keep an exercise diary bring it with you when going to see the doctor, it will help your doctor decide how exercise can be better used to help fatigue.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Chemocare.com

http://www.chemocare.com/managing/fatigue_and_cancer_fatigue.asp

Exercise: A cancer survivor's tool for wellness

<http://www.cancersupportivecare.com/whyexercise.html>

American Cancer Society: Physical activity and the cancer patient

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/MIT/content/MIT_2_3x_physical_activity_and_the_cancer_patient.asp?sitearea=MIT

American Institute for Cancer Research: Exercise tips for cancer survivors

http://www.aicr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=cs_exercise

Top 10 self care tips during breast cancer treatment

http://breastcancer.about.com/od/lifeduring_treatment/tp/self_care_tips.htm

Energy Conservation Tip Sheet

Fatigue, the feeling of extreme tiredness is the most common side effect of cancer treatment. Symptoms of fatigue include not being able to focus, not being able to remember things, mood changes and a general feeling of being tired. Cancer-related fatigue has many causes. Some of them may be the cancer itself, anemia, poor nutrition or lack of exercise. If you are feeling fatigued after treatment, here are a few tips to help you save your energy.

- **Remember Cancer Fatigue is Real!**
- **Plan your day** so that you have time to rest in between activities.
- **Make an activities list** every day, but only include the items that must be done that day. Keep a second list of things you'd like to do if you have the extra energy. Save your energy for the activities that mean the most to you. Schedule activities around high-energy times and days.
- **Check your goals.** Being careful and realistic in what you choose to do will reduce mental as well as physical fatigue.
- **Learn to pace yourself.** You can do more by spreading out what you need to do over the entire day. Take rest breaks between activities. Rest breaks save energy for the things you want to do.
- **Change** the way a tiring task is done in order to use less energy. For example: sit when ironing.
- **Pass on** hard, high-energy tasks to willing family or friends. Do not force yourself to do more than you can manage.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Ask for help with tasks like housekeeping, laundry, shopping and carpooling.
- **Keep an activities journal.** Write down what you do during the day and note your energy and tiredness levels. After a few days, review your entries to see if there are any patterns. This can help you to change, schedule, or pace these activities throughout the day.
- **Work on the hardest errands** during the time of the day you feel you have the most energy.
- **Restore your energy** with activities that you enjoy and make you feel good, such as reading, watching a movie or spending time with your family.

- **Take short naps** or breaks rather than one, long rest period. Do not nap in the late afternoon or evening because it may get in the way of your nighttime sleep.
- **Reduce** stress with relaxation, deep breathing, hypnosis, guided imagery, or distraction to restore energy.
- **Try easier or shorter kinds** of activities you enjoy.
- **Eat well**, and drink plenty of fluids. For more tips on nutrition see the “Nutrition to Fight Fatigue” tip sheet.
- **Exercise.** Take short walks or do light exercises such as stretching if possible. Stay as active as you can, many people find that light exercise such as walking can actually decrease their fatigue.
- **Think about your need** for aids (walkers, canes, adaptive devices).
- **Talk to your family** about your fatigue. If your family does not understand your fatigue it can lead to communication problems, resentment, and feelings of guilt.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Always talk to your doctor or nurse about your fatigue. There are many causes for your tiredness that they may be able to treat. If you keep a fatigue/tiredness diary, bring it with you when you go to see them. It will help them decide what else can be done to help your fatigue get better.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care: What is fatigue?
http://www.stoppain.org/palliative_care/content/fatigue/default.asp

Cancer related fatigue

<http://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/health-info/docs/0300/0305.asp?index=5230>

Learn how to prevent fatigue

<http://meriter.staywellsolutionsonline.com/RelatedItems/1,2913>

Cancer fatigue: Why it occurs and how to cope

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cancer_fatigue/CA00032

Anemia and Fatigue Tip Sheet

Anemia occurs when the body does not have enough red blood cells (RBCs). The RBC's carry oxygen from the lungs to the tissues in your body. Hemoglobin is a protein that is found in red blood cells and carries oxygen to body tissues. When red blood cells are destroyed, your body may make fewer red blood cells. Hemoglobin levels may fall. If hemoglobin is low, anemia results. Anemia can cause extreme tiredness or fatigue, and may affect your quality of life. Here are a few things about anemia and what to do about it.

Anemia may be a problem for you if you:

- Have a fast heart rate
- Are light-headed
- Are short of breath
- Have headaches
- Are dizzy
- Feel faint
- Are sensitive to cold
- Are more pale than normal
- Lose skin tone
- Are not able to do the things you are used to doing during the day such as work, spend time with other people or have fun.

Here are some things you can do to help yourself if you feel you have anemia:

- **Eat foods that are rich in iron.** Iron from animal products is easy for your body to absorb. Iron from vegetables, fruits, grains, and vitamins are harder for the body to absorb.
- **Mix** some lean meat, fish, or poultry with beans or dark leafy greens at a meal. This will help you to absorb the iron from vegetables up to three times. Foods rich in vitamin C also increase iron absorption.
- **High iron sources include:**
 - cereals with iron added
 - dried beans
 - whole grains
 - eggs (egg yolks are good)
 - dried fruits
 - dark leafy green vegetables
 - liver
 - lean red meat (beef)
 - poultry, dark meat

- tuna fish
 - salmon
 - lamb
 - pork
 - shell fish
- **Other sources of iron include:**
 - whole grains such as wheat, millet, oats, and brown rice
 - legumes: lima beans, soybeans, dried beans and peas, kidney beans
 - seeds such as almonds and Brazil nuts
 - dried fruits: prunes, raisins, and apricots
 - vegetables: broccoli, spinach, kale, collards, asparagus, dandelion greens
 - **Some foods** such as commercial black or pekoe teas decrease absorption of iron. These products contain substances that bind to iron so it cannot be used by the body.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

If any of the symptoms listed above occur for several weeks or bother you, call your doctor or nurse. A simple blood test called a complete blood count (CBC) can easily be done. This test can tell you if you have anemia. Your doctor may prescribe a medicine to help you fight anemia.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Nutrition and Anemia

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002422.htm

Cancersymptoms.org

<http://www.cancersymptoms.org/fatigue/key.shtml>

Fatigue and Anemia

http://www.y-me.org/information/treatment_side_effects/side_effects/fatigue_anemia.php

Fatigue and Anemia

http://www.breastcancer.org/treatment/chemotherapy/side_effects/fatigue.jsp

Anemia causes and treatment

<http://www.cancersupportivecare.com/anemiacauses.html>

PAIN

A Look at Pain

Pain is what you say it is, and it happens when you say it does. Pain is perhaps one of the hardest things for other people to understand. Unlike some symptoms pain is something that no one else can see or feel.

People describe pain in many ways. Sometimes they describe it by where the pain may be coming from. Pain can be aching, gnawing and in one area of the body, or it can be a vague ache all over. Pain can come quickly and feel sharp and intense; it can come and go or be constant. It may feel like tingling, numbing or burning. Pain can be acute, meaning that it comes on quickly but goes away, or it can be chronic, meaning that it goes on for months or years. People who have chronic pain can also have times of very strong pain, which is called break through pain.

Breast cancer pain is a common symptom and can occur after treatment is over. Pain may last for only a short period of time, or it may last for many years. After breast surgery, pain may be caused by lymphedema or phantom limb pain. The effects of pain are not only in the body. Pain can have an impact on social, psychological, and spiritual aspects of life. Pain causes physical effects like having to limit your activity, having trouble sleeping and having symptoms like nausea. Pain causes psychological effects such as anxiety or sadness. Pain also may affect spiritual issues by causing the loss of hope or the feeling of more suffering.

Causes of Pain in Breast Cancer

Pain can be a result of tissue damage from surgery or radiation. It can also result from pressure on nerves. Nerve pain can also result from direct nerve

damage from chemotherapy (called neuropathy). Tumors can press on tissue in the same area and also cause pain.

Breast cancer treatment and side effects that can cause you to have pain include:

- Breast surgery
- Lymphedema or swelling in the affected arm after surgery.
- Radiation may cause shooting pains, breast swelling and fullness.
- Neuropathy from chemotherapy.
- Infection after surgery.

Pain after Breast Surgery

Breast surgery can cause pain. As a rule, pain at the surgery site goes away with time. "Phantom limb pain" refers to feelings and pain in the chest wall even after the breast has been removed. This feeling can occur right after surgery or weeks or months later.

After surgery, many women may want to hold their arm bent across their waist and may feel better when they stoop over. Sadly, this results in elbow and shoulder soreness, pain, and muscle contraction (i.e., shortening of the muscle). When you are sitting or standing, you may need to support your arm at first, but over time you can let it hang straight by your side.

Try not to stoop. Practice keeping your body in an upright posture with your shoulder held back when sitting, standing, or walking. While this may be hard at first, it will help to prevent future problems. After the breast has been removed, the change in weight may cause back pain. Exercises may help with this pain.

Pain and Lymphedema

Lymphedema is swelling due to fluid build up caused by the blocking of the lymph vessels. In breast cancer patients it most often occurs in the arm on the side where the cancer was located. The blockage is caused by the taking away of lymph

nodes during surgery. Lymphedema causes pain and decreased range of motion in the arm and shoulder. It may occur right after surgery or some months or years later. Factors that add to the risk of getting lymphedema are infection in the area and being overweight.

Signs or symptoms of lymphedema to watch out for include: a full feeling in the arm(s); skin feeling tight; being less able to flex the hand or wrist; having a harder time fitting into clothes; or tightness by a ring, wristwatch, or bracelet. If you notice swelling that gets worse or does not go away, you should contact your health team as soon as you can because catching it early may help you to keep it from getting worse.

Pain after Radiation

Women who had radiation after breast surgery often report a ‘shooting pain’ through the breast area. There may also be swelling, and aches and pains that come and go in the treated breast area. Some women feel shooting pains and aches in the treated breast area that last for weeks to months after radiation is complete.

It is helpful to know that shooting pains can happen. If they occur, you may try using medicines that are talked about in the next section. Wear a sports bra with good support and no underwire. In general, the shooting pains will go away with time.

Pain after Chemotherapy

Some of the medicines that were used to treat your cancer can leave you with nerve pain called neuropathy. This pain often begins in the fingertips or toes and may spread toward the trunk. It may involve the wrists and ankles. The affected area may have numbness and tingling. In more severe cases heat and cold are very bothersome. There may also be problems with pain, weakness and even trouble moving that part of the body. Often this gets better over time. If you have nerve pain that is severe and interferes with your normal activities, you should talk with your health team about this.

Treating Pain with Medicines

There are many kinds of medicine for pain. Some of these drugs such as aspirin, Tylenol® and Motrin® are used for mild to moderate pain. These drugs can be bought over the counter. Stronger drugs for pain such as morphine, oxycodone, or Dilaudid® are used for moderate to severe pain and need a prescription by a doctor. There are many medicines that were not made to relieve pain but now they are known to be very helpful for pain. Elavil® and Neurontin® are used for nerve pain in the hands or feet caused by chemotherapy.

Some people do not want to take pain medicines because they make them feel “fuzzy” or “droopy.” Talk with your doctor if you are worried about the side effects of your pain medicine. Sometimes people might not want to take pain medicines as directed because of the common beliefs about pain relievers. They may think, "If I take this amount now, there won't be a strong enough dose later when I really need it," or “It is better if I wait until the pain gets really bad before I take it, that way I won't take it as often and I won't become addicted."

Neither of these statements is true. Studies show that pain medicine works better when taken early. If you wait until your pain is severe, you will need more medicine to relieve it. When people take medicine regularly, they use less. For these reasons, most doctors order pain medicine to be taken around the clock. Around the clock means taking the medicine with the same amount of time between doses during the day and night. By taking pain medicine around the clock, you keep a more even level of pain control. For most patients, pain can be relieved using the right medicine for their pain.

Side Effects with Pain Medicines

Side effects such as nausea, constipation, and feeling sleepy can occur when you take pain medicines. If you are having side effects from taking your pain medicines, we have Tip Sheets that may help you deal with them.

Non-Drug Pain Relief

Another way to relieve pain is using non-drug methods such as heat, cold, massage, relaxation and distraction. Women sometimes do not want to try non-drug methods. For instance, some women may have tried one of the methods in the past and found it was not helpful. They may think that if it worked their doctor would have told them about it, or they may be afraid that it will harm them in some way. Like pain medicine, each non-drug method works in one way for one person and some other way for someone else. A non-drug treatment may also work for one kind of pain and not for some other pain.

Keep these ideas in mind:

- Non-drug methods can be chosen for the type of pain you have. For instance, heat may be most helpful for muscle pain such as a stiff shoulder.
- Often a non-drug method may require a "trial and error" period. Choosing the right method for your pain and the correct placement of heat or cold is important to get the best relief that you can.
- Be careful using heat on any area that does not have a normal feeling.
- Sometimes women may not try a non-drug way to relieve their pain because they think that even partial success with the non-drug method will result in pain medicine being decreased or withheld.
- Non-drug methods are to be used with your pain medicines, not to replace them.
- It is important to choose the method that is right for you before the pain becomes so severe that while your body absorbs the pain medicine, you may be able to get more pain relief from the non-drug method.
- Although most of the time they are safe, be sure to check with your healthcare team prior to starting any non-drug pain relief methods.
- More facts about non-drug treatments for pain are in the Tip Sheets.

About Your Pain

Listed below are some questions you can ask yourself about your pain. Thinking about these will help you to talk with your family or health team about your pain. Ask yourself these questions:

- When did your pain begin?
- Where are all the areas that hurt?
- How long does the pain last?
- What does the pain feel like (achy, stabbing, cramping, dull)?
- What makes your pain worse?
- What makes it better?
- What medicines are you taking and what other non-drug treatments are you using to relieve the pain?

Since you are the only one who can feel your pain, you need to share with your family and health team about your pain. Report pain as soon as it begins and when there are any changes in your pain.

Sometimes survivors believe that if their pain is worse, they must be getting sicker. This is not always true. Pain is common after breast cancer treatment and often only means that there is a problem that will go away or a chronic problem (i.e. neuropathy after chemotherapy) that is not related to spreading cancer. Always keep in mind that you are the only one who knows how much pain you are feeling. You must take action and talk about your pain symptoms with your healthcare team. Expect that your pain can be treated.

Talking about Pain

The best way to talk about pain is to learn a common language and use a common scale to measure your pain. Using this pain language with your family members and friends and your health team is the first step toward better pain relief. Some key things to keep in mind are:

- Share your true feelings about your pain; don't try to hide them.
- Talk openly about where you are feeling the pain.
- Talk about how intense your pain is on a scale from 0 = no pain, to 10 = the worst pain you can imagine.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
No pain Worst Pain

- Tell your family members how your pain affects your feelings.
- Ask your family how your pain affects them.
- Ask your family for their ideas in dealing with your pain.

Aspects of your pain that you should share with your healthcare team

are:

- Pain that is not relieved by your current pain medicine.
- Pain that is new or changed since you last saw the doctor or nurse.
- Pain that gets more severe and intense.
- Pain that makes you have nausea and vomiting.
- Pain from constipation or bloating.
- Severe side effects from pain medicines.

Your Action Plan

- 👍 Over the next few weeks, work on your action plan:
- 👍 Read the section on Pain in your workbook.
- 👍 Review your Pain Tip Sheets and try the suggestions.
- 👍 What Tips helped?
- 👍 Try the following actions:

- 👍 Describe how these actions helped or did not help.
- 👍 Call your Research Team for any questions.
- 👍 Talk with your family about these issues in Pain:

- 👍 Talk with your healthcare team about these issues:

Lymphedema (Swelling of the Arms) Tip Sheet

Lymphedema can be a serious side effect after breast cancer surgery and radiation therapy. It is thought that as many as one out of four women who have been treated for breast cancer will have this problem. Lymphedema occurs when fluid collects under the arm, in the arm or hand. Since the fluid does not drain, swelling can occur. This can become painful and can limit arm movement and daily activities. Lymphedema may occur right after treatment or months or years later. It is important to keep up good skin care in the affected arm and hand. If you notice any swelling in the arm and hand, get in touch with your doctor or nurse as soon as possible. That way you can begin treatment early. The key is to prevent Lymphedema.

Factors that may increase your risk:

- Surgery to remove breast cancer or lymph nodes.
- Radiation treatment to the breast or underarm.
- Being overweight.
- Being inactive.
- Eating a poor diet.
- Having diabetes.
- Having any condition that affects the flow of blood or lymph in or near the arm.
- Having had other surgery in the arm or armpit in the past.

What brings on Lymphedema?

- **Injury to the skin or muscle** in the arm. This could include insect bites, cuts, scratches, bruises, burns, and allergic reactions (poison oak or ivy).
- **Gaining** a lot of weight.
- **Heat.** Hot tubs and very hot weather.
- **Long flights.** It is not common for flying to bring on the first bout of lymphedema. Women who have had a problem with lymphedema may notice that flying makes it worse.

What you can do to prevent Lymphedema:

- **Use sunscreen** (spf 15 -30) and insect repellent (with no alcohol in it).
- **Keep your hand and arm clean.** Avoid harsh soaps. Dove is good.
- **Keep your skin moist** and free of cuts and cracks.
- **Avoid too much heat,** sauna, sunburns, tans on the affected side (surgery side).
- **Use an electric razor** to avoid cutting the skin under the arm.
- **Wear gloves** to protect your hands while doing housework and yard work.
- **Do not get manicures** that cut the skin around the nails.
- **If you get a cut or scrape,** clean the area and apply antibiotic ointment.
- **Keep your ideal** body weight.
- **Avoid getting cut** or having blood drawn on the affected side.
- **Do not allow** your blood pressure to be checked on that arm.
- **Avoid lifting heavy objects** such as heavy grocery bags and suitcases on the affected side. This includes purses.
- **Don't smoke.**
- **Do not** wear clothes that are tight on your arm.
- **Avoid** wearing any jewelry that is tight. You may need to get rings sized so that they are larger.
- **Do rest your arm** in an elevated position with support.
- **Wear compression bandage/sleeve** when flying.
- **Do not ignore any swelling** of your affected arm or hand. Call the doctor right away!
- **Do not ignore** small or minor injuries to your arm or hand.
- **Report any signs of infection** such as redness, warmth, red streaks, or pain and soreness in your affected arm that starts suddenly.
- **Report any changes** in the size of your arm or hand. You might notice that clothes or rings are tight. Also report any new numbness or pain in your affected side.

- **Examine your arm regularly.** Run the tips of your fingers over the back part of your upper arm. Try to notice if there is a change in fullness of the tissue. Stand in front of a mirror and look at both arms from the front and side. Look for differences in them.
- **Know what your arm looks like** when there is no swelling. Then you will be able to notice any new changes.

Symptoms of Lymphedema:

- The arm feels full or heavy.
- Tight feeling skin.
- Clothes or jewelry fit tighter than usual.
- Not being able to move the hand or arm like usual.

Dealing with Lymphedema:

- **Elevate the arm** as often as you can with support. Lie down and place your arm on a pillow so that the hand is higher than the elbow and the elbow is higher than the shoulder. Do this 2 to 3 times a day for 45 minutes. If you use a compression garment, put it on after the swelling has gone down.
- **Try arm and shoulder exercises** such as arm swings, front raises, side raises, and shoulder shrugs for loosening up exercises.
- **Gentle stretching exercises** may also help keep the arm and shoulder movable and prevent pain.
- **See a physical therapist or other health team member who** knows how to treat and check lymphedema. You may need to travel to find a specialist in lymphedema.
- **Wear a compression bandage or sleeve during the day.** A compression bandage or sleeve can either be ready made or custom fitted. You will need a prescription from your doctor to get one.
- **Gently massage** your affected arm using manual lymph drainage. You can be taught to do this by a physical therapist.
- **Prevent further injury** to the arm or hand.
- **Prevent infection** and keep the skin soft and free of cracks and cuts.
- **Wear a “Medical Alert” Bracelet.**

Dealing with Severe Lymphedema:

- **If severe Lymphedema pain occurs**, discuss how to manage your pain with your doctor or nurse. They can talk with you about which medicines may be used, how to position and support your arm and help you with other measures to reduce pain.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

As soon as you notice swelling, call your doctor or nurse. It is very important to get lymphedema treated early. It will not go away on its own. Most lymphedema specialists will be found in bigger cities. Seeing a specialist may be well worth the trip. Remember, preventing lymphedema is the key.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

You may wish to get a copy of the book *Lymphedema: Understanding and Managing Lymphedema after Cancer Treatment*. This book is published by the American Cancer Society and may be purchased in a bookstore or by calling the number listed above.

National Cancer Institute (800-422-6237)

National Lymphedema Network (800-541-3259)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

National Cancer Institute: Lymphedema

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/lymphedema/HealthProfessional/page2>

American Cancer Society: Lymphedema: What every woman with breast cancer should know

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/MIT/content/MIT_7_2x_Lymphedema_and_Breast_Cancer.asp

Lymphedema and Breast cancer: The causes and the symptoms

<http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/lymphedema/74103>

Breast cancer: Side effects of treatment: Lymphedema

http://www.medicinenet.com/breast_cancer_and_lymphedema/article.htm

National Lymphedema Network

<http://www.lymphnet.org/lymphedemaFAQs/overview.htm>

Drug Therapy Pain Relief Tip Sheet

Managing pain often starts with drug therapy. It can work quickly, has few risks and does not cost a lot. Different drugs work for different people. The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a 3-step program for dealing with pain. This program starts with mild medicines for pain and then stronger ones if the pain lasts or gets worse.

- **If you have mild to moderate pain**, try pain medicine you can buy on your own such as aspirin, acetaminophen, or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as Ibuprofen. Some people cannot take these drugs so check with your doctor first.
- **NSAIDs work well** to relieve mild pain. They may be given with drugs called “opioids” for the relief of mild to severe pain. Acetaminophen also relieves pain, although it does not have the anti-inflammatory effect that aspirin and NSAIDs do.
- **If pain lasts or increases**, your health team may add drugs called “opioids” to aspirin, acetaminophen, or NSAIDs. You will need a prescription for these drugs.
- **Opioids are very helpful** for the relief of mild to severe pain.
- **Some commonly used opioids** are morphine, codeine, methadone, and fentanyl. The right dose is the amount of drug that controls pain with the fewest side effects. Take only the amount of drug that the doctor tells you to take. Some people worry about becoming addicted to drugs like these. Please know that this is not common. People who take pain medicine for pain do not usually become addicted.
- **If pain lasts or gets worse**, your doctor may increase the opioid dose. Take the medicine regularly (at scheduled times) to keep up a constant level of the drug in your body; this will help stop the pain from coming back.
- **Your doctor may prescribe** more doses of drugs if you are having pain between the times when you take your pain medicine.
- **Other drugs may be given** at the same time as the pain medicine to help it work better and treat side effects.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you are not having relief from the pain medicines that you are taking. You may need to have your pain medicine adjusted.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Cancer pain: Relief is possible

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cancer-pain/CA00021>

Cancer pain: Pain treatment

<http://www.oncologychannel.com/pain/treatment2.shtml>

Pain center: Drug therapy

<http://www.cancerpage.com/centers/pain/drugtherapy.asp>

M. D. Anderson Cancer Pain Research Group

<http://www.mdanderson.org/topics/paincontrol/>

National Cancer Institute

www.cancer.gov/cancer_information/doc_pdq.aspx?viewid=66D23623-3E9C-4BCF-8C09-902C2AFE0F06#1

Non-Drug Pain Relief Tip Sheet

Non-drug pain relief methods can be used with drugs and other treatments to manage pain. There are many kinds of non-drug pain relief. Here are a few tips to help you:

Heat may be used for muscle tightness after surgery.

- **Heat includes** warm to hot baths, heating pads, or chemical packs.
- **Chemical packs** can be heated in the microwave or boiling water. Then place in an elastic wrap with Velcro®. Be careful not to make it too hot!
- **Avoid heat** to the chest wall if you have had radiation.
- **Avoid heat** in the radiated breast if you have had treatment with anthracycline (doxorubicin) chemotherapy. If you use heat in this area, you may develop a severe skin reaction.
- **Avoid heat** in your arms, chest or legs if you have any numbness or tingling in the area.

Non-drug pain relief with cold: Cold may be used for relief of itching, muscle spasms, nerve pain, and severe pain.

- **Types of cold relief** include ice massage, ice bags and gel packs. Gel packs that you can get at the store are not costly, can be used over and over and are easy to use.
- **Slowly cool** the painful area until you begin to feel relief. Avoid the shock of sudden, intense cold.
- **Apply** a well-wrapped cold pack. **Slowly remove** layers of cloth from the cold pack until the area is cool enough.
- **Alternate use of heat and cold** may be more effective than the use of heat or cold alone. This may be very helpful for even severe pain.

Non-drug pain relief with lotions and creams: Lotions or products that contain menthol provide a feeling of warmth or coolness to an area. They may also help with pain.

- **Products with menthol**, such as Ben Gay®, Icy Hot® and Vicks®, are often used with sports injuries and are popular home cures.
- **Do not use these lotions or creams with heat** (such as a heating pad or heat pack, or the sun), as the heat can cause a burn.

- **Do not use these products** if you have had radiation to the painful area or if your doctor has told you to avoid the use of aspirin products.

Thinking and behavior methods are also helpful in treating pain. These methods help you gain a sense of control. Many methods can be tried, and one or more should be used regularly.

- **Relaxation:** Simple relaxation methods such as deep breathing may be used for periods of brief pain. (See our Tip on Relaxation Techniques)
- **Redirecting thinking and distraction:** Thinking about something other than pain or negative feelings that come with pain may help. You can talk to yourself (for example, counting, praying, or saying things like "I can cope"). Try doing something with others or out loud (for example, music, television, talking, listening to someone read, or looking at something specific). You can also learn to stop negative thoughts and replace them with more positive thoughts and images.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Always talk to your doctor or nurse if the non-drug pain methods are not working.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Living with cancer: Non drug cancer pain relief methods

[http://www.lwcancer.rbtnc.com/Non Drug Cancer Pain Relief Methods.html](http://www.lwcancer.rbtnc.com/Non_Drug_Cancer_Pain_Relief_Methods.html)

Health A to Z: Controlling cancer pain

<http://www.healthatoz.com/healthatoz/Atoz/common/standard/transform.jsp?requestURI=/healthatoz/Atoz/dc/cen/canc/gen/pain.jsp>

Cancer pain: Alternative and complementary methods

<http://www.cancer-pain.org/treatments/alternative.html>

National Cancer Institute: pain control

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/paincontrol/page4>

Managing Your Bowels Tip Sheet

Constipation is having a bowel movement less often than is usual for you. The stools may be small, hard and dry. This makes it hard to pass the stools. Some people have a bowel movement each day. Others have one less often, maybe three times a week. This will vary from one person to another. There may be a problem for you if you notice that you are having bowel movements less often than is your normal. Constipation may be a side effect of medicine that you take or it may be a symptom of a poor diet.

Taking pain medicine often leads to bowel problems. These medicines slow the movement of waste through the colon. When this happens water is absorbed from the waste. The result is that the stool is dry and hard. Medicines for anxiety, depression, stomach antacids, diuretics, vitamins, and sleep will also add to this problem.

A good diet will go a long way to help prevent constipation. Liquids and fiber are two areas to focus on. They can help you manage your bowels. Liquids like water and juice will help add fluid and bulk to the waste while it is in your colon. Fiber will add bulk and soften the waste so that the stool is not hard to pass. Adding more liquid and fiber may solve your bowel problems.

If you are taking pain medicines, you should try to have regular bowel movements. Here are some tips that are helpful:

- **Drink 8-10 (8 oz) glasses of water** or juice per day. This should include what you drink with meals.
- **Add more fiber to your diet** by eating more fruits (raisins, prunes, peaches, and apples), vegetables (squash, broccoli carrots, and celery), and whole grain cereals, breads, and bran. 25 grams of fiber is how much you should have each day in your diet. Read labels and see how much you are getting each day. If you need to increase the amount, do it over time, not over night. Following is a list of some foods and their fiber content:

Food	Serving Size	Fiber (grams)
Kidney beans	1 cup cooked	11.3
Lentils	1 cup cooked	15.6
Split peas	1 cup cooked	16.3
Dried plums	1 cup raw	4.7
Apple with skin	1 small	2.5
Peach with skin	1 larger	2.4
Broccoli	1 cup raw	2.4

Tomato	1 large raw	3.4
Wheat bran flake cereal	1 ounce	4.9
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	4.1
Brown rice	½ cup cooked	1.8

Always drink more liquids when eating more fiber. If you don't take in enough liquid, that will make things worse.

- **Stay active** and exercise to help to keep your bowels normal.
- **Using laxatives or enemas** may add to the problem. If you are using these products daily, you should talk with your healthcare team about other options.
- **Try to drink a warm or hot drink** about one half-hour before your usual time for a bowel movement.
- **There are many medicines** that may help. Some of them are bulk-forming laxatives, lubricants (mineral oil, liquid petrolatum), suppositories (glycerin, bisacodyl, senna), and stimulants. These may be helpful. Call your doctor to find out which one will work best for you.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse about constipation. They may have more ideas about medicines to help you manage your bowels.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

National Cancer Institute

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/gastrointestinalcomplications/HealthProfessional/page3>

Constipation and Chemotherapy

http://www.chemocare.com/managing/constipation_and_chemotherapy.asp

Causes of constipation

<http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk/help/default.asp?page=14364>

Constipation: System specific

http://www.wehealny.org/cancer/symptoms/1_1_13.html

Sleepiness Tip Sheet

Feeling sleepy is a common result of taking pain medicines. That feeling will usually end in about three days when your body gets used to pain medicine. Here are a few tips to help you learn ways to deal with feeling sleepy.

- **Drinking liquids with caffeine** such as coffee, tea, or sodas will help to work against drowsiness.
- **Get up and move around** or do some stretching when you feel yourself getting sleepy.
- **When you feel sleepy**, be careful to avoid doing things like driving, cooking, climbing stairs, or working where you could hurt yourself and others. Taking pain medicines should not stop you from doing these things, but do not do them when you feel sleepy.
- **Rest as much as needed.** If you keep on feeling sleepy, talk to your doctor or nurse. Make sure that they know all of the medicines that you take, including prescribed and over-the-counter medicines that may make you feel sleepy.
- **Medicines** for depression and allergies might make you feel sleepy. Do not take medicines that are not prescribed by your doctor. Do not drink alcohol without talking to your doctor about it first.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse about the prescribed and over the counter medicines that you are taking which may cause you to feel sleepy.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

ACOR (Association of Cancer Online Resources)
www.cancer-pain.org/faqs/faqs.html

Causes of fatigue

<http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk/help/default.asp?page=10270>

Cancer treatment: Coping with fatigue

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=21727>

National Cancer Institute: Sleep disorders

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/sleepdisorders/patient/allpages/print>

Sleep disorders and cancer

http://www.talkaboutsleee.com/sleep-disorders/archives/cancer_english.htm

THE NEW YOU

A Look at the New You

Breast cancer changes the way women may see themselves and how they appear to others. The many changes that can occur may be body changes, menopause, intimacy and sexuality. Because these changes can affect your quality of life, this module may help you learn more about them.

Body Changes

Chemotherapy can cause menopause during or after treatment. Menopause caused by chemotherapy may cause more severe symptoms than natural menopause. When menopause happens the ovaries no longer produce enough female hormones. The lack of hormones causes problems such as, hot flashes, sleeplessness, vaginal dryness, and vaginal or urinary tract infections.

Hot flashes may occur at night while women are sleeping but can occur at any time of the day. Hot flashes can occur a few times to more than ten times a day. Hot flashes can last from a few seconds to a few minutes. When hot flashes occur at night, daytime fatigue may occur because women may not get enough sleep. Hot flashes really bother some women and may disrupt their lives. Breast cancer survivors often see their doctor for medicines that may help.

Heart disease increases with menopause. Women who are obese, not active, or smoke are at a higher risk of getting heart disease after menopause. Thus, it is vital to maintain good heart health by getting active, eating well and quitting smoking.

Bone loss (also called osteoporosis) also goes up with hormone loss. Calcium is depleted with poor reabsorption. Survivors who have bone loss have a higher risk of having a hip or spine fracture. For this reason, it is good to try to

prevent osteoporosis by eating well, exercising regularly, and getting enough calcium.

Urinary tract infections and vaginal dryness occurs with hormone loss. Women have a decrease in vaginal lubrication, an increase in pain during intercourse, and an increase in urinary discomfort and urinary infections. These outcomes of hormone loss may be helped through good personal hygiene and other self-care treatments.

Body Image

Body image is the term used for the way women view themselves and their body. Breast cancer treatment changes one's view of body image. For example, the loss of the breast after surgery can really change a woman's body image because breasts may be a sign of being a woman. The scar and the markings on the breast used for radiation can be a constant reminder of the disease. Breast cancer treatment may have other effects on how a woman views herself and how she feels about her body. For example, *surgery* may cause decreased feeling, numbness on the inside of the arm and a build up of lymph fluid in the arm (lymphedema). These problems may add to pain and physical discomfort. *Radiation* may cause skin changes in the breast or the scar site. Some women describe having less feeling in the breast after radiation. Other women worry about 'shooting pains' in the breast after radiation.

Feelings of Loss and Sadness

Feelings of loss and grief may linger for months or years after treatment ends. The life you knew before breast cancer has been changed in some way for the rest of your life. Finding a way to cope with feelings of loss is vital for healing and moving on. It is good to look at the impact of the losses in your life. Is the loss moving you to go on with your life? Is the loss creating a feeling of being overwhelmed and making coping hard?

Feeling sad at some point in your illness is common. You have not failed if you have these feelings, feel distressed or have sad thoughts that come into your mind. Many have these feelings at times. In order to help yourself feel better, you do need to manage these feelings of loss, stress and sadness. It may be helpful to talk about these feelings and seek professional help.

Intimacy

A woman's desire and need for intimacy may change after cancer. There are many ways in which cancer can affect one's intimacy. For example, physical activity and energy levels may change. Women may not have desire or feel desirable after treatment. Other women may worry about stressors such as pain, sadness, and finances.

It is very hard to predict how breast cancer treatment will affect you, but often there are changes that require you to adapt and find new ways of seeing yourself. For example, during treatment, your spouse or partner may have helped with some of your roles. He may have taken on daily chores that you did or he may have helped to take care of you. Grown children may also have taken on some of your roles and they may not easily give them up now that your treatment is over. Some women feel conflict in their roles as a result. Now that your treatment is over you may want to go back to the previous roles that you once had before. Taking on these roles after treatment may have an impact on your family life.

Sexuality

Feeling nervous about the need for intimacy and sexuality after breast cancer treatment is normal. A woman may not feel desirable and avoid closeness fearing that her spouse or partner is not interested. On the other hand, some spouses and partners are overwhelmed by the disease and may fear showing sexual interest, thinking that their loved one is not interested. Others may be anxious about seeing

the mastectomy scar or other body changes for the first time. Share these changes with your spouse or partner when you are not stressed or in a hurry.

Breast cancer can affect whether you feel good about yourself and can change the degree of need for physical closeness. Some women may feel the need for more times for hugging, touching, and being close. Other women may feel the need for less contact because of pain, tiredness or fatigue. It is helpful to know that some changes may not last and may go back to normal in a few weeks. If these changes concern you, you may want to take things slowly by first spending time enjoying your spouse or partner's company, holding hands, touching, and resuming social activities together. As time goes on you'll be ready to move forward with more intimacy.

Most of all, be aware that any and all feelings are normal. Talking about these feelings with your spouse or partner can help you to adjust better to the New You.

About the New You

To help you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about the New You after breast cancer, ask yourself these questions:

- Are you having hot flashes?
- Do you have trouble with vaginal dryness?
- Do you have trouble with a urinary tract infection?
- If you have become menopausal, does this affect how you look and how you feel about your body?
- If arm swelling or lymphedema is present, does it affect how you look and feel about your body?
- If you have had a mastectomy, how content are you with the way you look?
- If you have had a mastectomy, is reconstructive surgery or other cosmetic changes an option?
- How do you feel about the mastectomy scar?

- What impact has treatment had on your body image?
- How do you feel about the changes in your body? How do you feel about hugging and touching?
- What other ways can you express your need for physical closeness?
- How sexually desirable do you feel?
- Do you have pain of any kind during sex? If so, how intense is the pain? Where is the pain located? How long does the pain last?
- If taking medicines, review the list with your health care team. Tell them how long you have been taking them and discuss how other medicines (if any) could be affecting how you look and how you feel about your body.

Talking about the New You

Talking about the changes in the way you look, body image, loss and intimacy, and sexuality is very important. Having someone that you trust to discuss your feelings will help. Problems in any of these areas can be hard for some women to discuss openly, but failure to discuss them with your health team and spouse or partner can cause delays in working out these problems. Even though you may feel scared, awkward, and/or uncomfortable with the New You, you need to share your feelings openly. Talk openly with your spouse or partner and your health team.

Breast cancer is a family illness, so it also affects your spouse or partner. Always keep the lines of communication open and be aware of your spouse or partner's needs. Sometimes, your spouse or partner may share your concerns about the New You. Here are some areas to think about as you talk with your spouse or partner:

- Create a safe time and place to talk about your concerns. Find a place where you can be alone and have plenty of time to yourself. You and your spouse or partner may need to make time for talks about your concerns. Reconnecting is crucial and will open the door to talking about other issues.

- You may be the one to bring up the subject of physical changes, body image/loss, intimacy, or sexuality. Your spouse or partner may not know what to say for fear that such a talk will be too painful for you. Talk about what is important to you - your feelings about the changes in your body. Ask and listen to what is important to your spouse or partner.
- Be realistic. Select one or two matters to discuss rather than a long list of all your concerns. Be specific when you talk.
- Focus on the good. Define your goals in that light.
- Keep in mind that your spouse or partner may worry about pain and how to touch you for fear of hurting you. Let your spouse or partner know when and if any activity causes discomfort.
- Although your view of your body may have changed, your spouse or partner may or may not be feeling that way at all. Most spouses or partners of breast cancer survivors feel the loss or change of a breast means less than the fact that you survived.
- Be a good listener. At the end of your talk, sum up your concerns, and your spouse or partner's concerns.
- How you express your sexual feelings with your spouse or partner is important. Be patient and give yourself time. Feeling uneasy is a normal feeling. You will be more at ease and comfortable over time.

Although your health team may not bring up the subject, changes in the way your body looks, body image, and sexual functioning are concerns that need to be talked about. It is helpful to choose someone on your health team such as a nurse or social worker who can discuss these concerns with you.

Your Action Plan

- 👍 Over the next few weeks, work on your action plan:
- 👍 Read the section on the New You in your workbook.
- 👍 Review your New You Tip Sheets and try the suggestions.
- 👍 What Tips helped?
- 👍 Try the following actions:

- 👍 Describe how these actions helped or did not help.
- 👍 Call your Research Team for any questions.
- 👍 Talk with your spouse or partner about these issues in the New You:

- 👍 Talk with your healthcare team about these issues:

Managing Hot Flashes Tip Sheet

Menopause (the change of life) is the body's response to having less of female hormones as a woman gets older. Symptoms of the change include hot flashes, problems sleeping, vaginal dryness, and infections of the vagina and urinary tract. A greater risk for bone loss and heart disease also comes with menopause. Chemotherapy can bring on an early menopause (change of life). Since its onset is more rapid, menopause caused by chemotherapy tends to cause more severe symptoms than natural menopause. If you are having change of life symptoms due to aging or as a result of treatment, here are a few tips that may help you:

Since estrogen helps some breast cancers to grow, Hormone Replacement Therapy (sometimes referred to as HRT) is generally NOT suggested for breast cancer patients. Be sure all your doctors are aware you are a breast cancer survivor. Talk to your doctors (primary doctor, gynecologist *and* oncologist) before taking any medicines or herbs to help with any symptoms you are having. You may hear of products that are said to be safe to use instead of hormones. Some act in the body like estrogen. Their safety after breast cancer has not been shown.

If you are having problems with hot flashes:

- **If your hot flashes really bother you**, talk to your doctor. There are medicines that help with hot flashes and are safe after breast cancer.
- **Dress in layers** so you can remove them at the first sign of a flash.
- **Dress in loose clothing** made of natural fibers (cotton).
- **Drink a glass of cold water** or juice at the start of a flash.
- **Keep a spray bottle and fan nearby** so you can mist and fan yourself to cool down quickly.
- **At night**, keep a thermos of ice water or an ice pack by your bed.
- **Use cotton sheets and night gowns or pajamas** to let your skin "breathe."
- **Avoid hot spicy foods and alcohol.** They start hot flashes in some people.
- **Keep a diary** of your hot flashes. Note the time of day and what you were doing prior to the hot flash. You may be able to find what triggers your hot flashes. If you find something that you do or eat is a trigger, then avoid it.
- **Exercise** regularly.

- **Try stress relief techniques.**
- **Vitamin E** seems to help some women with hot flashes, but it can be toxic in high doses. Always talk to your doctor about what dose is right for you before you try Vitamin E supplements.
- **At night**, try sleeping with your covers un tucked. This will allow you to get your hands and/or feet out of the cover, as soon as you feel a hot flash coming on. You have heard that you lose most of your body heat from your hands and feet. That is why this helps some women.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

Talk to your doctors or nurses if your hot flashes bother you and you have tried the tips listed above.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Breastcancer.org: All about hot flashes

http://www.breastcancer.org/bey_cope_meno_hotFlash.html

Ribbon of Pink, A Novartis Oncology Program

<http://www.ribbonofpink.com/content/breast-cancer-menopause.jsp?checked=y>

Breast cancer and menopausal symptoms

<http://www.cancerbackup.org.uk/Cancertype/Breast/Aftertreatment/Menopausalsymptoms>

Top 10 ways to cope with hot flashes

http://breastcancer.about.com/od/lifeduringtreatment/tp/hot_flashes.htm

Menopause and Breast Cancer

<http://www.abreastinthewest.ca/medical2.cfm?Num=23>

Urinary Changes Tip Sheet

Menopause, also called the change of life is the body's response to the lower amounts of female hormones. Chemotherapy can cause the change of life to start early. Urinary tract changes can happen after chemotherapy. These changes may include the urge to void often and urinary infections. If you are having urinary changes, here are a few tips that may help you:

- **Drink lots of liquids.** Try to drink at least 8-10 glasses of liquids each day.
- **Keep track** of your voiding patterns
- **Try to void with a schedule.** Do not hold urine over long periods of time.
- **Avoid having urine leak.** Keep small female pads handy.

Try Kegel Exercises:

- **Practice pelvic muscle exercises** called kegels. Kegels prevent drop of the pelvic organs. This can help prevent leaking urine when you sneeze or cough.
- **Kegel muscles are attached to the pelvic bone** and act like a hammock, holding in your pelvic organs. To try and isolate these muscles try stopping and starting the flow of urine.
- **Once you have located the muscles** simply tighten and relax the muscle over and over, about 20 times a day or for 5 minutes twice a day. These are basic kegels.
- **There are many kinds of kegels:** elevator kegels (where you tighten slowly, going in and out, like an elevator stopping on several floors); you can hold the muscle tight for five seconds, you can bulge the muscles out at the end.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

If you are having pain, burning, frequency, or urgency during voiding, check to see if you have a fever. Also note the color of your urine, and call your doctor or nurse as soon as you can.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Childbirth.org – Kegel exercises

www.childbirth.org/articles/kegel.html

National Cancer Institute: Managing radiation therapy side effects: What to do about changes when you urinate

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/wtk/urination>

Kegel exercises: How to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/kegel-exercises/WO00119>

Urinary tract infections

<http://www.epigee.org/health/uti.html>

Body Image and Loss Concerns Tip Sheet

Body image is the way you view yourself and your body. Breast cancer, may be associated with a loss of confidence about the way you look and how attractive you feel. Breasts are a symbol of being feminine and being a woman. This Tip Sheet provides you with tips to help you with changes in body image.

- **Be patient** and give yourself some time to get used to body changes. Spend some time alone getting used to your body.
- **Grieve over the loss or change in your body.** Accept losses and trauma with breast cancer. Talk about where you are now. Recall past illness and losses to help make sense of what you are going through.
- **If you have had chemotherapy,** hair regrowth is gradual over a period of about six months. Over time, your hair will look a lot like it did before cancer.
- **If you have had mastectomy,** your prosthesis may need to be readjusted after treatment has ended. If you have not yet had a prosthetic fitting, ask your doctor for a referral.
- **Contact your local American Cancer Society “Look Good...Feel Better” program.** “Look Good...Feel Better” is a free, national public service program (available in some areas). Its purpose is to teach women with cancer beauty practices to help restore the way they look and self-image during and after cancer treatment. Through the “Look Good...Feel Better” sessions, women learn how to cope with the change in the way they look because of side effects of cancer treatment.
- **Although you may view your body in a different way,** don’t think that your spouse or partner sees things the same way you do. Your spouse or partner cares for you as the whole person, not for each body part. Spend time together to discuss your concerns about body image after treatment has ended.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

You need to be able to talk openly about your body image concerns. If you have problems talking about your concerns, think about seeing a professional counselor or support group that talks about these issues.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Body image issues? You're not alone

http://www.y-me.org/publications/spring07_4.php

Your self esteem and how it may be affected

http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/content.php?page_id=1021

Breastcancer.org: Accepting the nude you

http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/intimacy/self_image.jsp

American Cancer Society - Breast Protheses List

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/cric/content/cric_2_6x_breast_protheses_list_5.asp

Look Good – Feel Better

www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org/

Intimacy and Relationship Concerns Tip Sheet

Sharing close moments and times with loved ones after breast cancer is important. Sharing helps others know more about the changes in you. Enjoying your family and friends is vital in moving on with your life. Here are some tips to think about as you reconnect and share intimate moments.

- **Reconnect with your spouse**, partner, family, and friends as much as you can. There are no certain timelines that you must meet. Make sure that you are at ease in reconnecting. Go at a pace that feels right for you.
- **Discuss the changes in you** and how they affect your relationship with your loved one.
- **Talk about other ways** of showing love and closeness with your spouse or partner. For example, try holding hands, hugging, sharing a special moment, or finding new ways to share time with each other. Touch is a large part of intimacy.
- **Make time for special moments** with your children and grandchildren. Share by doing something fun with them like reading a book, going to a movie, a park, or museum. You may even do an everyday activity such as sharing a meal or taking a walk. The key ingredient is marking special moments in time.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

You need to be able to talk openly about your intimacy concerns. If you have continued difficulties in communicating, think about seeing a professional counselor or support group that discusses these issues.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

National Breast Cancer Organization: A candid conversation on sexuality, intimacy and fertility

<http://www.y-me.org/coping/relationships/intimacy.php>

National Breast Cancer Organization: Talking with family and friends

http://www.y-me.org/coping/relationships/talking_with_familiy_and_friends.php

Breastcancer.org: You and your partner

<http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/intimacy/partner.jsp>

Love, intimacy and breast cancer

<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=52276>

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

www.breastcancerinfo.com/

Sexual Changes Tip Sheet

Menopause, also called “the change of life”, is the body’s response to the lower amounts of female hormones. Drugs used to treat breast cancer can cause the change of life to start early. Symptoms of the change may include vaginal dryness, pain during sex and changes in the ability to have children. These problems can be more severe than changes that occur naturally without drugs. If you are having symptoms of sexual or urinary changes due to aging or as a result of treatment here are a few tips that may help you:

Vaginal Dryness

- Use water-based lubricants such as K-Y jelly (Johnson & Johnson), Astroglide (Astro-Lube, Inc.), or Replens (Parke-Davis).
- Do not use oil-based lubricants such as Vaseline or baby oil because they cause irritation to the vagina.
- Check with your doctor about using a non-estrogen based cream or gel.

Pain during Sex

- Take the time to try positions. After surgery, some women do not prefer that their spouse or partner’s weight rest on them.
- Think about making love in a side-by-side position. Try other ways that may not be painful.
- Reduce weight on your surgical site to decrease pain. Support yourself with pillows for comfort.
- Take pain medicine before having sex.

Fatigue and Sex

- Be flexible about the time of day you make love.
- Try less demanding positions. Discuss with your spouse or partner that making love need not start with a long session.

- Try making love in dim light rather than in complete light. Some women find that having sex with their bra on after surgery makes them feel sexier. This way they can use their prosthesis to conceal their scar.

Pregnancy/Fertility

- If you have not gone through the change of life and have regular periods, or are on hormonal therapy, you will need to use some form of barrier contraception to avoid becoming pregnant. Use barrier protection to avoid becoming pregnant after treatment with chemotherapy for at least two years or during the entire time that you are on hormonal therapy.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

You need to be able to talk openly with your spouse or partner. If you keep having trouble in communicating, consider seeing a professional counselor or support group that discusses these issues.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

American Cancer Society: Sexuality

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/MIT/content/MIT_7_2X_Ways_of_Dealing_With_Specific_Sexual_Problems.asp?sitearea=MIT

Breastcancer.org: Changes in your sex life

<http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/intimacy/changes.jsp>

Breast cancer and sexuality

<http://cancer.higsinc.com/breast-cancer-and-sexuality.htm>

National Cancer Institute: Body changes and intimacy

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/life-after-treatment/page5>

Sexuality Tip Sheet

Sexuality and changes that occur in sexual desire are a large part of the 'New You' after breast cancer. To help you better know about what changes are linked to breast cancer, this Tip starts with review of normal sexual response and follows with tips to think about and discuss with your spouse or partner.

Sexual response occurs in four phases:

1. **Desire** is also known as libido, is the interest that one has in sex. Desire for another person begins the sexual response. Desire is influenced by sight, touch, thought, fantasy, and foreplay. Desire for sex can vary over time. Sexual desire may also be affected by emotional reasons like comfort with one's sexuality and feeling attractive.
2. **Excitement** or arousal occurs when the body reacts to stimulation by increasing the flow of blood to sexual organs. Heart rate and blood pressure increase. The vagina produces a natural lubricant that helps make intercourse comfortable. The vaginal walls also loosen and widen. Nipples become erect. Arousal may not necessarily lead to orgasm.
3. **Orgasm** is the climax of pleasure where the body has a series of rhythmic contractions. It is physical release and an emotional high.
4. **Resolution** follows sexual arousal and orgasm. Sexual activity generally results in a satisfied feeling and the body returns to normal.

Here are some tips to think about in discussing your sexuality concerns:

- **Create a safe time and place to talk about your sexual concerns.** Find a place where you can be alone and take your time. You and your partner may need to make time for talks about closeness. Talking about your concerns is needed and will open the door to talking about other matters. It may often be easier to talk outside the bedroom and not during sex.
- **You may be the one to bring up the subject of sexuality.** Your spouse or partner may not know what to say or fear that talking about it will be too painful for you. Talk about what means most to you - feelings about the changes in your body and fears of rejection. Ask and listen to what means most to your spouse or partner
- **Have a realistic outlook.** Select one or two things to discuss rather than a taking out a list of your entire concerns. Be clear in your talking.

- **Think positive.** Set your goals in a positive light. Remember that intimacy and sex are life-affirming activities.
- **Keep in mind that your spouse or partner may worry** about pain and how to touch you for fear of hurting you. Agree with your spouse or partner to let them know when and if any activity causes discomfort. That way your partner can proceed with confidence.
- **Discuss any fears that you have about sexual rejection.** Breast cancer and its treatment may have changed the way you look. It has also changed the way you function sexually. Be as honest as you can when you talk about these things.
- **Be a good listener.** At the end of your talk, go over you and your partner's concerns.
- **How you express your sexual feelings** with your spouse or partner is important. Be patient and give yourself time. Being uncomfortable and anxious are normal feelings. Confidence and comfort should return in time.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

You need to be able to talk openly with your spouse or partner. If you have continued difficulties in communicating, consider a referral to a professional counselor or support group that discusses these issues.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Breastcancercare.org: Sexuality

http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/content.php?page_id=101

Oncolink: Sexuality and Breast Cancer: Overview of issues

<http://www.oncolink.com/coping/article.cfm?c=4&s=42&ss=90&id=472>

Breastcancer.org: Beyond Intercourse

<http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/intimacy/beyond.jsp>

Midlife Sexuality, Relationships/Vaginal Dryness

<http://www.power-surge.com/educate/sexuality.htm>

Thinking About Children after Breast Cancer Tip Sheet

While few breast cancers happen in women before the change of life, having children is a major concern for young women. They may have been ready to start or continue a family at the time of their cancer. Other young women may have not yet thought about having a family, but worry about whether they will be able to have children in the future.

Effects of Treatment on Having Children

Women can get pregnant after treatment for breast cancer. It depends on a lot of things.

- **Surgery** does not affect being able to have children. It may reduce the ability to breast-feed.
- **Radiation** does not affect being able to have children. It may decrease the ability to breast-feed.
- **Chemotherapy** may affect fertility:
 - **Some drugs can damage** the ovaries.
 - Some drugs may cause changes in hormone levels needed for pregnancy.
 - Some drugs may cause your menstrual periods to stop for a short time or permanently.
- **Tamoxifen:**
 - May cause changes in hormone levels needed for pregnancy and ovulating.
 - May cause your menstrual periods to stop for a short time or permanently.
 - Is taken for 5 years after treatment.
 - Women **must** take measures to prevent getting pregnant while on this drug due to the harm it can cause a fetus.

Other reasons that affect being able to have children

- **Age.** The older you are, the less likely you will become pregnant. A healthy 30-year-old woman has a 20% chance of becoming pregnant each month. A healthy 40-year-old woman has a 5% of becoming pregnant each month.
- Fertility rates decline a great deal after the age of 40.
- Older age and certain drugs used in breast cancer treatment can affect your periods causing them to stop.
- Being **overweight**.
- **Smoking**.

When Pregnancy occurs after Treatment

Research has shown that:

- Pregnancy after treatment has not been shown to have a poor effect on survival after breast cancer.
- Hormone changes during pregnancy have had little effect on return of breast cancer.
- The rate of miscarriage in women after breast cancer is slightly higher than in women without breast cancer.
- It is advised that women wait at least 2 years after treatment before trying to become pregnant.
- Children born to women with a history of breast cancer do not have any harmful effects due to the breast cancer.

When do you need to seek help?

You should talk to your doctor if you want to try to become pregnant after being treated for breast cancer. There are many things to think about. Your doctors will be able to discuss the issues with you. You may also need “extra help” to become pregnant and may need to see a fertility specialist.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

National Breast Cancer Organization: Fertility: Is it safe to become pregnant after completing treatment for breast cancer?

<http://www.y-me.org/coping/relationships/fertility.php>

Breast cancer and fertility

http://www.pregnancy-info.net/infertility_breast_cancer.html

How breast cancer affects fertility

<http://www.webmd.com/breast-cancer/features/how-breast-cancer-affects-fertility>

Breast Cancer Organization: Thinking about fertility issues

http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/fert_preg_adopt/fertility_issues.jsp

MAINTAINING HEALTH

A Look at Maintaining Health

Now that treatment is over, you may feel that there is nothing that you can do to affect your health. That is not the case. There are many things that you need to take charge of to be in better control of your health. These include taking charge of follow up with your health team, getting active, eating well and dealing with concerns that you may have about work.

Follow-up Checks to Monitor Breast Cancer

Breast cancer survivors should realize the importance of regular follow-up visits with the health team. Now that you are finished with treatment, you will need regular follow up checks. It is vital that you see your health team so they can keep a close eye on your health and they can monitor your breast cancer.

Follow-up with your health team will probably include:

- Having your doctor check you every 3 to 6 months for the first 3 to 5 years, then every 12 months after that.
- Having a mammogram every 12 months. If you still have breast tissue on the affected side, have a mammogram of the treated breast 6 to 12 months after treatment ends and then a mammogram of both breasts every 12 months.
- If you take tamoxifen and have a uterus, have a pelvic exam every 12 months.
- If you take an aromatase inhibitor or if you have experienced menopause due to treatment, your bone health should be monitored.
- There may be other follow up tests that your doctor may wish to perform.

Getting Active

Exercise can play a big role in how you feel about yourself and your body image. Some recent studies have shown that regular exercise is linked with better survival outcomes. Exercise has also been shown to improve or maintain quality of life, heart health, fatigue, body image and happiness in breast cancer survivors.

It may be that you have never been one to exercise regularly, or that you did exercise before cancer. Either way, there are good reasons to get active and stay active. Here are some easy ways to begin:

- Take the stairs when you can.
- Park the car farther away and walk a little extra.
- Watch less TV and take a walk or do something more active.

Eating Well

Having a healthy diet after breast cancer can help you gain your strength, rebuild tissue and feel better. Eating smart may also help you to lose weight gained during treatment and can help prevent other kinds of cancer. Some ways to eat better include:

- Eat 5 to 7 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- Eat 3 or more servings of whole grains a day.
- Use low fat or fat free milk and milk products.
- Decrease how much red meat you eat.
- Avoid fried foods.
- Limit your intake of really sweet foods.
- Avoid adding extra fat to foods when cooking.
- Drink no more than one alcoholic drink a day.

Bone Health

Many women are at risk for osteoporosis (bone loss) after treatment for breast cancer because they have less hormones in their systems. There is also the risk of having bone loss if you take drugs called aromatase inhibitors. If you take an aromatase inhibitor you should have your bone health checked. This is done by having a bone mineral density test (scan). Some ways to reduce the chance that you will have bone loss include:

- Make sure that your diet includes calcium.
- Stay away from caffeine.
- Get active.
- Talk with your health team about taking a calcium supplement.
- If you smoke, stop!
- Drink no more than one drink with alcohol a day.
- Talk with your health team about how to prevent bone loss.

Heart Health

Both menopause and cancer treatment can affect your heart health. There are many things that you can do to reduce the chance that you will have poor heart health. Some of them are:

- Stop smoking.
- Get 30 minutes of exercise a day, three times a week.
- Talk with your doctor about taking vitamins.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Keep a healthy body weight.

Work Issues

Many women have concerns about going back to work after breast cancer. Some women worry about being treated differently. Others worry that they may

not be able to do the job like they did before. You need to know your rights and what resources are available to you.

Insurance

Keeping insurance and being able to have it in the future are big issues for cancer survivors. Treatment and follow up can cost a lot. There are some options that may help you keep insurance with or without having a job.

About Maintaining Health

Here are some questions to ask yourself about staying healthy. Thinking about these questions will help you to talk with your family and/or health team about staying healthy. Ask yourself:

- How is your health now?
- Have you seen your health team when you should?
- Are you eating smart?
- Are you active?
- Are you overweight?
- How is your heart health? What are you doing about it?
- What are you doing about your bone health?
- Do you have work issues?
- Do you have insurance now? Will you in the future?

Talking about Maintaining Health

Staying healthy after breast cancer means talking with your doctor and family. You should share with them any concerns or questions you have about maintaining your health. These are areas that you may wish to talk about:

- When should you see the doctor again?
- Are there symptoms that you should be concerned about? What are they?
- What tests should you have done to monitor your health?

- What does your doctor think about your eating and activity?
- Are there any special things to think about when deciding to eat better and get active?
- How is your bone health?
- Are there other things you can do to improve bone health?
- How is your heart health?
- Should you take vitamins or supplements?
- Are you able to take a calcium supplement?
- Is there someone that you can talk with about work issues?
- What options do you have as far as insurance for now and the future?

Your Action Plan

- 👍 Over the next few weeks, work on your action plan:
- 👍 Read the section on Maintaining Health in your workbook.
- 👍 Review your Maintaining Health Tip Sheets and try the suggestions.
- 👍 What Tips helped?
- 👍 Try the following actions:

- 👍 Describe how these actions helped or did not help.
- 👍 Call your Research Team for any questions.
- 👍 Talk with your family about these issues in Maintaining Health:

- 👍 Talk with your doctor or healthcare team about these issues:

Staying Healthy after Breast Cancer Tip Sheet

There are about 10 million people alive now with cancer. This number will likely grow because of the new treatments for cancer. Now that more people are living after cancer, the focus has turned to helping them stay healthy. These tips will help you begin some healthy habits or to keep healthy habits.

Breast Cancer Follow-up

One of the main things that you can do is to follow-up with your doctors and nurses after treatment so they can keep an eye on your health. Follow-up is vital to check your health. Follow up tests may be needed. This guide will help you know what to expect after treatment.

- Have an exam by a doctor every 4 to 6 months for the first 5 years, then every 12 months after that.
- Have a mammogram every 12 months. If you had surgery and radiation therapy instead of mastectomy, have a mammogram of the treated breast 6 to 12 months after radiation ends. Then have one of both breasts every 12 months.
- If you take tamoxifen and have a uterus, have a pelvic exam every 12 months.
- If you take an aromatase inhibitor such as Arimidex or if you have gone through the change of life due to treatment, your bone health should be checked.
- Do monthly breast self-exam. You should do this even if you have little or no breast tissue after surgery. The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Suggests:
 - Lie down with a pillow under your right shoulder:
 - Use the pads of the 3 middle fingers of your left hand to check your right breast.
 - Press using light, medium and firm pressure in a circle without lifting your fingers off the skin.
 - Follow an up and down pattern.
 - Feel for changes in your breast area, above and below your collarbone and in your armpit.
 - Repeat on your left breast using your right hand.

- Stand in front of a mirror and look for any changes from normal. Inspect your breasts and chest using these steps:
 - Hold your arms at your sides.
 - Hold your arms over your head.
 - Press your hands on your hips and tighten your chest muscles.
 - Bend forward with your hands on your hips.
 - See your doctor or nurse if you notice any of these things in your breasts:
 - Lump, hard knot or thickening.
 - Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening.
 - Change in size or skin.
 - Dimpling or puckering of the skin.
 - Nipple discharge that starts suddenly.
 - New pain in one spot that does not go away.
 - On the side where you had surgery:
 - Get to know how the skin, tissue and scar look and feel.
 - Look for changes from one month to the next.
 - If you have concerns, share this with your doctor.

Exercise

Exercise has been shown to help your quality of life, heart health, fatigue, body image and happiness. Weight-bearing exercise such as walking and using resistance weight training has helped bone mineral density (BMD) in women who have been through the change. These types of activities may help slow or prevent bone loss that may lead to osteoporosis. Exercise has also been shown to lower body weight and change the body's make-up to include more lean muscle mass and less fat. Walking, even for short periods of time have been shown to be good for those who have had breast cancer.

Diet

A healthy **diet** after breast cancer can help women lose any weight they may have gained during treatment as well as reduce fatigue and improve body image. Having both a good healthy diet and getting fit will help with weight loss. Some good choices include adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet, eating leaner cuts of meat, adding more poultry and fish. Also choosing milk products and cooking oils with low fat will help.

Bone Health

Keeping your bones strong is vital after treatment for breast cancer. You can see how your bone health is by having a bone mineral density test (scan). To improve bone health, women should add more calcium to their diet and exercise on a regular basis.

Other Healthy Behaviors

Please think about these:

- Stop smoking.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Limit how much time you spend in the sun
- Be screened for other cancers like colon, cervical and skin cancers.
- Also be screened for other health problems that you are at risk of having.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

You should talk with your doctors and nurses about any changes you are making in your routine after treatment. They may be able to help you make good choices. Also, if you have any questions or concerns about your health between visits or if you notice any changes in your breast(s) or symptoms, contact your doctor. Talk with your doctor about them and have these changes checked.

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

The American Cancer Society

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/ped_1.asp?sitearea=PED

Breastcancer.org

http://www.breastcancer.org/research_diet_072705a.html

CDC: Women's Health: Active steps for staying healthy

<http://www.cdc.gov/Women/owh/preventworks/action.htm>

Familydoctor.org: Healthy Living: What you can do to keep your health

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/healthy/prevention/086.html>

US department of health and human services: Women: Stay healthy at any age:

Your checklist for health

<http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthywom.htm>

The Susan G. Komen Foundation: <http://www.komen.org>

This group is working to fight breast cancer through research. They also provide information to women after treatment.

Living Beyond Breast Cancer: <http://www.lbbc.org>

The goal of this site is to help women improve their quality of life after treatment.

National Breast Cancer Coalition: <http://www.y-me.org>

The goal of this group is to provide information and support to breast cancer survivors. There is also a 24 hour/day Hotline you can call for facts and support. 1-800-221-2141 (English) 1-800-986-9505 (Spanish)

The Young Survival Coalition: <http://youngsurvival.org>

This site helps address the concerns of young cancer survivors.

Women's Cancer Network: <http://www.wcn.org>

This site informs women about cancers specific to women.

CancerCare: <http://www.cancercare.org>

This offers education, financial assistance and support to cancer survivors. Telephone support groups are also available. Call 1-800-813-4673 for more information.

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS):

<http://www.canceradvocacy.org>

This group acts as a voice for cancer survivors at the government level. They work to ensure quality cancer care for all survivors.

National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN): <http://www.nccn.org>

The NCCN site gives you access to guidelines for treatment of breast cancer and some of its side effects. There is a patient area at this website.

Cancer Symptoms.org: <http://www.cancersymptoms.org>

This site provides information on understanding cancer symptoms.

Other resources:

Local County Health Department: This is a good place to start for local resources and groups that may be able to offer you help. We can provide you with your County's Health Department telephone number.

National Women's Health Information Center

<http://www.womenshealth.gov> or 1-800-994-9662

This site can provide a wide range of resources to women in both English and Spanish:

Medline Plus: Women's Health Topics

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/womenshealth.html>

This site can help you answer health-related questions.

“Your Medicines” Tip Sheet

Many women take medicines for years to help keep the cancer from coming back. The medicines are used if the breast cancer cells were “estrogen hormone receptor positive”. The medicine is usually a pill that is taken one time a day. Because it is a pill, you may not feel that it is very important to your continued good health. Some recent studies show that these medicines increase the amount of women who survive five years by as much as 40%. As with the treatment that you have already had, there are risks and benefits with these medicines. The four most common medicines in this group are:

- Tamoxifen
- Arimidex
- Aromasin
- Femara

How they work

Many breast cancers need estrogen to grow. The drugs listed above all work by keeping the normal estrogen in the body from aiding in tumor growth. They have been shown to greatly improve outcomes. There are some risks and side effects with each drug. You may not have any of them, or you may have several. Every woman is different in her response to these drugs.

Common Risks and Side Effects

- Hot flashes and sweats
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Nausea, indigestion, or diarrhea
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Hair thinning
- Risk of osteoporosis
- Vaginal dryness

One of the more common complaints by women who take these drugs is joint, muscle and/or bone pain. If this is a problem, you should contact your doctor. You may need to have some tests to see whether or not the pain is related to the medicine. If the pain is from the medicine, there are a number of things that can be tried.

Some of them are:

- Try over the counter medicine for pain and inflammation, like Tylenol or Ibuprofen. Always talk with your doctor before trying these for relief.
- Take a dietary supplement of calcium and vitamin D. Talk with your doctor before starting these medicines.
- Think about prescription medications for pain and inflammation. These should be prescribed for you by your doctor.
- Begin weight-bearing exercise. Start this slowly after talking with your doctor about it.
- Wear supportive shoes.
- Do regular stretching and joint exercises.
- Try using heat and massage in the area of pain.
- Do not smoke.
- If you drink alcohol, use moderation.

Most of the above listed problems are mild. There are other less common side effects that may be more serious. If you are having problems taking your medicines, talk with your doctor. Think about the risks and the benefits as you talk. DO NOT just stop taking the medicine because you are having a problem with side effects. There are many things that can be done to help. Some may involve changing your medicines or adding a new one to help with the side effects. There may also be some non-drug treatments that may help. Many of these problems get better after you have been taking the medicine for a while.

There are some rare, but serious side effects that you should be aware of like blood clots and the development of other cancers. Some symptoms that may go along with serious problems from taking these medicines need to be reported to your doctor and checked out as soon as possible.

Some of the serious problems may be:

- Pain, redness or swelling in the lower leg.
- Shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.
- Sudden severe headache.
- Confusion.
- Trouble speaking or moving.
- Unusual female bleeding.

Other information

These medicines to prevent the return of cancer are usually taken one time a day. It is best to take it at the same time each day. It does not matter whether it is morning or evening. These medicines should be:

- Kept out of children's reach.
- Stored in the original container.
- Kept at room temperature, away from moisture, direct heat and light.
- If you are taken off the medicine by your doctor, return the rest of the medicine to the pharmacy, so they can be safely disposed of.
- Refilled before you run out, so that you don't miss a dose.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Breast cancer: Types of medications

http://www.healthatoz.com/healthatoz/Atoz/common/standard/transform.jsp?requestURI=/healthatoz/Atoz/dc/caz/canc/brca/brca_meds_type.jsp

Breast cancer medications

<http://www.webmd.com/breast-cancer/tc/breast-cancer> medications

Tamoxifen and breast cancer

<http://www.cchs.net/health/health-info/docs/2600/2616.asp?index=9785>

Arimidex

<http://www.a-zbreastcancer.com/drugs/arimidex.htm>

Getting Active Tip Sheet

Now that breast cancer is over, it is a great time to begin to take better care of yourself by getting active. You may have always been active or being active may be a new change for you. Some of the benefits of getting active may be less fatigue and better energy levels. Getting active may also help to combat feeling blue. Being more active is something positive that you can do about your health. Your risk of getting other health problems can be lowered by getting active. Some of the long term effects from treatment may also be made better by being more active.

Getting active includes a focus on two areas. They are aerobic and strength exercises. Aerobic exercise is any activity that makes your heart beat more and makes you breathe more rapidly, but not so much that you can't sustain the activity for more than a few minutes. Some activities that fall into this group are walking, biking, dancing, and swimming. Strength exercises are aimed at improving the strength and flexibility of certain muscles.

Getting active is a process and will take time. The US Surgeon General suggests that you get about 30 minutes of medium level exercise most days of the week. This can be done 10-15 minutes at a time and total 30 minutes in a day. If you have not been very active, it may take several weeks to work up to this level. You should talk with your doctor about any activities that you plan to try. Never start a new exercise program without getting your doctor's approval.

You may know what you want to do to try to get more active. For instance, you may know that you want to walk. You may have no idea where to start. Here are some things to think about as you seek an activity to help you get fit. It should be:

Simple, convenient, practical, realistic, and specific.

Keeping these things in mind will improve your odds of success at getting fit. The goals of exercise after breast cancer include these:

- Better movement and strength in the affected side.
- Lower your risk of Lymphedema.
- Improve your endurance.
- Reduce your risk for bone loss.
- Improve heart health..
- Increase your feeling of well being.

Walking is a very easy way to get fit. It takes very little planning. You can do it in the area where you live or somewhere else. You can vary where you walk. You don't need a lot of costly gear to walk. It may be easy to get someone else to walk with you. You are not limited to a certain time of the day. You can start out with a short distance and slow pace. Then you can work over time to a faster, longer walk.

You may ask WHY WALK?

- To reduce stress.
- To give you more energy.
- To tone muscles.
- To burn more calories.
- To strengthen bones and muscles.
- To lower your chance of getting other health problems.
- To make you feel good.

Before starting a walking program:

- Check with your doctor. Make sure that there are no medical reasons that would make it unwise to start walking.
- See that you have good shoes. You need proper support for your feet to prevent injury. When you go to purchase walking shoes, wear the socks that you plan to use. Also walk around the store to make sure that they are the right shoe for you.
- **Always** warm up. Walk the first 5 minutes slowly before picking up the pace.
- Think about your heart rate and your breathing. You should be able to talk while walking.
- Use good posture. Swing your arms. Keep your head up and stand up straight and tall.
- Keep track of the length of time you walk or the distance that you go.
- Carry water if it is hot or you plan to walk for a long distance.
- Change the scenery. Walk in a different area some of the times.
- Find a buddy or some good music to walk with.

If you have given it some thought and done the things listed, it is time to start. Put on those shoes, and leave the house. Set a time or distance to go on your first day out. Some people start with 5 minutes out and 5 minutes back. That means that you go 5 minutes and then turn around and come back. Always start

out slowly and warm up. Then get your pace up to where you feel a little warm and are breathing a little more frequently than at rest. Try to do this about 4 times a week. Adjust your pace and distance as you need. A good guideline to use to increase what you are doing is to add 10% a week. If you are walking 10 minutes the first week, then add 1 minute and walk 11 minutes each day of the second week. Keep on doing this until you have reached your goal. You will find that over time you are able to walk at a brisker pace.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Also talk with them about any problems that you may have when you start getting active. Your health team may be able to offer you more options to get active.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

American Heart Association (1-800-242-8721)

Weight-control Information Network (1-877-946-4627)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Medicine.net: Breast cancer survivors: Nutrition and fitness tips
<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=50498>

Exercise Tips
<http://exercise.lifetips.com/>

US Govt Weight-control Information Network
<http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/walking.htm>

Breast cancer.org: Exercise after treatment may improve survival and reduce recurrence
http://www.breastcancer.org/risk/environmental/new_research/20050727a.jsp

Exercise Benefits
<http://www.busywomensfitness.com/exercise-benefits.html>

Eating Healthy Tip Sheet

Now that breast cancer treatment is over, it is a great time to eat healthy. You may have always eaten healthy, or eating healthy may be a change for you. A healthy diet can improve how you feel and increase your energy level. Eating healthy is also something positive that you can do about your health. Your risk of getting many health problems can be lowered by having a good diet. Some of the long term effects from treatment may also be made better by a healthy diet.

Healthy eating involves three main guidelines: Moderation, variety and balance.

Moderation means that you don't eat too much or too little of any food. You need food from each of the five food groups. Your diet should never consist of only food from certain groups and no food from others.

Variety not only makes what you eat more interesting, but allows your body to get the different nutrients that are in different foods within a group. For instance, if you eat many servings of the same fruit day after day, you may not be getting all the nutrients that you need.

Balance in your diet means that you eat moderate amounts of the foods from each group. You should also aim to have the right amount of calories for how active you are.

There are five basic food groups. A healthy diet for the average person should include these groups of food and about the amounts listed by each group. If your weight is above or below average, the amounts will vary. Also if you are very active or not active at all, this will affect how much from each group that you need.

The Five Food Groups are:

GRAINS: 6 oz each day

Grains include foods that are made from wheat, rice, oats, barley, cornmeal or other grains. Breads, pasta, cereals, and tortillas are in this group. Try to get 3 oz of whole grain foods.

VEGETABLES: 2 ½ cups a day

Vegetables include 100% vegetable juice. This group also includes raw, cooked, canned, frozen, fresh and dried vegetables. In this group are green, orange, and starchy vegetables. Also in it are dry beans and peas.

FRUITS: 1 ½ cups a day

Fruits include 100% fruit juice. This group also includes fresh, canned, frozen and dried fruits. Eat different fruits and go easy on the juices.

MILK and DAIRY: 3 cups a day

This group includes all of the liquid milk products and foods made from milk that keep their calcium. Puddings, yogurt and cheeses are in this group. Cream cheese, cream and butter are not. Always go for the low fat or fat free items in this group.

MEAT and POULTRY: 5 ½ oz a day

This group includes meat, poultry, fish, dried beans, eggs, nuts and all foods that are made from them. Lean, low fat cuts of meats are best. Add more fish, beans, peas and nuts and go easy on the red meats.

OILS (FATS): less than 6 teaspoons a day

Some foods that fall into this group are oils, butter, margarine, nuts, animal fat and shortening. Most of your intake from this group should come from fish, nut and vegetable oils. Limit solid fats like butter and shortening.

Here are some other tips from the United States Department of Agriculture that may help you to eat healthier:

- Make half your grains whole.
- Vary your veggies.
- Focus on fruit.
- Get your calcium rich foods.
- Go lean with protein.
- Find your balance between food and physical activity.

There are times when you will be eating out. Plan ahead to allow for the meal. Always avoid the “all you can eat” buffet. If you have planned ahead and thought about where you will go and what might be a healthy choice there, chances are that you will eat healthier. Here are some more tips from the US Department of Agriculture to help you when you plan to eat out:

- Order an appetizer or side dish instead of an entrée.
- Share a main dish with a friend.
- Take leftovers home in a “doggy bag.”
- The moment your food arrives, set aside half of it to take home.

- Resign from the “clean your plate club” - when you have eaten enough, leave the rest.
- Ask for your salad dressing on the side, so you can use only what you want.
- Avoid ordering foods that have creamy sauces or gravies.
- Add little or no butter to your food.
- Choose fruits for dessert.
- Order water to drink, or low fat milk or a drink without added sugar.
- Order steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes instead of those that are fried or sautéed.
- Ask for whole wheat bread for sandwiches.
- Start your meal with a salad packed with veggies, to help control hunger.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse when you are concerned. Be sure to tell them if you have a personal or family history of weight problems. Also let them know if you have had a rapid weight gain or loss. This could be a symptom of a health problem that needs to be checked out. They can also provide you with more advice about what you should do about your weight.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

American Heart Association (1-800-242-8721)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

American Heart Association

www.americanheart.org and www.deliciousdecisions.org/

Healthy eating: Tips for a healthy diet

http://www.helpguide.org/life/healthy_eating_diet.htm

Breast Cancer Organization: What does healthy eating mean? Nutrition

<http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition/>

Breast cancer diet and nutrition manual

http://www.healthcastle.com/breast_cancer_diet.shtml

US Department of Agriculture - MyPyramid.gov

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/index.html>

Facts About Women and Heart Disease

<http://www.mealsmatter.org/EatingForHealth/Topics/article.aspx?articleId=9>

Losing the Weight Tip Sheet

Many women find that they are overweight or have gained weight during or after treatment. There are some studies that say that being overweight may increase the chances that breast cancer may come back. We do know that being overweight does increase the chances for other health problems, like heart disease and osteoporosis. If you are overweight, now is the time to take control and do something about it. Others have done it and so can you.

If you think that you are overweight there are three things that you need to do before getting started. The first is to talk with your doctor and see if it is safe for you to start a diet and exercise plan to help you lose weight. The second is to see what your weight is and what weight is a reasonable goal for you. Thirdly, ask yourself why do you want to lose the weight. You need to think about that and answer the question. It may be helpful to write down all of the reasons that you want to lose the weight. They may help keep you motivated in the future.

There are many ways to determining if you are overweight. One of the easiest is to use the BMI (body mass index). You can find out your BMI by looking on a table or doing the math. To do that math, multiply your weight by 703. Then divide that number by your height (in inches) squared. Example:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight (pounds)} \times 703}{\text{Height} \times \text{height (in inches)}}$$

Refer to the BMI chart. It is easier to find out your BMI on it than to do the math. A healthy BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 means that you are overweight. A BMI of 30 or more would put you into the obese group.

Now you know your weight and BMI. The next thing to do is to see what you really eat and how much activity you have. You can start to look at this by writing down everything that you eat and drink. Look at the labels so you will know how many calories an item has. Total up your calories for each day. Also track how much exercise you do. When you know what you take in and what you burn each day, you can begin.

To lose weight, you must either eat less or work out more, or have a good combination of both. Let's talk about the eating first. It takes 3500 calories to gain one pound. So, if you cut your calories by 100 a day, you would lose about one pound a month. If you also did enough exercise to burn an extra 100 calories a day, then you would lose about 2 pounds a month. If you need to lose a pound a

week, then you need to cut your calories and burn 3500 more than usual in a week. (That is 500 calories a day). It is always good to lose the weight over time, not too quickly. By doing this you can slowly change the way you eat and exercise. That way you can make a lifestyle change that you can keep forever. If you lose weight on a crash diet, you are more prone to put it back on again.

Starting a journal to keep up with your progress is always a good plan. That way you can keep see how you are doing. Write the reasons that you want to lose weight and your current weight in the journal. Track your weight, maybe one time a week. Write down everything that you eat during each day, every drink, meal, and snack. This will help you to know what you have actually eaten. It is easy to forget about a piece of bread here or a handful of pretzels there. Write about your activity. Did you walk, how long, what kind of pace, etc. You can also write about how you are feeling about what you are doing and how you feel about your progress.

- a 10% weight loss over a year is reasonable.
- Weight loss of ½-2 pounds per week is usually a good range.

There is some very easy diet and activity changes that you can make that will help:

- **Cut out sodas.** They are empty calories (about 100 a can). If you have been drinking one can of soda each day, cutting that can out, means one pound a month difference.
- **Drink water.** You need about 8 cups a day. It is good for your body and also will give you a feeling of being full.
- **Be cautious eating out.** Never supersize. Plan before you go out. Look at the nutrition contents of foods. (see the Eating Healthy tip sheet)
- **Allow yourself some rewards.** If you really love ice cream, plan ahead and have a small portion of low fat ice cream or sorbet.
- **Don't quit!** If you have a bad day, do not quit. Just resolve that you will do better.
- **Take the stairs,** not the elevator.
- **Park a distance away.** You can get a little more exercise by parking farther away and walking a little faster and farther from your car to the office or store.
- **Get a buddy.** It is always easier to exercise with a friend. Then you have some to talk with and to be accountable to. They may want to lose a few pounds and need encouragement too.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Talk with your doctor before starting a weight loss plan. Make sure that your doctor agrees that you need to lose weight and also agrees with your plan. Talk with your doctor about any health conditions that you have that may limit what you should do. Also, ask if your doctor has other ideas about losing weight for you. There may be other health team members that he would like for you to see.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

American Heart Association (1-800-242-8721)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

USDA My Pyramid- Guidelines for nutrition

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/index.html>

Breast cancer.org: Making healthy food choices and lose weight

http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition/nutr_treat/lose_weight/food_choices.jsp

How to lose weight the healthy way

http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/health_advice/facts/loseweight.htm

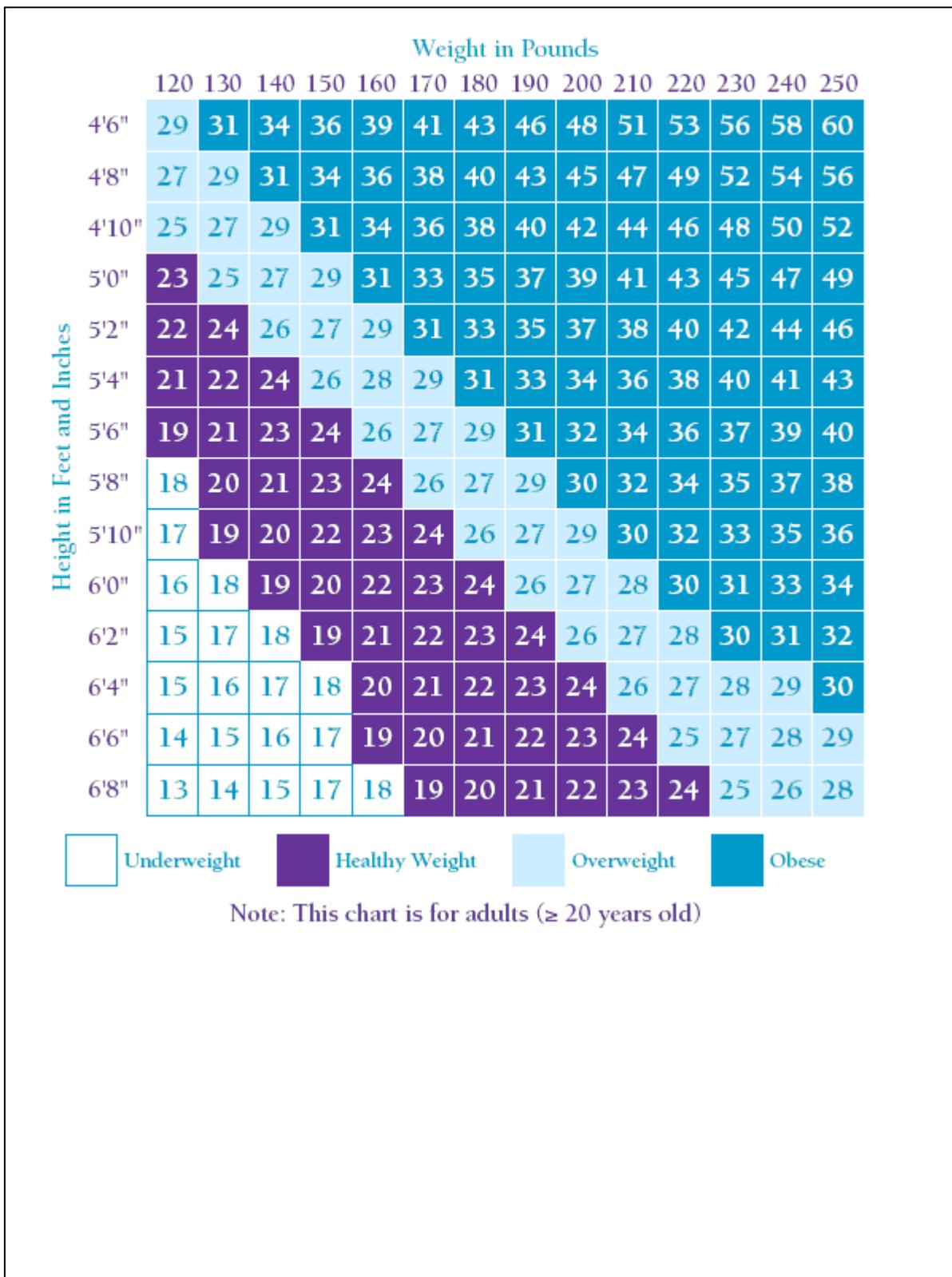
Healthy weight loss

http://www.epigee.org/fitness/weight_loss.html

WebMd: 17 Best foods for dieters: Diet foods that taste great and can help you lose weight

<http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/17-best-foods-for-dieters>

Body Mass Index (BMI) Chart:



Preventing Osteoporosis after Menopause Tip Sheet

Menopause (the change of life) is the body's natural response to lower amounts of female hormones. A greater risk for osteoporosis (also called bone loss) comes with menopause. Chemotherapy can cause bone loss to start early. If you have concerns about bone loss after the change, here is some information to help.

Estrogen, a female hormone, helps some breast cancers to grow. Because of that, Hormone Replacement Therapy (sometimes referred to as HRT) is NOT often recommended for those who have had breast cancer. Be sure all your doctors are aware you have had breast cancer. Talk to your doctors before taking any medicines, herbal or dietary supplements to help prevent bone loss. You may have heard of products that are called safe substitutes for hormone replacement. Some act in the body like estrogen and their safety in those who have had breast cancer has not been proven.

Women who have gone through the change of life due to treatment and women taking drugs such as aromatase inhibitors like Arimidex should have their bone health checked. This can be done by having a bone mineral density test (scan).

There are many known risk factors for osteoporosis. You should know if you have any of them. Some of them are:

- Being female. Women have about twice the risk that men do.
- Age. The older you get, the higher the risk.
- Race. If you are white or of Southeast Asian descent, your risk is more.
- Lifetime exposure to estrogen. The more exposure to estrogen, the lower the risk is.
- Family history.
- Frame size. Those who are very thin or have a small frame have a higher risk.
- Tobacco use.
- Sedentary lifestyle.
- Excess caffeine intake.
- Chronic alcoholism.
- Taking certain medicines.

- Low calcium intake. Lifelong calcium has an effect on bone density.

What you can do to help keep your bones healthy:

- **Eat a well rounded diet.**
- **Make sure you are getting enough calcium.** Some calcium rich foods are dairy products, broccoli and dark green leafy vegetables. Many juices and cereals also have calcium added to them. The amount of calcium considered adequate is 1000-1200 mg per day. This will vary depending on your age.
- **Make sure that you are getting enough Vitamin D.** The best source is sun exposure. A general rule is to expose your hands and arms to the sun for about 15 minutes on warm days. There are some dietary sources. The best are milk products that have added Vitamin D and oily fish. You should get 200-400 IU (5-10 micrograms) of Vitamin D a day. **Your body needs Vitamin D so that it can store calcium in the bone.**
- **Avoid caffeine** products. (Coffee, colas and chocolate...)
- **Exercise.** Weight bearing exercise like walking, jogging and aerobics, prevents bone loss.
- **Discuss taking a Calcium/ Vitamin D supplement** with your doctor. They can help you decide how much and what kind of calcium you should take.
- **If you smoke, stop.**
- **Drink alcohol only in moderation.**
- **Talk to your doctor** about how to prevent bone loss. There are other medicines besides HRT that prevent bone loss and may be safe for you to take.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Talk to your doctors or nurses about your concerns. Be sure to tell them if you have a family history of osteoporosis or other risk factors. They can give you more advice and facts about how to prevent this disease after the change of life.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

National Osteoporosis Foundation

www.nof.org/prevention

netdoctor.co.uk

<http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/osteoporosistreatment.htm>

HealthLink, Medical College of Wisconsin

<http://healthlink.mcw.edu/article/1031002449.html>

e-Health MD: How you can prevent osteoporosis

http://www.ehealthmd.com/library/osteoporosis/OSP_prevention.html

WebMd: Preventing osteoporosis

<http://www.webmd.com/osteoporosis/guide/osteoporosis-prevention>

Readers Digest: 15 tips for preventing osteoporosis

<http://www.rd.com/healthy-living/health/15-tips-for-preventing-osteoporosis/article.html>

Preventing Heart Disease after Menopause Tip Sheet

Menopause (the change of life) is the body's response to the lower amount of female hormones in the body. There is a higher risk for heart disease linked with the change of life. Chemotherapy can cause the change to start early. Early menopause at a younger age increases the risk for heart disease.

Since estrogen helps some breast cancers to grow, Hormone Replacement Therapy (sometimes referred to as HRT) is not advised for those who have had breast cancer. Be sure all of your health care members are aware you have had breast cancer. Talk to all of your doctors before taking any medicines, herbal or dietary supplements to help prevent heart disease. You may have heard of products that are helpful to use instead of hormone replacement. They act in the body like estrogen does. These products may not be safe for women who have had breast cancer. ALWAYS talk with your doctor about any of these products that you are thinking about using, before trying them.

If you have concerns about getting heart disease after the change of life here are a few tips that may help you:

- **Eat smart. Make sure that what you eat is low in fat and cholesterol. The American Heart Association says that you should:**
 - See that fat makes up no more than 30% of your total caloric intake per day. The amount of cholesterol you have should be less than 300 mg/day.
 - Replace saturated fats (full-fat milk products, fatty meats, vegetable oils and egg yolks) in your diet with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats (canola and olive oils, tub margarine, lean meats, fish and skinless poultry).
 - Increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet.
- **Keep your blood sugar under control** if you have diabetes.
- **Lose weight** if you are above your ideal body weight. Even a little weight loss will help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- **Keep track of your blood pressure readings and cholesterol levels.**
- **Take medicine** to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol if your doctor orders it.

- **Keep your heart** fit by being active (do things that increase your heart rate like fast walking or jogging) for 20-30 minutes or more at least three times a week.
- **Reduce stress** in your life.
- **If you smoke, stop.** Smoking puts you at higher risk for many diseases. These include heart disease, bone loss and lung cancer.
- **Ask your doctor** about diet and lifestyle changes to prevent heart disease.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Talk to your doctor or nurse when you have concerns. Be sure to tell them if you or your family has a history of heart disease. Your health team can give you more help with ways to prevent heart disease after the change of life.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

American Heart Association (1-800-242-8721)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

American Heart Association
www.deliciousdecisions.org/

Facts About Women and Heart Disease
<http://www.mealsmatter.org/EatingForHealth/Topics/article.aspx?articleId=9>

US Food and Drug Administration: Eating for a healthy heart
<http://www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/hlyheart.html>

Maintaining a heart healthy lifestyle: Heart healthy tips
http://www.mainlinehealth.org/mlh/centprog/heart/article_11745.asp

The healthy fridge: 10 tips for a heart healthy refrigerator
<http://www.healthyfridge.org/tips.html>

Work and Finance Concerns Tip Sheet

Most people who have had cancer decide to keep on working after treatment. Most return to work with ease. They are able to keep doing their job like before. Others may have concerns about their cancer when they go back to work. You should know your rights in the workplace. You should also know what help that there is for you.

Workplace Discrimination

Some people with cancer have certain rights. These rights come from the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). These rights deal with how they are treated at work.

- **ADA** protects the civil rights of people with disability. ADA says that employers can not treat a worker or potential worker different based on their disability. Most employers must provide for a disabled person unless it would impose an “undue hardship” on that employer.
- **FMLA** requires employers to allow workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12 month period when a serious health problem exists. During the leave, insurance must be continued by the employer. To be eligible for FMLA, you must have been employed for 12 months prior to starting the leave.

Insurance Issues

After cancer many people worry about changing jobs because of fears they can lose insurance. They can worry about not getting enough insurance in a new job. People with cancer need to avoid periods without insurance, no matter how brief. There are some options to persons with cancer in regards to keeping insurance coverage.

- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)** protects an employee’s rights to insurance coverage between jobs. A person must apply within 63 days of losing the previous insurance. HIPAA enables employees to buy health insurance not subject to the pre-existing condition clause found in most policies.
- **Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA)** requires employers to offer health coverage at group rates to employees in the event they leave their job. This type of coverage is usually more expensive than the prior workplace policy.

Financial Burden of Cancer

The cost of having cancer is not the same for each person. Some people have great insurance that leaves them with few out of pocket costs. But most people do have some out of pocket costs that may be a burden. Many of the resources listed below are a good start for those who may be feeling the financial impact of cancer.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Right now! If you are having issues with work, insurance or finances, your doctor's office is the best place to start. Often your doctors and nurses will be able to refer you to local resources that may be able to help you.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

Job Accommodation Network: 800-ADA-WORK (800-232-9675) (The Job Accommodation Network is a free service that helps employers make special arrangements like flexible hours for employees who need them.)

The Cancer Resource Center: (415) 885-3693 (The Cancer Resource Center can give you more information about your legal rights.)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

HIPAA OnLine

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/home/regsguidance.asp>

The American Cancer Society: Financial and legal matters

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/MIT/mit_3.asp?sitearea=MIT

thecancer.info

http://www.cancerlinksusa.com/financial_aid.htm

US Department of Labor

<http://www.dol.gov>

National Cancer Institute

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/support/financial-assistance>

Breast cancer and the workplace

<http://www.y-me.org/coping/daytoday/workplace.php>

EMOTIONS

A Look at Dealing with Emotions

After treatment has ended, short-term side effects such as hair loss, nausea, vomiting, pain, and fatigue slowly get better. Women face the task of moving on with their lives, making choices about their future, and enjoying life fully. The desire to get on with one's life and to live a full life that has meaning without being haunted by a chronic or serious disease can be a challenge for breast cancer survivors. Dealing with feelings ranging from fear to uncertainty is common after breast cancer and may make women feel overwhelmed. Yet, dealing with both negative and positive emotions is important for survivors.

Because feelings like anxiety, fear, and uncertainty can have a negative impact on your quality of life, this module was written to help you better understand and manage them, and help you to lead life more fully after breast cancer.

Anxiety

Feelings of anxiety and mood swings are common after breast cancer treatment. Thoughts that disturb you and having anxiety about what to do next with one's life may be bothering you. These feelings may not always be easy to manage, but there are ways to help you. Anxiety can be helped by making changes like going back to routines, and adding planned activities and exercise into your day. Changing the way you relate to your friends and family and the way you think about life events can also be helpful.

Going back to old routines or starting new routines is a way to help make your life feel normal. During your treatment, family and friends may have taken on some of your tasks at home. After treatment, some women want to go back to their former routines. Others may need to take it easy for a while. Either way, it is

good to talk with your loved ones about your desires and needs during this time in your life.

Doing things with friends like you did before cancer may not be as easy. Often, friends look to you to give them clues as to what to say or how to act. Awkward moments may occur. Again, be patient while you move through this time of getting back to routines and getting on with your life.

You may have worked during breast cancer treatment or you may have reduced your work load. Take time to set your work priorities if possible. Try not to rush into taking on the added burdens of work. Also, be careful not to start major work projects right after treatment ends. Keep in mind that you are recovering from breast cancer with its many physical, psychological, and social side effects.

Fear of Breast Cancer Returning

Fears of breast cancer returning and fears about the future are also common after treatment. While treatment has lowered the risk of cancer coming back, women often believe that their breast cancer will return. If you have these feelings, it is important to remember that you're not alone. Other women have had feelings like these about their breast cancer returning. Women fear that return of cancer would be very painful and lead to death. These thoughts and fears may come near the date of your diagnosis or treatment, awareness of symptoms, or simply by going for a routine check-up. Keep in mind, though, there are many new treatment options should your breast cancer return.

You may be more aware of disturbing and unwelcome thoughts about cancer returning or spreading to other parts of the body at the time of follow-up visits and anniversary dates (when breast cancer was first diagnosed). Other women describe these thoughts occurring in the evening or at night when it's quiet and they have more time to think about themselves. You may want to think about when these

thoughts occur. If these thoughts trouble you, there are many ways to help stop or reduce them. Stopping your thoughts and using your energy on something else like relaxing, meditating, or writing is very helpful. Think about keeping a journal of your thoughts and feelings. When you are getting close to an “anniversary date” or going to a follow-up visit, be kind to yourself and ask a family member or friend to go with you for the visit.

Another way of changing your thoughts is to stay “in the moment.” Enjoy each day and create special moments throughout the day. Enjoying family and friends and a pleasant setting helps to refocus your thoughts and gives you a larger view of your life. Refocusing your energy and thoughts takes time and practice. Be patient with yourself while you go through this process.

Another fear that women have is that their spouse or partner will leave them after breast cancer. We do know that breast cancer alone does not increase the chance of separation or divorce. Sometimes the crisis of illness will help spouses and partners to work harder in the relationship. Sometimes the stress of illness on an unhappy relationship may be too much. After breast cancer, some women may change the things that take priority in their life and may choose to leave. If your relationship ends, try not to blame yourself or your illness as the cause. If you are having trouble in a relationship you may want to think about seeking help. Often a professional counselor can help you sort through some of these problems.

Concern about the Future

Women often wonder about the future and are concerned about the doubts and worries of a future after breast cancer. Personal issues arise such as who will take care of my children and my spouse or partner? Will I be strong enough to go through another round of treatment? Will I be around to take that trip or finish that project? Feeling uncertain about the future is very common and concern over how to manage these feelings is common.

Women also report that they become more on guard and become more concerned about their health after their breast cancer. They focus on normal aches and pains as if their cancer has returned. Again, these feelings are very common. Talking about them with a trusted person helps. Being on guard about your health is very important, but being overly concerned is stressful and a waste of energy. It is common to have some discomfort and fatigue after breast cancer treatment, but having these symptoms is not necessarily a sign that your cancer is returning.

Some things that might help you keep track of your health include:

- Keep correct records of all your follow up blood studies, exams, and other tests. This is very important if you have to move or change doctors.
- Write down your questions and take them with you to routine check-ups.
- Stay in touch with a member of the health team who knows you well.
- Keep regular contact with your health team and go for check-ups at the scheduled times.
- Learn more about the tests and the reasons why they are used in follow-up.
- Keep a journal of how you are feeling physically as well as emotionally.
- Talk to other breast cancer survivors; this will help you get other views on life after treatment.
- Stay informed about breast cancer news.
- Learn about the warning signs of the return of cancer.

Getting the Facts about Breast Cancer Returning

Lack of knowledge about breast cancer returning or metastasis (the spread of cancer to other parts of the body) often leads to more fear about the disease. It is helpful to learn more about how breast cancer can behave to help you manage your fear. Getting accurate information about the real risk of the cancer returning can be very helpful.

Keep in mind that there are treatments for breast cancer
that has come back or spread.

About Your Emotions

Learning about cancer coming back and dealing with your questions or concerns is an important aspect to your quality of life. To help you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about cancer coming back after treatment, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you feel anxious?
- Do you feel tense?
- Do you have difficulty concentrating? Making decisions? Remembering things?
- Do you have trouble sleeping?
- Do you feel tired all the time?
- Do you have fears that family will reject you?
- Do you have fears that friends will reject you?
- How often do you need to have check-ups after the end of breast cancer treatment?
- Who watches over your follow-up tests and procedures?
- What tests and procedures do you need after treatment ends?
- Will insurance cover the costs of the tests?
- What symptoms should you watch for?
- How often do you think about cancer coming back? Have you had more of these thoughts since the end of treatment?
- Do these thoughts interfere with your daily life?
- Do thoughts of cancer coming back affect your sleep?
- Do thoughts of cancer coming back effect decisions that you make?

- What thoughts come to mind about the cancer coming back?
- What are your concerns about your future?
- What are your concerns about your family and friends?
- What are your concerns about your work?
- How uncertain do you feel about the present? Future?

Talking About Your Emotions

Remember, your concerns are very normal. It may be hard, however, to discuss these concerns openly. Talking openly with your oncology team on a regular basis is vital. Your doctor, nurse, and social worker can help you see the difference between any unrealistic fears you may have and valid health concerns that need to be followed up on. Good communication with your oncology team is helpful to get support to help reduce your fears.

Don't forget to take time to talk about your concerns and fears with your family. Often you will find they are facing the same fears as you are. Sometimes family members hide their fears from their loved ones to "protect them". Often, the result of this is that no one gets the support they need. Talking things through can help to lessen your fears.

Your Action Plan

- 👍 Over the next few weeks, work on your action plan:
- 👍 Read the section on Emotions in your workbook.
- 👍 Review your Emotions Tip Sheets and try the suggestions.
- 👍 What Tips helped?
- 👍 Try the following actions:

- 👍 Describe how these actions helped or did not help.
- 👍 Call your Research Team for any questions.
- 👍 Talk with your spouse or partner about these issues in Emotions:

- 👍 Talk with your healthcare team about these issues:

Ways of Dealing with Fears Tip Sheet

Feelings of stress, anxiety and depression and having mood swings are common in people who have had cancer. These feelings are not pleasant. They often go with fear of cancer coming back. They may be triggered by the anniversary of diagnosis or going for a routine check-up at the doctors. These feelings may not always be easy to manage. There are ways to help you. Below we have listed some tips to help you deal with your feelings of fear and anxiety.

- **Add planned activities** to your daily life. Staying busy helps keep you from thinking about your fears.
- **Distract yourself** from your fears or worries by watching TV, listening to the radio, reading, doing needlework or puzzles. Something that you enjoy and engages your mind can help distract you from your fear and anxiety.
- **Use a diary** to note stressful events - record the event, thoughts, and feelings that bring about the stress. As you come up with ways to reduce stress write about them in the diary and note how well they work.
- **Take medicine for anxiety** as directed by your doctor.
- **Laugh.** Groucho Marx once said, “A clown is like an aspirin, only he works twice as fast...” When it comes to anxiety, laughter is the best medicine.
- **Don’t deny your problems or fears.** It’s O.K. to have fears and it’s O.K. to cry once in a while. Make sure that these feelings don’t keep you from enjoying the rest of your life.
- **Talk to family and friends.** Often times just getting fears out in the open helps to relieve them.

Identify a support person you can talk to. Everyone needs someone they can lean on. If you are not at ease sharing your feelings with everyone be sure to find at least one person to confide in and obtain some strength.

- **Attend support groups or online blog.** Talking to other breast cancer survivors and hearing their stories helps to keep your fears in check.
- **Talk to your doctor or nurse.** They can talk with you about your condition and your chances of the cancer returning. That will help you be less fearful.

- **Decide just how much you want to know.** Some people want to know every detail about their condition, because it helps them deal with their anxiety. Others find *too much information* makes them anxious. Only you know how much you want to know. Think about it and tell your doctor or nurse if you want more or fewer details.
- **Learn all you can about breast cancer,** its treatment and the survival rates. Being aware of the facts gets rid of fears and gives you a realistic look at the odds of the cancer coming back.
- **Try relaxation techniques** to help reduce stress and anxiety. If you would like to learn more about relaxation see our Relaxation Technique Tip Sheet.
- **Develop thought-stopping practices** when fears feel like they are getting the best of you. If you find yourself thinking anxious thoughts there are ways to make yourself stop.
- Start these practices:
 - Think or say, “Stop!” to yourself to interrupt the thought. Continue to think “stop!” until the unwanted thought stops.
 - 2) Wear an elastic band around your wrist that you can snap until the thought ceases. 3) You can also pinch yourself or press your fingernails into your palm when you have unwanted anxious thoughts.
 - Replace an unhealthy thought with a healthy thought. When an unwanted thought enters, replace the thought with a healthy, positive one right away. For example, if you find yourself thinking about your cancer coming back, replace that thought with the fact that today you are cancer free.
 - If you have a tendency to see negative images, replace these negative images with positive, healthy images.
- **Know that fears may get worse** at anniversary dates or with regular doctor visits. Plan for these times by practicing how you will relieve your anxiety.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Anxiety and anxious thoughts are also symptoms of depression. Call your doctor or nurse if you're anxious thoughts are interfering with your sleep, if you are crying all the time, if your fears keep you from doing things you used to enjoy or if you would like a referral to a counselor or support group.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Breastcancer.org: Dealing with breast cancer fears

<http://www.breastcancer.org/community/fears/>

Tips for coping with breast cancer

<http://www.riainvision.com/invision/speccen/sallyjobe/copingbc.asp>

American Cancer Society: Cancer, Anxiety and Fear

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/MBC/content/MBC_4_1X_Cancer_Anxiety_and_Fear.asp

Journaling or Keeping a Diary Tip Sheet

Journaling is writing about your thoughts, feelings, and concerns. Writing and other forms of expressing yourself are good ways that women can help themselves as they heal after breast cancer. Many people find that writing their thoughts and feelings down in a journal helps them cope with the uncertainty they face, and explore the meaning of having breast cancer. People have questions about how to begin with journaling. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- **Get a notebook or journal.** Find one that you like. One that opens flat makes writing easier.
- **Choose a quiet, private place** where you will not be bothered by sounds, sights, or smells.
- **Write as often as you want** or feel the need to but try to write for 15 minutes at a time each day.
- **Keep your pen moving.** Keep writing and your mind will deliver what it wants to write. Some persons who journal enjoy drawing in their journals, so you may want colored pencils too.
- **Write down thoughts and feelings** of your journey with breast cancer. You may want to work out what you want to say to your doctors, your spouse, or how you will tell loved ones about your breast cancer.
- **Many people feel that writing thoughts on paper helps them** be more organized and focused. Some persons who journal report that writing down thoughts also helps their emotional well-being.
- **Whatever the topic,** you should explore your experience (what happened) and your feelings about it.
- **Don't worry** about grammar, spelling, or sentence structure.
- **Focus on** those issues in breast cancer that you are dealing with right now.
- **Really "let go" and write** about your very deepest feelings: What do you feel and why do you feel that way.
- **Keep in mind** that what you write is for your eyes only. You do not have to justify your thoughts to please someone else.
- **Don't use writing as a substitute** for action or to avoid things.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Journaling is a way of dealing with what is going on in your life. It is meant to be a pleasant and relaxing activity. However, if you are having anxiety and anxious thoughts while journaling, you may want to seek more help through a counselor or support group.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Journaling through breast cancer treatment

<http://health.yahoo.com/experts/breastcancer/8/journaling-through-breast-cancer-treatment>

Caring for Cancer: Writing in a journal

<http://www.caring4cancer.com/go/cancer/wellbeing/emotional-wellbeing/writing-in-a-journal.htm>

Tips for cancer patients

<http://www.beverlykirkhart.com/tips.htm>

Benefits of keeping a journal or diary

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Benefits-of-Keeping-a-Journal-or-Diary&id=809063>

Living One Day at a Time Tip Sheet

Embrace today! It is a gift. Living one day at a time and living each day to the fullest helps women to enjoy their life after breast cancer. Living one day at a time also helps to decrease feeling uncertain over the future. If you live in fear of what the future may hold, it will rob you of the joy of today. If you spend your time worrying about cancer coming back, you have lost today. By focusing on each day and meeting the challenges and joy each day brings, you can cope better and with fewer feelings of stress, anxiety, and fears. Here are some tips to help you think on living more fully one day at a time.

- **Set specific and realistic goals** for each day. Try to keep short lists rather than long ones. Crossing things off the list will give you a good feeling.
- **Think about your routines and habits** before you had breast cancer. Decide how and when you wish to re-start old routines. Decide how and when you wish to begin new habits or routines.
- **Take time** to pause each day to enjoy yourself, your family, and your friends.
- **Take a few minutes** each day to appreciate what is in your home, environment, or setting.
- **Start a “Gratitude List”** of what you are grateful for each day. Think about all that you can do now that you could not do during treatment!
- **Take a few minutes** each day to read an uplifting or inspiring quote, verse, or passage.
- **Identify and accept** the things that you do not have power to control in your life and let go of feelings of not being in control.
- **Ask for help** when you need it. Do not wait till your unmet needs are overflowing.
- **Keep a journal** of any thoughts, feelings, emotions. (See our Tip on Journaling)
- **Talk and share** with someone you trust – your spouse, family members, or friends.
- **Talk to others who have had breast cancer** who can help you get another view on life after cancer.

- **Set major goals and decide what is important in your life.** List short-term and long-term goals and their importance. Think about how realistic these goals are. Identify what you need to do so you can meet your goals. Identify other resources to help reach or keep the goals.
- **Plan to survive.**
- **Keep a close eye on your health.** Don't be overly concerned, it's stressful and a waste of energy.
- **Keep accurate health records.** This is a real good thing to do if you tend to move or change doctors a lot.
- **Keep regular contact** with your doctors and nurses. Go for check-ups at the regularly scheduled times.
- **Learn** about the tests and procedures. Find out why they are being done.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

If your anxiety and fears about the future keep you from doing things you used to enjoy, think about seeing a counselor or going to a support group.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Y-Me Breast Cancer Organization: Tips for taking time for yourself

http://www.y-me.org/publications/spring07_1.php

Susan G Komen For the Cure: Survivors: Healthy living after treatment

http://www.komenoregon.org/Survivors/Healthy_Living_After_Treatment.shtml

American Cancer Society: Tips for coping with breast cancer

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/SPC/content/SPC_1_Tips_for_Coping_With_Breast_Cancer.asp

Top 5 tips for living a more positive life

<http://www.positivityblog.com/index.php/2007/05/09/top-5-tips-for-living-a-more-positive-life/>

Fun ways to live longer

http://longevity.about.com/od/longevity101/tp/fun_ways.htm

Relaxation Techniques Tip Sheet

Relaxation can help with anxiety and stress. Some who have had breast cancer feel that relaxation calms and quiets the mind and muscles. What is relaxing for one person may not be relaxing for another person. Below are some ways to relax that may help you handle your feelings of fear and anxiety. Try some of them.

- **A very simple relaxation practice** is to tighten your fists, breathe in deeply and hold your breath for a moment. Breathe out slowly and let your arms and hands go limp like a rag doll.
- **Yawning** can also help you to relax.
- **Listen to peaceful music** or relaxation tapes. Some of these tapes have nature sounds such as birds, ocean and forest noises. You can pick a place that is peaceful and comforting to you.
- **Try some slow, steady, controlled breathing.**
 - Sit in a comfortable position and relax all your muscles.
 - Close your eyes or focus on a distant object if you prefer to keep them open.
 - Breathe in and out slowly and comfortably through your nose. Count up from 1-4 as you breathe in and back from 4-1 as you breathe out.
 - Feel yourself relax and go limp each time you breathe out.
- **Muscle Tension and Release**
 - Lie down in a quiet room.
 - Take a slow, deep breath.
 - As you breathe in, tense one muscle or group of muscles. For example, clinch your teeth or stiffen your arms or legs.
 - Keep your muscles tense for a second or 2 while holding your breath.
 - Then breathe out, release the tension, and let your body relax completely.
 - Repeat the process with another muscle or muscle group.
- **Progressive relaxation** is a lot like muscle tension and release. In this practice you will follow the same process, but start at your feet and slowly move up your body until you have completely relaxed.

- **Mental Imagery**
 - Close your eyes, breathe slowly, and feel yourself relax.
 - Imagine a ball of healing energy, the hand of God or some other healing force inside your body.
 - When you see the healing force, slowly breathe in and blow it to any part of the body where you feel pain, tension or discomfort, such as nausea.
 - When you breathe out, picture the air moving the force away from your body, taking with it any painful or uncomfortable feelings.
 - Keep the force moving toward you and away from you each time you breathe in and out. You may see it getting bigger and bigger as it takes away more and more tension and discomfort.
- **Visualization** is similar to imagery. With visualization you create an inner picture that stands for your fight against cancer. You might visualize a battle scene with soldiers or knights fighting off the cancer in your body or a video game where you shoot the cancer cells as they approach down a screen.
- **Biofeedback** With training in biofeedback you can control body functions such as heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension. With professional help you are connected to a machine that will sense and alert you when your body shows signs of tension. The machine will also give you feedback when you relax your body. Over time, you no longer need the machine to control your relaxation responses. Your doctor or nurse can refer you to someone trained in teaching biofeedback if you think this method would benefit you.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Anxiety and anxious thoughts are also signs of being depressed. Call your health team if you're anxious and your thoughts are causing problems with your sleep, if you are crying all the time, if your fears keep you from doing things you used to enjoy or if you would like a referral to a counselor or support group.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

American Cancer Society: Relaxation techniques

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_2_1x_Relaxation_Techniques.asp

Relaxation Tips

<http://www.greatrelaxationmusic.com/tips/index.cfm>

10 Techniques for relaxation

<http://www.relaxationtips.org/ten-techniques-for-relaxation.html>

Relaxation Emporium: Everything you need to relax and manage stress

<http://www.relaxationemporium.com/>

Stress Management

<http://stress.about.com/cs/relaxation/>

(Go to this site for a good laugh.)

www.geocities.com/Heartland/Woods/7822/laff.html

Return of Breast Cancer Tip Sheet

Many women who have had breast cancer wonder what the future may hold. Not knowing what is ahead for them is linked to fears and stress over the future. Women describe that every ache and pain makes them feel as if their disease is coming back or getting worse. Because women have many questions about the return of breast cancer, this Tip sheet was written to give you the facts so that you will know more about breast cancer coming back. You should always let your doctor know if you notice any changes in your breast or chest area.

There are three areas where the cancer can return:

1. **Local:** This means that the cancer may come back in the same breast. If this happens, it might be that the skin or tissue seems thicker in the scar area, breast area, or collarbone. It may also look or feel like a lump or mass.
2. **Regional:** This means that the cancer may come back in the skin, soft tissue of the chest wall, and under the arm.
3. **Distant:** This means that the cancer may come back in other parts of the body, like the bones, lungs, liver or brain. You may have heard the term *metastasis* used for this kind of return of cancer.

There are treatments that can be used for breast cancer, if it returns. The goal of treating cancer that has come back is to slow or stop the disease, extend life, and keep the quality of life. Many of the treatments are new and are being used with other treatments that have been used for years. Because of this there is a lot of reason to have hope, even if cancer has come back.

- *Radiation therapy* may be used as local treatment to the chest wall if the cancer returns. It involves the use of high-energy x-rays to a local site and is often used with chemotherapy.
- *Chemotherapy drugs that are taken either by mouth or in the vein (IV).* They may be used if cancer returns and affects more than one area of the body or when cancer spreads to the liver, lung, or central nervous system. Chemotherapy is often used because it goes all through your body and can fight cancer in many areas at one time.
- *Targeted therapy* is used in certain women at high risk for cancer coming back. Women with HER-2 over-expression may be able to get this therapy.
- *Hormonal therapy* is treatment that uses a group of drugs called hormones. It is most often used with patients who respond to hormone receptors.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

It is vital for you to have regular planned check-ups with your doctor. They will work with you to have follow-up blood tests, mammograms, and other tests that are done. Keep a record of your tests. (See the Maintaining Health after Breast Cancer Tip Sheet)

If you are nervous about your cancer coming back, you should talk with others about these concerns. It may be that there is a counselor or support group who can help you with these concerns.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

National Cancer Institute: When cancer returns: Your feelings

<http://www.nci.nih.gov/cancertopics/When-Cancer>Returns/page5>

Breast cancer: Dealing day to day

<http://yourtotalhealth.ivillage.com/breast-cancer-dealing-day-day.html>

Breastcancer.org: If cancer comes back

http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/recur_metast/fear_combk.jsp

Top 10 self care tips during breast cancer treatment

http://breastcancer.about.com/od/lifeduringtreatment/tp/self_care_tips.htm

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

National Cancer Institute

www.cancer.gov

SOUL and BODY

A Look at Caring for your Soul and Body

After breast cancer, your life is changed. Because of the serious nature of cancer, many cancer survivors have a change in their feelings about their life. They have a changed outlook. They may search for some meaning in their illness and for answers to the question, “Why me?” These are very common concerns that can occur before, during or after treatment has ended. While the first five modules were very specific and were related to physical and emotional aspects of quality of life, this last module is designed to help you care for both your soul and your body, and to help you deal with the spiritual aspects as you face life after treatment.

Caring for your soul and body, often called ‘spirituality’ is a broad concept and includes the need to find a purpose and meaning in life, have a sense of belonging, love and relatedness, keep hope, and express faith. The purpose of this module is to help you explore some of the inner changes that you may be going through as a result of having breast cancer and to discuss issues in caring for your soul as well as your body.

Faith: Religious Practice

After a serious illness like cancer many people question the meaning of their illness and the meaning of their life. Many may also question the meaning of their faith. Having had breast cancer may create loss and suffering which includes anger at God or a higher power. Some see their illness – as a challenge, an enemy, a punishment, or a weakness. These are common feelings you might ask yourself, how does having had breast cancer affect you emotionally? Spiritually?

Prior to breast cancer, you may have practiced religious activities such as prayer, meditation, and attending a place of worship such as a church or temple. You may have started some of these practices after breast cancer. These practices

can be a source of comfort and solace in facing the future. Some of your past practices may be the same or may have changed a lot. Think about your current religious practices and whether they have changed. Think about other religious activities and whether they may be helpful or useful in looking at your spiritual life after breast cancer.

Faith: Other Forms of Spiritual Practice

After breast cancer, some seek to understand faith and spirituality in their lives in other ways. While some begin or go on with a search for God, a spiritual being, or higher power in their lives, others have found a good experience through daily activities, the pleasure of being with family and friends, enjoying nature and beauty, and working on creative talents. Others reach out to their family and friends and create positive events in daily life. The ways in which women develop spiritual practices are as varied as they are. Think about some of these practices and assess whether they may be useful in your spiritual life after breast cancer.

Seeking Meaning and Purpose in Life

The search for meaning is a basic human need. Often people delay the search to find meaning in life until they face a serious illness such as cancer. These illnesses create an even bigger feeling of weakness and mortality. Having survived breast cancer may also create a sense of loss and suffering.

Women also have many positive effects after breast cancer. They can be a review of one's life, getting a new attitude toward life, having more knowledge, and a change of what is important. Finding meaning in life after having breast cancer fosters positive coping and increases hope for the future. These positive effects occur in the process of finding meaning and in coming to terms on surviving breast cancer.

Finding or going back to a purpose or mission in life, and changing goals in life is common after treatment. This is a process that occurs over time. Many

times breast cancer survivors feel thankful to be alive. Many want to share their good experiences with others in creative ways such as through support groups, volunteer, or advocacy activities. Breast cancer survivors often share that it is helpful to talk to others who have been through the same kind of experiences to learn what has been helpful in coping. Times of sharing can help give meaning to their experiences and affirm the meanings one has about breast cancer and its impact.

The process of finding meaning after breast cancer does not mean ignoring the losses that have been experienced. Rather, identifying the losses that have occurred, acknowledging them, and properly grieving will enhance the healing process. Look at the losses that you have had and the impact of these losses in your life. Does the experience create a sense of being overwhelmed? Does it move you to go on with your life? What do you see as your purpose or mission in life?

Keeping Hope

Hope is a vital part of being human. While hope is most often viewed as a virtue, it often springs from suffering and hardship. Yet, hope is resilient and can coexist with suffering. People view hope in many ways. Some ways in which people maintain and foster hope include:

- Having meaning in a shared relationship where one feels a sense of being needed or being a part of something.
- Keeping a feeling of delight, joy; using humor in situations.
- Thinking back to joyous and meaningful events.
- Having one's individuality acknowledged, accepted and honored.
- Identifying positive qualities such as courage, strength of mind and serenity.
- Having beliefs that give one a sense of meaning in suffering.

- Focusing on the future in a positive way
- Thinking about ways to direct one's efforts at short-term goals.
- Wanting serenity and inner peace.

Spend some time thinking about the comments about hope and the need for hope in the presence of a chronic illness. Are you hopeful about your future?

About Caring for Your Soul & Body

The process of caring for your soul and body is a vital part of quality of life. To help you discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about the changes in your inner life after breast cancer treatment, ask the following questions:

- How do you feel about having survived breast cancer?
- What is your understanding of the course of your illness?
- How does breast cancer affect you emotionally? Mentally? Spiritually?
- Who provides you with emotional, physical, and spiritual support?
- Who do you confide in when you have a problem or concern?
- What gives you hope?
- How hopeful do you feel?
- Do you have spiritual or religious practices that help you?
- What goals do you have for your life? How have they changed after breast cancer?
- What are your career goals? How have they changed after breast cancer?
- What things matter most with your family? How have they changed?
- How ready are you to share your journey through breast cancer with others?
- Have you come to terms with any physical loss?

- Do you feel a sense of control in your life?
- What spiritual needs matter most in your life today?
- How can you redefine your values and goals?
- What do you see as your mission or purpose in life?

Talking about Caring for Your Soul & Body

Sharing your thoughts and feelings about having breast cancer and the meaning it holds in your life may not be easy. Often families, friends, and even your health team may be at a loss to respond. This is normal. Other times, they are waiting for you to bring up the topic and start talking about your feelings. Often, it may be other breast cancer survivors who know and understand what you are going through.

You might also think about talking first to one person such as your spouse, partner, or a friend in whom you can confide. The main goal is to understand your feelings and thoughts about breast cancer and how it has changed your life.

To help you share your thoughts and feelings, take some time out for yourself and think about the questions listed above. While all of our lives are busy, think about taking some time out each day or every few days to focus your thoughts on these questions.

You may want to write down your thoughts and feelings about the questions in a journal or notebook. Any way that you want to write them will do: long letters, short notes, or even phrases. Take a few minutes each day to write down your thoughts about these questions. The main goal is to think about how you feel about your life and the meaning or effect that having survived breast cancer has had in your life.

Your Action Plan

- 👉 Over the next few weeks, work on your action plan:
- 👉 Read the section on Soul and Body in your workbook.

👍 Review your Soul and Body Tip Sheets and try the suggestions.

👍 What Tips helped?

👍 Try the following actions:

👍 Describe how these actions helped or did not help.

👍 Call your Research Team for any questions.

👍 Talk with your spouse, partner, or family about these issues and actions:

👍 Talk with your healthcare team about these issues and actions:

Meaning in Life Tip Sheet

The search for meaning is an effort to understand breast cancer, why it has happened and its impact in your life. Making meaning of one's life after facing cancer can be a good experience. Yet, be aware that coming to terms with breast cancer, its meaning, and finding a purpose in your life takes time. There are no recipes or set ways to attend to this part of your life. However, here are some ways that others have found meaning in having breast cancer.

- **Take time to think** about the meaning of having breast cancer and its impact in your life. Know that the search for meaning involves looking at yourself, and your relationships with others.
- **Talk to others with breast cancer.** Seek support from others who have had breast cancer and are willing to talk about what has helped them.
- **Practice relaxation exercises** (See Tip on Relaxation)
- **Think about building and leaving a legacy.** What do you want to be known and recognized for? Come to terms with the good things you have done in your life. Begin a life review and look back over your life.
- **View breast cancer as a challenge** that you have done well dealing with. Think about the strengths that you have found or used during your treatment for breast cancer. Use these strengths. Think about breast cancer as a good affect in your life.
- **Be aware of and build up inner resources** such as self-worth, humor, coping, drive and self-determination. Focus on the good outcomes of breast cancer.
- **Express your thoughts and feelings,** keep a journal or diary of your feelings and thoughts about breast cancer. Use journal or diary writing as an activity to help in the search for meaning. (See Tip on Journaling).
- **Finding purpose in life** may flow from having breast cancer. Think about helping others who have just found out that they have breast cancer. Join in support activities, or volunteer for another cause you would like to support.
- **Know that talking about finding meaning in life** after breast cancer may not always be easy with your family or friends.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

You need to be able to talk openly about your concerns. If you have continued problems in communicating, think about seeing to a counselor or support group that talks about these issues.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Finding positive meaning in the experience of breast cancer

<http://www.csw.ucla.edu/Newsletter/Feb07/mitchell.html>

Y-Me National Breast Cancer Organization: Life after treatment: What now?

http://www.y-me.org/publications/summer07_5.php

National Cancer Institute: Finding meaning after cancer treatment

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/life-after-treatment/page6#e7>

Gillette Women's Cancer Connection

http://www.gillettecancerconnect.org/women/coping.asp?section=cyf&story=cyf_spl

Finding Meaning

<http://www.dfci.harvard.edu/pat/surviving/resources/findingmeaning.asp>

Maintaining and Fostering Hope Tip Sheet

Hope is always viewing the cup as half full. After breast cancer many women have a loss of hope. Once treatment is over, many women feel a return of hope, while others keep feeling hopeless. Here are some tips to help you get back hope after breast cancer treatment.

- **Be aware that it is normal to feel sad** or to wonder, "Why me?" Having hope does not mean sticking your head in the sand and pretending that you never had breast cancer. It is having an upbeat view of things to come despite your breast cancer.
- **Join a support group or talk with others.** People acquire hope by talking with others who have been through the same thing survived. If you can't get out of the house there are some on-line support groups.
- **Read a book that inspires you.** Much like support groups, hearing how others came through a similar tough time can give hope.
- **Reflect on the meaning** of life and death. Decide what means most in your life. You've been through a lot, finding meaning in your experiences helps you to accept them and put them in the past. You may want to talk with your minister, priest or spiritual leader and discuss your faith's spiritual part of hope.
- **Share your story of survival** with family, friends and others who need hope. Talking about your story helps give you feelings of success in survival.
- **Enjoy nature...**go outside and sit in the sunshine, take a walk in a park, watch the birds or find some way to enjoy the beauty in nature.
- **Treat yourself** with a relaxing bubble bath, manicure or massage, listen to your favorite music or watch a sunset.
- **Take time for prayer and meditation,** which can help you focus on your true priorities.
- **Create a joy collage** or memory book by cutting out pictures or poems in magazines that represent hope to you.

- **Learn more about breast cancer and its treatment.** New and improved cancer treatments are helping more people to survive this disease. Knowing the facts makes facing the future easier.
- **Remember your past accomplishments** and the inner qualities you possess that helped you get them. Think about how these qualities can help you to regain hope now as a breast cancer survivor.
- **Set realistic short term goals**, as you achieve them you will gain confidence
- **Laugh**...cancer isn't funny, but a lot of the things that have happened to you as a result of your cancer are. A good sense of humor can carry you a long way.
- **Journal**...write down all of your feelings of hope and despair in a journal or diary and track them. Include the things that give you hope as well as the things that discourage you.
- **Rest**...regaining hope takes energy and is hard when you are tired or weary. Pass on chores to family and friends. Create a "Hope Box" or basket and place slips of paper in it with tasks others can do for you written on them. When others ask what they can do to help, let them look through the basket and choose something.
- **Find ways to feel needed**, valued and cared for in relationships.
- **Talk to your family and friends.** They have a lot of the same feelings and fears that you do. Encourage, but do not force, one another to talk. Listen carefully to each other's feelings. Provide comfort and support. Talk about your current situation; remember past illness and losses to help make sense of the situation.
- **Try deep breathing and relaxation exercises** several times a day.
- **Volunteer** in a breast cancer support group, as a breast cancer supporter, or for another cause you feel strongly about. Having a sense of purpose gives you hope.

When Do You Need to Seek Help?

You need to be able to talk openly about your concerns. If you have continued problems in communicating, consider a referral to a professional counselor or support group that discusses these issues.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Buzzle.com: Uplifting tips from breast cancer survivors
<http://www.buzzle.com/editorials/9-16-2006-108943.asp>

American Cancer Society: Stories of hope
http://www.cancer.org/docroot/fps/fps_0.asp

My sister's hope
<http://www.mysistershope.com/index.html>

National Cancer Institute: Facing forward life after cancer treatment
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/life-after-treatment>

The Cancer Hope Network
www.cancerhopenetwork.org/

Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Michigan
www.cancer.med.umich.edu/share/shahum.htm (*This is a site on humor.*)

Spirituality and Religious Practices Tip Sheet

Spirituality is a big part of all human life. It can give life meaning and purpose. It can exist whether or not a person has any formal religious background. People who have been faced with cancer often have questions and concerns of a spiritual nature. You may ask questions such as: Why me? Why now? Where is God or a higher power in my life? Cancer is more than a health issue—cancer can have an effect on the human spirit, mind, and the body. Having one's life changed by cancer often raises spiritual and religious concerns. While some feel their spiritual life becomes stronger as a result of their illness, others find that new beliefs and faith keep them going. This Tip Sheet provides you with some thoughts about how to look at your spiritual needs and concerns.

- **Be aware of the spiritual nature of your being.** Spiritual and religious practices such as going to a service, spending time with others who share the same beliefs, and prayer, meditation, and listening or singing hymns may provide you with comfort.
- **Seek out someone you trust,** a pastor, priest, elder or clergy who can offer support. Think about your need to have someone listen and care. Also think about who will help you with advice, prayer, rituals and religious practices.
- **During times when doubt and fear is greatest,** the knowing of a higher power or God in your life may be a great comfort.
- **Read religious or spiritual books.** Listen to tapes, music and readings to gain inner meaning and depth in your spiritual life.
- **If you belong** to a spiritual or religious group or community, seek activities such as support, fellowship, and community prayer for comfort.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Seeking the advice, comfort, and help of a spiritual or religious advisor is your choice. When you have concerns or feelings that you need help to deal with, that is the time to contact them.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Breastcancer.org: Spirituality

http://www.breastcancer.org/treatment/comp_med/types/spirituality.jsp

Revolution Health: Spirituality and stress relief: make the connection

http://www.revolutionhealth.com/articles/spirituality-and-stress-relief-make-the-connection/1B214325-E7FF-0DBD-12CFBF2A9D240487?id=1B214325-E7FF-0DBD-12CFBF2A9D240487§ion=section_02

National Cancer Institute: Spirituality in cancer care

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/spirituality/HealthProfessional/page4>

About.com: 10 ways to grow your spirit:

<http://healing.about.com/od/spirituality/a/growspirit.htm>

Science of Spirituality: Tips for meditation

<http://www.sos.org/webpage/med/tips.html>

Religion online – resource

www.religion-online.org/

Healing Art and Nature Tip Sheet

The arts and the feeling pleasure from nature have helped people heal after breast cancer. Seeking the joy in life, nature, surroundings, and finding an interest in the arts are common after cancer. Here are some tips about the healing arts and nature to think about:

- **Listen to music.** Music has helped calm the soul for years. The choice of music is up to you – whether you enjoy classical, rock, jazz, alternative, spiritual or religious music. Take a few minutes each day to listen to music and relax.
- **Reading books, poetry, scriptures, and/or spiritual books** may also give you with new view of living after breast cancer and in caring for your soul, body, and mind. Sometimes, other breast cancer survivors may share a poem or story of interest. Others have also shared stories of survival. Read some of these stories to help you in healing after breast cancer.
- **Express your artistic side** through painting, and/or art appreciation is soothing and healing for the soul. Even if you have never tried painting in the past, think of this as a way to express yourself.
- **Enjoying nature** through walks, hiking, or sports can help you to heal. Women who have taken part in wilderness and Outward Bound-type activities have found great pleasure and healing.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

You can do all of these things on your own. If you would like help, ask friends and family members what they do to relax and express themselves.

For more information:

American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345)

National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237)

If you have access to a computer and the Internet try these websites:

Readers Digest.com: The healing power of nature

<http://www.rd.com/healthy-living/mind-and-body/the-healing-power-of-nature/article.html>

American Cancer Society: Healing gardens nurture the spirit while patients get treatment

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/FPS/content/FPS_1_Healing_Gardens_Nurture_the_Spirit_While_Patients_Get_Treatment.asp

Nature: The great stress reliever

http://www.livetinc.com/stress_article/reduce_stress_nature.html

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

www.mdanderson.org/patients_public/support_programs/