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Category: Breast Cancer Causes

Subcategory: Causes of Breast Cancer

Tip: Analyzing Your Risk of Getting Breast Cancer

If you have performed a breast cancer risk assessment and discovered you are more than 30% likely than the average woman to get breast cancer, what should your next step be? Your first option should be to remain calm and not panic. Secondly, consider the opposite view that you have a 70% chance of not being diagnosed with breast cancer. Your third step should then be to modify your lifestyle by reducing the amount of alcohol you drink, or increasing your daily exercise. As always, it is also a good idea to discuss with your doctor any other things you can do to help reduce your chances of getting breast cancer. So instead of asking, "What causes breast cancer?" start asking, "What prevents breast cancer?"

Tip: Breast Cancer Risk Factors Due To Lifestyle

There are many lifestyle choices you can make to decrease your risk of developing breast cancer. These risk factors include diet, exercise, alcohol consumption, waiting until later to have children, and breastfeeding. Like so many other illnesses, a diet low in fat coupled with exercise can help reduce your risk for developing breast cancer. Women who drank only one glass of alcohol a day also had a lower risk. Younger women who had children before age 30 years of age were found to lessen their risk of getting breast cancer. However, some studies have also shown that women who breastfeed, also had a lower risk of developing breast cancer later in life. Therefore by exercising, eating right, starting a family, and abstaining from excessive use of alcohol, you can improve your odds against being diagnosed with breast cancer.

Tip: Does Hormone Replacement Therapy Increase The Risk Of Breast Cancer

Many women who experience the symptoms of menopause consider hormone replacement therapy. However, when using estrogens and progesterone to treat the symptoms of menopause, a woman's risk of developing breast cancer also increases. Studies have shown that not only has long term HRT increased the risk of developing breast cancer, but it has also reduced the effectiveness of mammograms used in the detection of breast cancer. Anyone who has been on hormone replacement therapy for five years, should address their concern about this breast cancer hormone replacement risk factor.

Tip: Non-Preventable Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

What causes breast cancer? There are some risk factors for breast cancer that cannot be prevented by lifestyle changes. These risk factors include experiencing an early

menstrual period or entering menopause a later age than the average woman. Age plays an important factor in developing breast cancer, as someone over 50 years of age, would be more likely to be diagnosed. Even though it is possible for a man to be diagnosed with breast cancer, it is more common in women. Within the last decade, it has been shown that genetics and family history have played an important risk factor in developing breast cancer. Women with mutations in the BRCA genes, or blood relative such as mother, daughter, or sister who has been diagnosed with breast cancer, are at risk for developing breast cancer. The risk also seems to be greater for Caucasians rather than for people of African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American descent. Breast cancer risk increases with age. You cannot change these risks factors if they affect you, but knowing them should make you more diligent about getting the appropriate screening and consultation for breast cancer. What causes breast cancer? No one knows all the answers but there are certainly many ways to prevent it.

Tip: Unproven Causes of Breast Cancer

Even though we live in a world in which there are numerous things being attributed to cancer, there are still some causes of breast cancer that have remained unproven. Society has held the belief that breast implants, abortion, underwire bras, and antiperspirants can all lead to someone developing breast cancer. However, no firm scientific study has been conducted on these unproven factors. Therefore, until scientists can answer the question, "What causes breast cancer?" without any doubts, there is certainly no reason to go without deodorant or bid farewell to your favorite push-up bra.

Category: Breast Cancer Diagnosis

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Diagnosis

Tip: Relating Your Family History Risk to the BRCA1 and BRCA2 Gene Mutation

Category: Non-Modifiable Breast Cancer Risk Factors The research is startling: Women who have inherited BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation have up to an 80% chance of receiving a breast cancer diagnosis during their lifetime (and at a younger age) over those who are not born with a gene mutation. But if you have a strong family history of breast cancer, don't accept a diagnosis as your fate. You can still reduce your risk of developing this disease. While research suggests that some breast cancer diagnoses are the result of an inherited mutation of genes BRCA1 and BRCA2, it's estimated that only 5% to 10% of all breast cancers are caused by these mutated genes. There is no guarantee you are going to be diagnosed with breast cancer because your mother was diagnosed. A high percentage of breast cancers are caused by gene mutations that are acquired over time and not inherited, so it's worth exploring modifiable breast cancer risk factors for your own proactive healthcare. Studies have shown that solid

nutrition, maintaining a healthy weight, moderate exercise and minimal consumption of alcohol have a much higher impact on reducing your cancer risk than the family you were born into. Don't feel that if you have cancer in your family history, there is nothing you can do about it. Learn how lifestyle changes can reduce your risk and change your family tree.

Category: Breast Cancer Facts

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Facts

Tip: Interpreting Breast Cancer Statistics: The Difference Between Absolute and Relative Breast Cancer Risk Factors

A risk factor can be defined as something that may increase your chance of getting breast cancer. There are two ways that scientists define risk factors: absolute and relative. An absolute breast cancer risk factor is the chance a particular group of people will develop breast cancer over a specific time period of time. For example, if you are a woman, you have a 1 in 8 (or 12.5%) chance of developing breast cancer in your lifetime. A relative breast cancer risk factor compares how something specific, (like inheriting a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation), will change your risk compared to those who don't have that specific thing. So, if a woman who has a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation has up to an 80% chance in relative risk of receiving a breast cancer diagnosis during her lifetime (and at a younger age) over those who don't, what does that breast cancer statistic mean? Multiply the absolute risk of 12.5% by the relative risk of 80%. The answer is 10%. So 10% is the size of the increase in risk. Then add the 10% increase in risk to the 12.5% risk, and she has a 22.5% absolute risk of breast cancer during her lifetime, at a younger age, if she has inherited a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation. It is important to know the difference between absolute and relative risk so you can determine how certain breast cancer statistics apply to you.

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Tip: Research and Breast Cancer Treatment

In 1975, a radical mastectomy was usually the standard treatment for breast cancer. The entire breast, the underlying muscle, and lymph nodes under the arm were surgically removed as the best way to get rid of the cancer. Over the past 30 years, treatment has shifted toward a "breast conservation" philosophy. In a great majority of cases, breast cancer now can be treated without a disfiguring, life-changing mastectomy. Since science has made great strides in the methods doctors use to identify and treat breast cancer, it is beneficial to take advantage of the new screening technologies that allow breast cancer to be detected and treated before a mastectomy is necessary.

Category: Breast Cancer Gene

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Gene

Tip: Family Patterns for BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 Mutations

Having an inherited mutation in the BRCA 1 or BRCA 2 gene means that this person possesses an altered gene from one of your parents. Either parent can be a carrier of the altered gene, and assuming only one of your parents carries the mutated form, your siblings will also have a 50 percent chance of inheriting the mutated gene. If you are a carrier, your children would face the same risk. However, it is important to remember that having the mutated gene only puts someone "at risk" for developing breast cancer. Altered BRCA 1 or BRCA 2 genes, does not mean breast cancer is definitely in your future, but regular screening measures should be taken.

Tip: Making The Decision To Find Out If You Carry The Breast Cancer Genes

Many people would want to know if they are at risk for getting an illness. The prospect of getting tested for gene mutations for breast cancer is an important decision that should not be treated lightly. Serious thought should be given to how you will handle the test results from your doctor. If knowing would make you more likely to get regular screenings and have a healthy, positive lifestyle to combat the possibility of cancer, then genetic testing might be a good idea for you. However, if testing positive for a mutated gene causes you to become sad, it is important for you to consider this as well.

Regardless if you are tested or not, the best recommendation is to follow your doctor's advice and reduce your chances of developing breast cancer.

Tip: Prognosis for Women Who Carry A Mutated Gene

It is still unclear the prognosis for a woman who has a mutated BRCA 1 or BRCA 2 gene developing breast cancer. Early statistics released have indicated a risk of 40 percent for someone with a mutated gene, while other research has now suggested the number might be closer to 80 percent. However, one thing is certain, if you have a mutated form of one of these genes, you are at greater risk for breast cancer than someone who does not. It is not definite that you will develop breast cancer during your lifetime, but it does mean you should be more diligent about taking care of your breasts. As a carrier of the breast cancer gene, consider yourself fortunate that through screening and proper care, you will have a head start in beating this disease if it does show up.

Category: Breast Cancer Gifts

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Gifts

Tip: Finding A Breast Cancer Charity

Different organizations sponsor different aspects of breast cancer research and education. Before making a donation, you should first do a little research on what the organization is involved in, and if it has a good reputation. Along the same lines, do not be bashful to ask just how your donation will be spent on breast cancer, and how much of it. One of the best tips on breast cancer donor gifts is to find out exactly how your donation will be used. The Better Business Bureau requires charitable organizations to spend at least fifty percent of raised funds on their stated cause. Many spend much more than this amount. So ask around to find an organization where more of your donated dollars are going to the breast cancer research of your choice.

Tip: Look Into Employer Support For Breast Cancer Donations

Perhaps you have always intended to donate to breast cancer, but by the end of the year there just is not enough money left over to make it happen. Your employer, in this case, may be able to help. Some employers offer programs through which you can have a small amount of each paycheck withheld for a donation to a charitable organization of your choice. One advantage of this method is that your donation amount is already accommodated in your budget, so you do not have to worry about getting the money later in the year for the amount you would like to donate. There are tax advantages as well, and some employers even have a matching gift program, whereby they match dollar for dollar the amount that you donate to a breast cancer organization. It would be

a good idea to talk to your company's human resources department about the availability of such a program.

Category: Breast Cancer In Men

Subcategory: Breast Cancer In Men

Tip: Breast Cancer In Men and Women Is Very Similar

The breast tissue of men is slightly different than that of women. In fact male breast tissue can be viewed as an undeveloped form of female breast tissue. This can be seen in the way in which the breasts of women have the apparatus for producing and storing milk, while the breasts of men consist of only a few ducts. But even though a cancer of the breast in a woman has more places to develop, eighty to ninety percent of breast cancer in men will begin in the ducts and spread to neighboring tissue. Even if you are a man, take advantage of the breast cancer resources that are available. Your risk may be very small compared to a woman's, but being aware of your risk can only help in this matter.

Tip: Statistics On Breast Cancer In Men

Most men are not likely to get breast cancer. Statistics show that fewer than 2,000 men in the United States are likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer each year. Of all cancer deaths that occur in men, breast cancer accounts for a scant two-tenths of a percent of them. However, women are hundred times more likely to be afflicted with this disease. Statistics aside, men can and do get breast cancer. Some do die from it. So, if you're inclined to scoff at the possibility, hold back. If you consider breast cancer to be a health problem solely found in women and ignore the possibility that you might develop it, you're being naive. If you don't take the necessary precautions to investigate the possibility that you might have breast cancer, you could be putting your life in jeopardy. Be smart and look into breast cancer screening, whether you're a man or a woman.

Tip: Symptoms That May Indicate Breast Cancer in Men

The signs and symptoms that indicate breast cancer in women hold true for men as well. Changes in the appearance of the breast tissue, such as dimpling, puckering, swelling, lumps, a rash or red skin, a discharge from the nipple, and a nipple that turns inward are among suspicious signs that are worth a visit to the doctor. This is all the more reason for men to pay attention when the women around them are getting information about breast cancer. Since women are more likely than men to recognize a possible symptom of breast cancer when they see it, a woman should keep alert for changes in the breast tissue of her significant other.

Category: Breast Cancer Prevention

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Prevention

Tip: Certain Medications May Reduce the Risk of Breast Cancer

It is important to learn about preventing breast cancer. There are certain drugs you can explore in an effort to prevent breast cancer from happening to you. Probably the most familiar possibility is Tamoxifen, commonly prescribed after breast cancer treatment and believed to reduce the risk of getting breast cancer in the first place. But you should know that medications do not come with a complete guarantee. Tamoxifen is controversial when used as a prevention strategy, because it can cause side effects like blood clots and increased risk of other types of cancers. If you are considering preventive drug therapy, it is wise to get genetically tested to help determine what your breast cancer risk actually is. Only after extensive discussion with your doctor, can you accurately weigh the risks and potential benefits to make the decision that is right for you.

Tip: Choose from Foods That Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk Factor

Category: Modifiable Breast Cancer Risk Factors Eating the right foods will not prevent you from getting breast cancer, but it will lower your breast cancer risk factor. No one knows one true cause of breast cancer but scientist have pinpointed two major risk factors that can't be changed: 1) being female and 2) getting older. As the second leading cause of cancer deaths in American women, each step you take to reduce the chance that you may get breast cancer is a step in the right direction. Reducing your breast cancer risk by choosing cancer-fighting foods couldn't be easier. Decrease the amount of fat you eat and increase your fruits and vegetables. Excess fat can promote abnormal cell division which may increase your risk of colon and breast cancer. You can substantially decrease your fat intake by choosing less red meat, low-fat dairy products and trimming excess fat from meats before cooking. And don't worry so much about eating the "right" cancer fighting fruit and vegetables. That seems to change with every new media headline. Focus, instead, on simply choosing more fruits and vegetables in any variety you wish. They are rich in natural antioxidants, high in fiber and low in fat. When you choose from foods that reduce your breast cancer risk factor, you strengthen your immune system and are choosing a great defense against a breast cancer diagnosis.

Tip: Introduce Cancer Fighting Foods Into Your Diet

For those who have multiple high risk factors for breast cancer, a dietary change is one way you can lower your risk. Does that mean never eating a jelly donut again? No, not at all! The most damage is done when you develop chronically bad nutritional habits,

like starting every day off with a couple jelly donuts. The keys to lowering your breast cancer risk through nutrition are developing good habits and enjoying bad habits in moderation. Thanksgiving weekend should be enjoyed, and so should birthday cake (make mine chocolate) and occasional treats. And it's never too late to start eating right. Start with a few tiny changes. Carry a piece of fruit in your purse to avoid unplanned trips through the fast food line because you are famished. Keep some baby carrots in the fridge to munch on in between meals. Or maybe it would be easier for you to quit one bad habit, like French Fries, and replace them with a leafy salad. I can hear your pain – before my cancer diagnosis, I believed French Fries were a perfectly acceptable side dish to every meal. The human body can tolerate a lot of abuse. Just consider what happens when a smoker kicks the habit. That person's risk of heart disease starts diminishing almost immediately! The U.S. government's National Cancer Institute estimates that "35 percent of cancer deaths are related to poor eating habits." Remember, what you are serving for dinner not only nourishes your body and soul, but also the bodies and souls of the family and friends who gather around your table. Give yourself and the people important to you an extra helping of nourishment by introducing nutritious cancer-fighting foods into your diet.

Tip: Lee National Denim Day Breaking the Rules to Fight Breast Cancer

On October 6, 2006, Lee Jeans will celebrate 11 years of raising awareness and funds for breast cancer. To date, Lee National Denim Day has raised \$61.5 million dollars for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Companies and organizations nationwide participate by allowing employees and members to wear denim in exchange for a \$5 donation to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Jennifer Crabtree, office manager of a mid-size law firm said, "Our firm has a strict policy to never allow jeans in the workplace with one exception, Lee National Denim Day. It seems that every woman knows someone who has had breast cancer. Since our office is predominately women, I think everyone felt it was important to give to this cause, and they got to break the rules for one day. Jennifer said that she had 100% participation from the women in her office in 2005. Debbie Skeen, Human Resource Assistant for a national trucking insurance company added, "We usually get very good response because, of course, these folks here will do anything to be allowed to wear jeans!" Registration for this event opens on June 1, 2006. To participate, sign up at Lee National Denim Day (<http://www.denimday.com/signup.asp>) or by calling 1-800-944-5633.

Tip: Soy Products and Breast Cancer

Scientists are interested in the connection between soy and breast cancer, and are actively studying, the possibility that soy might affect the likelihood of getting it or recovering from it. At this point, there is certainly no concrete evidence to say that eating tofu everyday will prevent breast cancer. If you are currently being treated for breast cancer or are post-menopausal, some researchers have hypothesized that soy could actually have the opposite effect, possibly impeding treatment or increasing the

likelihood of getting breast cancer. But since nothing at all has been proven so far, it is best to seek the advice of your doctor if you are concerned.

Category: Breast Cancer Screening

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Screening

Tip: Breast Abnormalities Warrant a Call to Your Doctor

Breast cancer, like many cancers, can be hidden. Early forms do not usually cause symptoms. Often they cannot be felt by a woman or her doctor. Only when the cancer has grown and spread, are breast cancer symptoms likely to be noticed. These may include:

- Lumps or hard spots in the breast tissue or under the arm,
- A change in the size, shape, or color of the breast or nipple,
- Breast pain or discomfort,
- A dimple or pucker in the skin of the breast (kind of like an orange peel),
- Scaly skin on the breast,
- An inverted nipple,
- Visible blood veins in the breast,
- Unusual discharge

Should you notice one of these breast cancer signs, or indeed, anything at all unusual about your breasts, do not panic. Cancer is but one of many possible causes. However, pay a visit to your doctor right away

Tip: Breast Cancer Screening Saves Lives

The best advice that you can get about breast cancer screening is that early detection of breast cancer through mammograms, clinical exams, and self-exams is estimated to save thousands of lives every year. If cancer is present in your breast, detecting it early vastly improves the chances that you can be treated and cured with few or no lasting side effects. Mammograms do have their limitations. They do not always detect every kind of cancer. But for the most part, screening methods are considered the most valuable weapon in the battle against breast cancer. Unfortunately, this weapon is only as strong as the women who utilize it. Make sure you are one of them.

Tip: Fine Needle Aspiration Breast Biopsy vs. Core Needle Breast Biopsy

If you or your doctor discovers a lump in your breast, your doctor may suggest a fine needle aspiration breast biopsy or a core needle breast biopsy to determine whether or not it is cancerous. The fine needle aspiration biopsy is less invasive, because the needle used is thinner than one used to draw blood. For this biopsy, your doctor will clean the area of your breast nearest to the suspicious lump with an alcohol swab and insert a fine needle into the area to retrieve the cells for examination. He may or may not numb you with a local anesthetic; but request it if you have a lower tolerance for discomfort. For a core needle biopsy, the doctor will perform an ultrasound on your breast with an ultrasound wand to locate the exact spot of the lump, a local anesthetic will be given, and the needle will be inserted into the lump (guided by pictures on the

ultrasound screen). The core needle is big enough to actually extract tissue, but will not leave a scar. It may seem that the fine needle aspiration is the best way to go insofar as comfort, but this procedure is sometimes less accurate because the needle is extracting from nearby breast tissue and not directly from the lump. Also, if cells extracted from the fine needle aspiration even look suspicious, it is likely that your doctor will order a second, more invasive biopsy for a more accurate diagnosis.

Tip: When the Doctor Says You Need A Breast Biopsy

If detecting a lump in your breast isn't alarming enough, being sent for a breast biopsy is! The first thing you should understand when your doctor says the words "breast biopsy" is about 75% of all biopsies are benign, or non-cancerous. The second thing you need to understand is what type of biopsy will be performed. Ask your doctor to explain the procedure and how you should prepare for your breast biopsy. It's a good idea to refrain from taking aspirin or anti-inflammatory medication a couple weeks before the biopsy because those types of medicines will increase bleeding and bruising. There are three main types of breast cancer biopsies: fine needle aspiration, core needle biopsy or a small incision (or surgery). If you are having a surgical breast biopsy, have a friend or relative drive you to the surgery center and back home again because you will be under anesthesia during surgery. It's also a good idea to have someone accompany you to a needle biopsy just for moral support. You won't know the final result of the biopsy until the pathologist's report comes back which can sometimes take a few days so it's just nice to have someone in the waiting room to talk to and drive home with. Remember: a breast biopsy doesn't mean you have cancer; it is simply a screening method to ensure that you don't.

Category: Breast Cancer Survivors

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Survivors

Tip: After Breast Cancer Treatment: Getting Life Back on Track

Your last day of treatment has arrived! Finally, a glimmer of hope that you will be getting your life back. Chemotherapy is over, no more cancer clinic visits -- maybe you will even start seeing some hair soon! But there may be something not-so-satisfying about this moment that you've looked forward to for months now. You might even feel a bit sad and confused. If so, you're normal. You're normal because you've been fighting for your life with your family and friends rallying around supporting you. You've been their focus, and even your own thoughts have been inward toward healing and wellness. Now your focus is turning outward again, and family and friends might not be as available, because, after all, now you're all better, right? Well, yes . . . and no. Oncology treatment is over, but you still have some healing to do, along with physical scars that remind you, daily, of what you've been through to get this far. It takes the human body time to

recover from catastrophic illness. Give yourself some grace. Your energy level will return again, just keep your pace slow and steady. Fear of a cancer recurrence may also be lurking behind some of your confusion. You might find yourself poking around your lymph nodes thinking – is that a bump I feel? Was that bump there yesterday? What is that sharp pain in my side? While these feelings are normal, they should not be swept under the rug. Talk to your healthcare team about your feelings at your follow-up appointments. Also, consider joining a support group for cancer survivors. Organizations like The Wellness Community (<http://www.thewellnesscommunity.org/default.asp>) provide free group counseling for breast cancer survivors and their families, and you'll find other cancer networking groups in the community section of your local newspaper. The last day of treatment is a milestone, celebrate it! But continue giving yourself the time you need to get back into your normal routine.

Tip: Life After Breast Cancer

A majority of breast cancer survivors continue to live normal, fulfilling lives. At the same time, life after breast cancer is different in many ways. For one thing, there is no "cure" for breast cancer. Survivors know it can always come back, and must find a way to come to terms with this risk. They may also face changes to their body, such as hair loss from chemotherapy, arm swelling due to radiation, or losing a breast due to mastectomy. It takes time to grieve and accept these changes, and for some women, recovery is a lifelong process. Breast cancer survivors might also be more cautious than the average woman about getting regular checkups, while smart lifestyle choices like a healthy diet, daily exercise, and abstinence from alcohol and cigarettes will be ever more important. These constitute considerable changes to how some women live. Others ride through the changes well, and greet their future with a renewed sense of purpose and hope.

Tip: Taking Action as a Breast Cancer Survivor

Surviving a disease like breast cancer is a life changing experience. Many breast cancer survivors find fulfillment as volunteers for a variety of cancer-related causes, from fundraising, to increasing awareness about the disease. Survivors put a face on breast cancer and serve a crucial role in the strides being made to lower breast cancer incidence rates and mortality, around the world. Whether you seek extensive involvement or just want a small role, there are opportunities available for you. Begin by contacting a volunteer organization, such as like the Susan G. Komen Foundation, or a local breast cancer support group in your community. Your doctor's office or hospital will also have details. Regardless of how the disease has changed your life, you can bring out the positive by reaching out to other breast cancer survivors like you.

Tip: The Odds of Dying from Breast Cancer

In 2005, it was estimated that breast cancer will kill more than 40,000 women and 460 men. But the statistics are not all so grim. A good portion of those 40,000 deaths will happen to women who were diagnosed many years ago, and screening and treatment have vastly improved since then. Certainly not every woman diagnosed with breast cancer will die from it. Quite the contrary, those who catch the disease at its earliest stages face an excellent survival rate - as high as 98 percent. These odds shift significantly for women who had their cancer diagnosed at a later stage, even though in more extreme cases, a woman stands a good chance of still being alive five years from the time of diagnosis. If you have been diagnosed with cancer, do not reflect on think about the "worst-case scenario". Breast cancer is a highly treatable disease and new advancements are being made everyday. Be positive, expect the best from your treatments, and stay in close contact with your doctor. If, on the other hand, you are currently cancer free, keep up with regular screenings and other preventative measures.

Tip: Women Who Have Survived Breast Cancer

Breast cancer survivors are everywhere. They are young mothers or retirees. Some are wealthy or poor. They can be found in cities or on farms. They are former first ladies like Nancy Reagan and Betty Ford, actresses like Shirley Temple Black and Rue McClanahan, athletes like Peggy Fleming and Edna Campbell, and singers like Carly Simon and Patti LaBelle, just to name a few. Breast cancer affects all of us because it can affect any of us. If you've been diagnosed with breast cancer, reach out to survivors and to fellow patients. You're part of a unique sisterhood, and with their support, you can fight breast cancer and win.

Tip: Young Survival Coalition for Young Women with Breast Cancer

In a study of 45,000 breast cancer patients, it was discovered that the odds of dying from breast cancer rose by 5 percent for every year that a woman was under age 45 when diagnosed. Since young women with breast cancer are less commonly screened than older women, physicians may pay less attention to lumps in a younger woman's breasts. In addition to higher breast cancer mortality rates, young women with breast cancer also have special issues related to balancing work, marriage and motherhood. These issues may include getting time off for treatment while building a career; problems with self-esteem and sexuality; and worries about fertility and early menopause. The Young Survival Coalition gives young women faced with breast cancer the benefit of a supportive environment of peers. In 1998, this organization was founded by three breast cancer survivors (all under the age of 35 when diagnosed). The Young Survival Coalition is committed to "advocating to increase the number of studies about young women and breast cancer; educating young women about the importance of breast self-examination and early detection; and being a point of contact for other young women with breast cancer." Young Survival Coalition is a resource for young women seeking answers and a path to wellness while providing a place to meet others who have gone through similar experiences

Category: Breast Cancer Treatments

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Treatments

Tip: Eating Well Through Breast Cancer Therapy

Breast cancer treatment information that might be unknown is the importance of a well-balanced diet in the recovery of the patient. Eating properly is important when undergoing breast cancer therapy. Treatments can cause fatigue, reduce physical strength, and damage tissue, leading to a decrease demand by the body for nutrients. Even though the cancer patient might feel exhausted, they can suffer from a reduced appetite as a side effect of the treatment they are receiving. But eating is a crucial component of in the battle against breast cancer. Eating fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C, high-protein foods like meat, beans, and dairy products, and carbohydrate-laden whole grains for energy can help tremendously. Drinking plenty of fluids to stay hydrated during your treatment is also recommended. If a loss of appetite is an issue, try eating smaller but more frequent meals. Smaller bites of food chewed slowly can help fight the nausea, while helping food stay down. If you have trouble with diarrhea or vomiting, keep track of the foods that seem to cause them. Your doctor is also a good source of information to discuss your dietary and digestive problems with. There maybe other solutions to help you keep your breast cancer diet healthy and on track.

Tip: Looking Your Best During Breast Cancer Treatment

Breast cancer and beauty pageants may not go hand in hand, but there is no reason why a woman should not continue to look her best during treatment. A positive outlook is vital to taking action against breast cancer, and maintaining your appearance can point your attitude in the right direction. Continue your usual makeup regime, using concealer to mask any dark circles you may have under your eyes. If you are receiving chemotherapy, use mascara and an eyebrow pencil to add emphasis to thinning lashes and brows. Wear hats, scarves, or wigs if you feel self-conscious about thinning hair, or wear your hair in a shorter style to mask thin patches. Moisturize dry skin and apply sunscreen daily. Treat yourself to regular manicures and pedicures as well. There is no time like now to pamper yourself. After all, the better you look, the better you will feel.

Tip: Standard Treatments for Breast Cancer

After you have been diagnosed with breast cancer, your doctor will outline the treatment choices that are available to you. These standard treatment choices are specific for every person diagnosed, and will depend on where the tumor is located within the breast, the size of the tumor, and how far the cancer has progressed. The less invasive

breast cancers can be treated by surgery, however it is typical for the physician to suggest a treatment of surgery, medication, chemotherapy, radiation, or a combination of any of these methods. Breast cancer patients may face difficult decisions about the extent and duration of the treatment that will take place. After being informed of the treatment options available for your breast cancer, it is important to discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor before deciding the treatment that is right for you. It is important to remember as a patient, you should fully understand the treatment option you choose. Even if this means receiving a second opinion on which breast cancer treatment option to choose.

Tip: Surgery as a Treatment for Breast Cancer

A majority of breast cancer patients have surgery to remove the cancerous tissue. Depending on the nature and extent of the cancer, surgery can involve either, removing a tumor or lump (lumpectomy), a portion of the breast (partial mastectomy), the complete breast and the lining over the chest muscles (modified radical mastectomy), or the complete breast and underlying chest muscles (radical mastectomy). Commonly the surgeon will also remove lymph nodes under the arm that drain the breast and chest area. These lymph nodes will then be tested for the appearance of cancer cells. Surgery due to breast cancer can have a significant impact on a woman's self image and ability to function. If you're facing surgical treatment for breast cancer, talk to someone about how you are feeling and surround yourself with a strong, loving support system.

Tip: The Breast Cancer Experience: When Treatment Ends

Ann, a breast cancer survivor, shared that when she was diagnosed in August of 2004, she quickly counted ahead to February, 2005 calculating that surgery, chemotherapy and radiation would take approximately 6 months (per her oncologist). She kept looking forward, believing that life would return to normal in February. Finally, February arrived and she completed her last day of radiation treatment at the oncology clinic . . . but life was far from normal. Even though her last day of chemotherapy was in November, her hair had not grown back. "I felt exhausted," she said, "and unable to keep up with my small children. When I looked in the mirror, I saw a cancer patient, not a survivor." Her friends and family were moving on with their lives, but she felt stuck. Not only that, but chemotherapy had been so much more difficult than she imagined that she began to feel anxious about having a recurrence. Would life ever be the same? Ann's feelings are not uncommon. Even breast cancer patients who go into treatment with a positive attitude can come out feeling beat-up, worn-out, alone and anxious. When treatment ends, it's important to keep in mind that even though you're finished with your oncology appointments, your body needs time to regain strength to handle the physical schedule you had before your diagnosis. For some people this will take months, and for others, it may take over a year. Try to ease into an exercise routine, even if it is only walking around the block each day, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids. Sleep a good eight hours every night. And

also ask for help with your children and other responsibilities. No one will know you need the extra help and time to heal unless you tell them. The breast cancer experience may also take an emotional toll when treatment ends. If you are struggling with anxiety, depression, nightmares, difficulty sleeping or feelings of detachment seek help through your oncologist. If your oncologist can't help you, he or she can refer you to counselors in your local area who are trained in oncology-related issues or support groups where you can discuss your feelings with people who have had similar experiences. Also, talk to your doctor about the benefits of anti-anxiety medications. Don't be hard on yourself for not being able to "move on" immediately when treatment ends. You are not alone. Remember, this is your second chance to make life what you want it to be. Give yourself the time you need to heal both physically and emotionally.

Tip: The Healing Touch for a Breast Cancer Patient

In addition to the medical treatment and therapies recommended by your doctor, there are alternative therapies that can facilitate healing. One such method is massage therapy. Massage therapy is when a licensed therapist rubs or kneads your body's soft tissue to make it feel better. This rubbing and kneading stimulates nerves and increases blood flow, which will relax your muscles. The massage therapist can gently rub the surface of the skin, or rigorously knead deep muscle tissues, whichever you prefer. You may also choose whether you want to focus on a general area, like your neck or back, or have an all-body massage. Massage therapy helps a breast cancer patient on an emotional level as well as physical because it relieves tension and stress. Even the human touch will help a breast cancer patient feel better, as many people around you may treat you as "fragile", or be afraid to touch you when your white cell count is down in fear of passing a virus to you. After treatment, a massage therapist can show you how to knead surgery scar tissue to help you become more comfortable with the tissue and make it softer to your touch. If you are presently in treatment, talk to your oncology team before you begin massage therapy. Your doctor may have recommendations on what areas the massage therapist should avoid, and what methods the therapist should use. The American Massage Therapy Association (<http://www.amtamassage.org/>) will help you find a qualified therapist in your area. Massage therapy cannot cure breast cancer, but used as an additional therapy, it will improve your feeling of well-being and promote your overall feeling of wellness.

Tip: Treating Breast Cancer with Chemotherapy

Well known breast cancer treatment information involving chemotherapy is concerned with trying to find ways to alleviate the side effects that accompany this form of treatment. Often the side effects of chemotherapy include hair loss, malaise, nausea and vomiting, changes to the sense of smell and taste, and a complete halt to normal life. In truth, while hair loss, nausea and fatigue are common side effects, chemotherapy treatment affects different people in different ways. With the recent chemotherapy drugs, some people experience only mild side effects. Most people who are on

chemotherapy for breast cancer can continue to work and carry on with the functions of daily life. If you are facing breast cancer chemotherapy, never hesitate to consult your doctor about side effects you are experiencing and the best ways to cope with them, and also consider joining a chemotherapy support group to help you stay positive and motivated throughout your treatment.

Tip: Treating Breast Cancer with Radiation

Anyone concerned about undergoing radiation therapy for treatment of breast cancer should not be. Radiation is a form of energy in which, when directed at the breast tissue, helps to cure the cancer by destroying any cancer cells that may have been left behind after surgery. Unlike chemotherapy, in which chemicals travel through the body, radiation therapy and its side effects are for the most part limited to the cancerous breast. The therapy is not usually painful, though skin irritation can cause minor discomfort. If you are facing radiation therapy for breast cancer, your doctor will supply you with detailed information that can take the mystery out of your treatment. Talking to other people who have undergone radiation therapy can also help put your mind at ease, and give you a better understanding of radiation in the treatment of breast cancer.

Category: Breast Cancer Types

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Types

Tip: Early Or Advanced Breast Cancer

Early and advanced breast cancer, are distinguished in terms of how far the breast cancer has progressed, not the age at which the woman is diagnosed. Early breast cancers are typically limited to a single tumor or area of the breast, and are easier to treat because a surgeon can often remove all the cancerous areas. Any cancer cells that might remain are often removed with a round of radiation therapy. Advanced breast cancer, on the other hand, has had a chance to spread, both throughout the breast and into other tissues of the body. Surgery alone cannot always rid the body of advanced cancer. Treatment becomes more difficult, but the prognosis can still be optimistic. If the stage of your breast cancer concerns you, try to get in touch with a support group where you can talk to survivors of all stages.

Tip: Understanding Your Breast Pathology Report

The breast pathology report is a summary of the information that has been collected about your breast cancer, both from your doctor's observations and from the pathology department. This report will contain information discovered after analyzing tissue that was surgically removed from your breast. The pathology report will reveal the condition of your breast that can lead to other tests that need to be done. As a result, different

parts of the pathology report may be sent to you or your doctor at different times. Only when all the information has been collected should you sit down with your doctor to decide your course of treatment. Your doctor will fully explain the type and stage of breast cancer discovered, and the suggested treatment course. It is also a good idea to retain a copy of the full pathology report in case you ever move, decide to change doctors, or have questions about your breast cancer in the future.

Category: Breast Cancer Web Sites

Subcategory: Breast Cancer Web Sites

Tip: Beginning the Search for Breast Cancer Information Online

Any search engine, like Google or Yahoo, is always a good place for finding breast cancer Web sites. Looking for Web sites on the particular aspect of breast cancer that interests you is easy. Another good source as well is the news feature you probably have as part of your Web server's home page. The latest breast cancer news is often featured under the health category, and such articles are usually reader-friendly versions of the actual scientific studies in question. You can also start your search on a respectable health Web site like the National Institutes of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While these are not strictly breast cancer Web sites, these sites are great starting points for general information and the basis for finding other reliable information about breast cancer online.

Tip: Beware of Possible Breast Cancer Scams on the Internet

No one would like to think someone would try to dishonestly profit from a disease like breast cancer. However, there are possible scams being showcased on "innocent appearing" breast cancer Web sites. Finding breast cancer information Web sites might lead you to read about a new breast cancer medication or treatment at a Web site that claims to sell it, for example. Be wary of what you find, just because something is on the Internet does not always mean it is true. Before purchasing any product or new treatment method, talk to your doctor about it, and discover if it is actually a viable treatment option. Your doctor will be able to prescribe it for you or tell you where to get it safely.

Tip: Finding Trustworthy Web Sites on Breast Cancer

If you are trying to find breast cancer Web sites and having difficulties, it is recommended that you visit the Web sites of national and governmental organizations. These websites are primary places to find factual, up-to-date, and non-biased information on breast cancer. However, it is important to always check when the information you are reading was last updated. There is always new research being

published in this field, and information from years ago may no longer apply. When finding a breast cancer site, be careful of information posted by someone who might have a hidden agenda. Sometimes people will start their own breast cancer Web site to report a new discovery, but much of the information reported might be skewed by personal opinion or are trying to get you to purchase a product. In general, stick to well known, unbiased sources that cross-reference their facts, and always compare what you read about breast cancer online with other Web sites and the advice of your own doctor.

Category: Breast Reconstruction

Subcategory: Breast Reconstruction

Tip: Alternatives To Breast Reconstruction Surgery

Surgery is not the only way to have normal looking breasts after mastectomy. There are also prosthetic breasts in a variety of types to suit the needs of different women. Some attach right to the skin of the chest to be worn under the bra. Others can be inserted into special bras made for the purpose. The entire breast can be simulated in this way, or if only a portion of your breast was removed, you may be able to get a prosthesis to accommodate for the missing portion. If surgery and implants are not right for you, talk to your doctor about the options that may be available in breast prosthetics.

Tip: Breast Reconstruction Reduces The Emotional Loss of Mastectomy

A mastectomy is no small matter. The surgical removal of a breast is not only frightening, but it can bring about feelings of anger, frustration, dismay, and loss for the woman who undergoes this procedure. Women may no longer find themselves attractive once the procedure is done. Clothes might not fit the same as before, and the shock of waking up "breast-less" after surgery can be even more heartbreaking than the breast cancer diagnosis itself. Fortunately, women who undergo mastectomy for breast cancer can have breast reconstruction surgery. The procedure involves inserting either an artificial breast implant, or an implant of tissue and muscle harvested from another area of your body. If you have had or are facing a mastectomy, get advice on breast cancer reconstruction and keep it in mind as a solution if you are concerned over the loss of a breast.

Tip: Risks Of Reconstruction Could Outweigh Benefits

The possibility of having breasts again after a mastectomy is certainly appealing, but it is not the right choice for every women. For one thing, breast reconstruction could interfere with certain treatments for breast cancer, such as radiation therapy. There are also risks associated with any surgery. Some women, following a mastectomy, do not

wish to have further surgeries because of the risks and recovery time involved, and, breast reconstruction may not have the outcome you are hoping for. If you are considering breast cancer reconstruction, carefully discuss the procedure, the risks, and reasonable expectations for the outcome with your doctor, and also with the people closest to you. Think about the pros and cons of the surgery before making a rash decision. In the end it comes down to what is best for you, emotionally and physically.

Tip: What To Expect From Your Reconstruction Surgery

Rare is the reconstructed breast that looks, feels and behaves exactly like the original. When naked, be prepared to notice a difference in the way your breasts look. They may not be exactly the same size or shape, for example. And a reconstructed breast rarely has the same sensation to touch as the original. If your goal for reconstruction is to be able to wear bras and clothing without too noticeable a difference in your breasts, then you have realistic expectations for the surgery. Before jumping into reconstruction surgery, it is in your best interest to have realistic expectations. To benefit the most from breast reconstruction, have a frank discussion with your doctor about what is involved and what you can expect, and make your decision to have the surgery accordingly. Make sure that you have all of the facts and that you have a pretty solid idea of what the outcome will be.

Tip: When To Have Breast Reconstruction Completed

For many women, breast reconstruction can be done in the same operation following the mastectomy procedure. The advantages of this method are obvious. Want some mind-settling advice on breast cancer reconstruction: you will avoid having another surgery, you only have to recover from one painful procedure instead of two, and you will not have to wake up after surgery with a void in your chest where your breast used to be. Some women who have had breast reconstruction after a mastectomy choose to separate the two procedures. They may prefer to focus entirely on beating cancer before worrying about their appearance, or they may also feel they need time to decide if reconstruction is right for them. If you are considering breast reconstruction, remember that you have time to make decisions and think it over. It is not a decision to rush into. You can always come back for the procedure once your mastectomy has healed. So take the time you need to make the choice that is best for you.