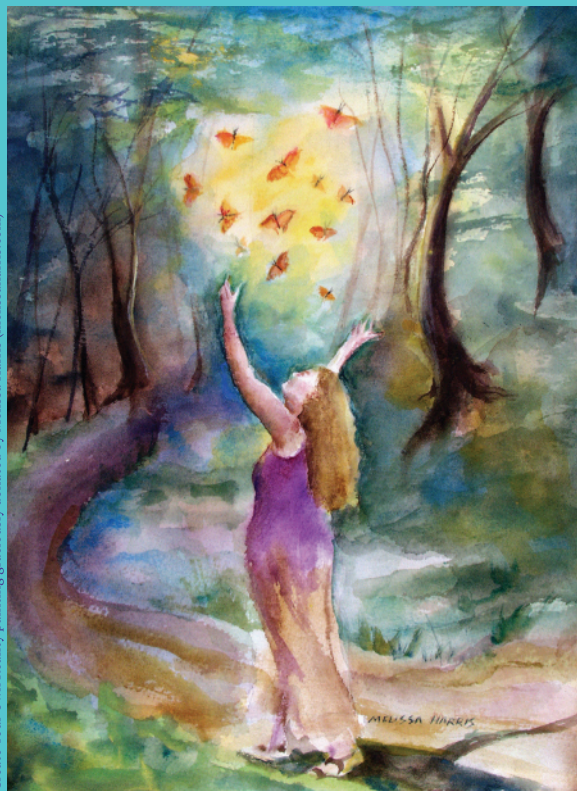


BREAST CANCER OPTIONS, INC.
101 Hurley Avenue
Suite 10
Kingston, NY 12401



Create Your Own Reality painting graciously donated by Melissa Harris (melissaharris.com)

Changes and choices YOU can make — little by little, bit by bit, day by day, to create a healthier environment, bolster your immune system and reduce the risk of breast cancer.

Healthy Lifestyles

2023 Calendar

by Breast Cancer Options
A not-for-profit organization dedicated to supplying information, support and advocacy.



The Precautionary Principle

GLOBAL WARMING, DISEASE, TOXIC CHEMICALS & THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

The precautionary principle is organized around the notion that it is better to be safe than sorry. It aims to prevent harm from the outset rather than manage it after the fact.

Climate Change & Toxic Chemicals Can Increase Your Breast Cancer Risk – Climate change is increasing cancer risk through increased exposure to carcinogens after extreme weather events like hurricanes and wildfires. It is also impacting cancer survival. Extreme weather events can impede patients' access to cancer care and the ability of cancer treatment facilities to deliver care. Warmer temperatures increase exposures to toxic chemicals and affect how chemicals behave. Higher temperatures allow certain chemicals to vaporize into toxic byproducts and enter the air we breathe.

Toxic chemicals can inhibit the body's ability to stay healthy – Many toxic chemicals are endocrine disruptors. They alter metabolism and hinder our ability to adapt to changing temperatures. These effects occur particularly in communities without access to heating or air conditioning. Most of us are exposed to a cocktail of environmental toxins on a daily basis at relatively low levels of exposure. Hotter temps make it harder for our bodies to cleanse and get rid of toxic chemicals.

We need to adopt a better-safe-than-sorry approach in order to reduce contact with known and suspected carcinogens. They are present in everything from fire-resistant couches to endocrine disruptors in shampoo and personal care products. Protect yourself—control what you can- limit exposures where you can.

Facts to remember: There are 85,000 chemicals in use today and only 7% of them have been tested for safety. Precaution is overdue. These chemicals are used in everything from preservatives in our personal care products to flame retardants in household furnishings—from plasticizers in our water bottles to pesticides on our fruit and vegetables— in household cleaning products and electro-magnetic radiation from cell phones and computers. Only about 5-10% of breast cancers are due to hereditary factors. Reasons for the other causes are unclear but are likely due to preventable factors. Safety tests are needed in laboratories, not in our bodies. **These xenoestrogens, act like estrogens and help promote breast and other cancers.**

How climate change may increase your risk of breast cancer: Hotter temps make it harder for our bodies to cleanse and get rid of toxic chemicals; It makes chemicals like pesticides more harmful to our bodies; Hotter temps mean more volatile toxic chemical pollution in the air we breathe; Severe weather events can pollute the water we drink.

Help Stop Global Warming! See how much carbon dioxide you can save doing some simple things:

1. Change a light. Replace one regular light bulb with an LED bulb. Save 150 lbs of carbon dioxide a year.
2. Drive less. Walk, bike, carpool or take mass transit. Save 1 pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don't drive!
3. Recycle more. Save 2,400 lbs of carbon dioxide per year by recycling half of your household waste. Even better, bring your own reusable container.
4. Check your tires. Keeping your tires properly inflated improves gas mileage by more than 3%. Every gallon of gas saved keeps 20 lbs of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.
5. Use less hot water. Take shorter, cooler showers. Washing clothes in cold water is just as effective and saves 500 lbs of carbon dioxide per year.
6. Avoid products with a lot of packaging. Reduce your garbage by 10%. Save 1,200 lbs of carbon dioxide.
7. Adjust your thermostat. Move it down 2 degrees in winter and up 2 degrees in summer. Save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
8. Plant a tree. A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.
9. Turn off electronic devices. Turn off your TV, DVD player & computer when you're not using them. It saves thousands of pounds of CO2 a year.

BECOME AN INFORMED CONSUMER: LOOK AROUND YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND IDENTIFY YOUR EXPOSURES - READ PRODUCT LABELS & DON'T PURCHASE A HARMFUL PRODUCT - LEARN ABOUT THE LEAST HARMFUL ALTERNATIVES TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH - BE VIGILANT WITH PRODUCTS FOR CHILDREN INCLUDING TOYS, FOOD AND CLOTHING - EAT A HEALTHY DIET, LEARN HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS AND INTEGRATE EXERCISE INTO YOUR LIFE TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF HARM - ADVOCATE FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE

We need to do everything we can NOW to eliminate the chance that our daughters and their daughters will ever get breast cancer!

Compliments Of

Sheldon M. Feldman, MD, FACS

Chief, Division of Breast Surgery
& Breast Surgical Oncology
Director, Breast Cancer Services
Professor, Department of Surgery



Montefiore Medical Center
Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Montefiore Einstein
Center for Cancer Care
1521 Jarrett Place
New York, NY 10461

718-862-8846

www.montefiore.org/cancer

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www.BreastCancerOptions.org

hope@BreastCancerOptions.org

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Martin Luther King	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Melissa Harris, MFA, is an internationally known artist, author, and psychic.

Her images grace the covers of books, CDs, magazines, and calendars worldwide.

Melissa also teaches "Painting Outside the Lines"™ art-making workshops in Hurley, NY. She is known for her Spirit Essence Portraits.

www.melissaharris.com

Living With Uncertainty

When you receive a cancer diagnosis, it may make you feel anxious, angry, sad, or afraid. You may even have trouble sleeping or it may be harder to focus at work. Learning to manage the uncertainty is an important part of staying healthy. Living with a cancer diagnosis means living with uncertainty. Whether newly diagnosed and anxious about treatment and side effects, or even 15 years after treatment, the feeling of uncertainty may not go away. The unknowns of cancer can make you feel anxious, angry, sad, or afraid. How to decide what treatments are best, and the worry about survivability adds another level of stress to an already difficult situation.



- Fear of an unknown (and often invisible threat)
- Feeling overwhelmed, disoriented, and anxious
- Hypervigilance about viruses and germs
- The loss of your sense of safety and predictability in the world
- Isolation and the contraction of your social life
- Uncertainty about the future

*Focus on the present. Don't try to predict what might happen... pay attention to what's happening now!
 Be fully connected to the present and you will interrupt the negative assumptions and predictions running through your mind.*

In reality we have control over many things, but we can't control everything that happens to us. To cope with all this uncertainty, many of us use worrying as a tool for trying to predict the future and avoid nasty surprises. Worrying makes it seem like you have some control over uncertain circumstances. Unfortunately, it doesn't really give you control over uncontrollable events. It just robs you of enjoyment in the present, saps your energy and keeps you up at night.

Life can change in a moment and it is filled with unexpected events and surprises—but that's not always a bad thing. Opportunity often arises from the unexpected and having to face uncertainty in life can also help you learn to adapt, overcome challenges, and increase your resiliency. It can help you to grow as a person.

Strategies to manage stress and anxiety and find inner calm

- **Stay connected.** Join a support group; Visit people: make phone calls: schedule Zoom visits.
- **Emotions are contagious.** Be kind to yourself. Talk to people who can help you feel calm. Avoid folks who only reinforce your fears.
- **Get moving:** Exercise is an effective stress-reliever and anti-anxiety treatment. Try adding a mindfulness element and focusing on how your body feels as you move. Pay attention to the sensation of your feet hitting the ground as you walk, run, or dance, or the feeling of the sun or wind on your skin.
- **Make time for relaxation:** Choose techniques such as meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises. Try to set aside time each day for practice.
- **Get plenty of sleep:** Excessive worry and uncertainty can disturb your sleep—just as a lack of quality sleep can fuel anxiety and stress. Improving your daytime habits and taking time to relax and unwind before bed can help you to sleep better at night.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Eating healthy meals can help maintain your energy levels and prevent mood swings. Avoid sugary, processed foods; add more omega-3 fats—from salmon, walnuts, soybeans, and flaxseeds – to give your overall mood a boost.

Learn as much as you can about your cancer. Accept that there are events out of your control and learn to go with flow. Share your feelings about what is going on so you can let them go.

Be kind to yourself. UNCERTAINTY is one of the hardest parts of a cancer diagnosis!



Are you getting the whole story?

MammaPrint and BluePrint together help navigate the complexity of early-stage breast cancer.



AGENDIA

MAMMAPRINT-BLUEPRINT

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February

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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18
19	20 President's Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				



The Financial Impact of Breast Cancer

Cancer treatment can be very expensive, even if you have health insurance. For many cancer survivors, the cost of diagnosis and treatment can have a lasting financial impact. Here are some of the financial issues faced by cancer survivors:

- Cancer treatment costs not covered by insurance and out-of-pocket payments can result in significant debt that lasts after treatment has ended.
- Survivors who can no longer work may lose health, disability and life insurance benefits provided by their employer.
- Difficulty finding a job that offers health, disability and life insurance benefits.
- Insurance companies may not pay for treatments that they consider experimental, such as treatments done as part of a clinical trial.
- Patients who receive treatment outside their hometown or state face additional costs of travel, lodging, meals and other living expenses.

Medical bills can completely overwhelm a family when illness strikes.

25 million people hesitate to take their medications in order to control medical costs.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation medical debt is the No. 1 source of personal bankruptcy filings in the U.S.

- 56M Americans under age 65 will have trouble paying medical bills. This is the reason most Americans file for bankruptcy.
- Studies found that 66.5% of all bankruptcies were tied to medical issues – either because of high costs for care or time out of work.
- Most people do not realize that their health insurance may not be enough to protect them.

Tips to Lower Medicine Costs: Medications can be a major expense for people with cancer. Make sure you take a look at your insurance plan's prescription coverage to see what's covered and what's not – and how much you can expect to pay out of pocket. If you're having trouble, get help from your insurance plan or a patient financial counselor at your hospital.

These strategies also may help:

- **Ask your doctor or pharmacist about generic medicines.** They are usually less expensive than brand name medications.
- **Ask your doctor for samples of any medicines you're prescribed.** Samples might not be available for all medicines.
- **Ask if the form of the medication affects your cost.** Oral chemotherapy medications – taken by mouth in pill form – are more convenient, but they cost more than medications given intravenously. A medication taken at home or given in a physician's office might not be reimbursed the same way as a hospital-based treatment.
- **Shop around.** Call the pharmacies in your area to check the prices of the medicines you've been prescribed. You may find that some larger stores have lower prices for commonly prescribed pain medicines and antibiotics. Ask if your insurance plan offers a mail-order prescription medication option that might cut down on your costs.
- **If a medication isn't covered, ask your pharmacist about alternatives.** They may be able to suggest a medication that does the same thing as the one your doctor recommended – and is covered.

Medicine assistance programs: Many pharmaceutical companies have set up programs to help people get the medicine they need at a reduced cost, or no cost in some cases. Some offer assistance with getting medications covered through your insurance company. Other organizations offer help paying for medicines and other treatments to people in need. Below are some of the most well-known programs and organizations. You may need to meet certain age or income requirements to enroll in some of these programs

Prescription Savings Cards Vary by Pharmacy- ie. Letrozole 2.5 MG Tablet cost \$11.66 at Shoprite and \$158.60 at Rite Aid. The free cards will tell you where you can buy at the cheapest price. Additional coupons are sometimes available on their websites.

New York Prescription Assistance Program – <https://newyork.prescriptionassistance.info>

WellRX: Find the lowest price for your medication at more than 62,000 pharmacies. www.wellrx.com

Partnership for Prescription Assistance – www.pparx.org

Discount Drug Network has a network of over 66,000 pharmacies in the US. Use their mobile app to search for local pharmacies and discounted prescription prices. www.discountdrugnetwork.com

GoodRx – <https://www.goodrx.com>

RxHope.com

NeedyMeds – www.needy meds.org

RxAssist – www.rxassist.org

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at Montefiore | St. Luke's Cornwall
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March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Daylight Savings Begins Spring Forward 12	13	14	15	16	St. Patrick's Day 17	18
19	20	21	Ramadan 22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



How to Find the Information You Need to Make Informed Decisions

Evaluating Cancer Information

FIRST GET YOUR DIAGNOSIS ... THEN GET A SECOND OPINION

You want a second opinion for your diagnosis if:

- the cancer grows or spreads
- no treatment is suggested
- you are not getting relief for side effects
- treatment stops working and a new treatment is suggested
- for reassurance
- you want to find better access to clinical trials for breast cancer
- you want to see a specialist with knowledge of new approaches to breast cancer
- you are unsatisfied with your care, treatment or answers you are getting from your doctors

When you go for a second opinion, take a list of questions to help you get the information you need. A second opinion can ensure that you have explored your options and are getting individualized care.

The Value of a Second Opinion for Breast Cancer Patients Referred to a National Cancer Institute Designated Cancer Center with a Multidisciplinary Breast Tumor Board:

Getting a second opinion for diagnosis, treatments and pathology will help you choose a course of care. New developments in treatments are happening so fast that it's impossible for every doctor to be aware of all the most up-to-date ways to deal with the disease. See a specialist who has lots of experience in treating your type of cancer. **Studies have shown that after patients had another complete workup, new cancers were identified in 22.8% patients; 20% of the patients had a change in pathology interpretation; 42.8% of the patients had a change in diagnosis.**

CREDIBLE WEBSITES

- **Understanding Evidence-based Healthcare: A Foundation for Action.** <https://courseplus.jhu.edu/core/index.cfm/go/course/home/cid/1739>. Register on the website. Created by the US Cochrane Center; developed by Kay Dickersin and Musa Mayer to help consumer advocates understand the fundamentals of evidence-based healthcare concepts and skills.
- **CLINICAL TRIALS:** www.ClinicalTrials.gov: Database of privately and publicly funded clinical studies conducted around the world. Provided by the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Listing a study does not mean it has been evaluated by the U.S. Federal Government.
- **Cochrane Review Organization** - www.cochrane.org. Systematic reviews of therapies. Includes searches of multiple databases. Up to date research.
- **PUBMED OVERVIEW:**
 - **PubMed:** www.Pubmed.gov - A biomedical database of abstracts. Peer-reviewed biomedical literature;
 - **MEDLINE-** www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/medline.html - Citations from journals selected for MEDLINE;
 - **PubMed Central.** www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. Full-text articles from reviewed journals.
- **National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health** - www.nccih.nih.gov. Conduct and support research. Credible information about complementary health products and practices.

Questions to ask about online information

- **Who is responsible for the website's content?** Reliable websites give you contact info for who runs the website.
- **Who funds the website? Some websites present information as scientific fact while promoting a product for profit.**
- **Does the website maintain your privacy?** A website may ask you to give private information: name; mailing address; diagnosis. They often sell your information.

Credible websites include those ending with ".gov" (gov't agency) ".org" (a professional and/or nonprofit organization), and ".edu" (an educational institution). Beware of sites ending in ".com" as it indicates a for-profit commercial site.



Comprehensive Breast Care Program

Risk Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment

Located inside the Outpatient Services Building on Garnet Health Medical Center's main campus, the Ray W. Moody, MD Breast Center is dedicated to helping individuals attain optimal breast health, diagnose and treat breast cancer and identify those who are at high-risk for developing breast cancer.

Our nationally accredited program offers:

- 3D Mammography – 40% more effective in detecting breast cancer
- Breast Cancer Patient Navigator
- Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Program
- Breast Ultrasound
- Breast MRI and Breast MRI Biopsy
- Stereotactic Vacuum-assisted Breast Biopsy
- Ultrasound-guided, Vacuum-assisted Core Biopsy
- Ductograms

To schedule an appointment, call (845) 333-7040 or visit garnethealth.org/breastcenter

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hope@BreastCancerOptions.org

Together, we make a difference:

Nuvance Health is proud to support Breast Cancer Options.

nuvancehealth.org



April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5 Passover	6	7 Good Friday	8
9 Easter	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23						
30	24	25	26	27	28	29



Food as Medicine NOT Living with Uncertainty

Epigenetics studies how lifestyle and environment can affect the way your genes work. Nutrigenomics looks at how foods and nutritional supplements influence gene expression. Different foods may interact with specific genes to increase or decrease the risk of common diseases such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease, stroke and certain cancers by modifying gene expression. To keep gene expression healthy, it is important to control metabolic syndrome, inflammation, hormonal imbalance and methylation. Compounds which inhibit cancer cell proliferation include: turmeric and curcumin, genistein, resveratrol, selenium, and vitamin E. Compounds that act indirectly to inhibit cancer progression include: vitamin C, anthocyanidins, proanthocyanidins. Compounds from food which stimulate the immune system include: maitake or shitake mushrooms, ginseng.



"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

~ Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.)

A healthy diet consists of natural, whole foods, including lots of vegetables, fruits, clean protein, whole grains, healthy fats and plenty of fluids. Specific food compounds found in food that inhibit negative epigenetic effects and can help reverse or help prevent cancers include all cruciferous vegetables, such as cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, bok choy, cabbage, green tea, fava beans, grapes and turmeric.

- Eat 2+ Servings of fruit daily
- Eat both raw and cooked forms
- Choose produce that is deeply colored, fragrant, local, organic, in season
- Eat 5+ servings of Vegetables daily
- Eat from the full spectrum of the rainbow colors every day

Why you should eat organic: Many pesticides and herbicides sprayed on fruits, vegetables and grains are "estrogen mimics" and can stimulate the growth of breast tumors causing hormonal imbalances in both women and men. Organic food is grown without chemicals, hormones or antibiotics. Organic foods are higher in important nutrients. Organic eggs, dairy products and meats are free of estrogen-like hormones and antibiotics that are fed to animals and stored in their fat. Avoid genetically modified foods as long term risks are unknown

DIET CAN MODULATE ESTROGEN SYNTHESIS, RECEPTOR ACTIVITY, DETOXIFICATION AND METABOLISM OF ESTROGENS.

Nutritional Approaches to Improve Hormone Balance

- Increase phytoestrogens consumption (1-2 cups of cruciferous vegetables daily)
- Eat organic foods to minimize intake of xenoestrogens, hormones, and antibiotics
- Use filtered water (reverse osmosis) to eliminate xenoestrogens
- Use garlic for sulfur and to help with detoxification
- Consume a high-fiber diet (25-50 g a day including legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, vegetables, fruit)
- Increase intake of omega-3 fatty acids (small cold-water fish: wild salmon, sardines, herring) & flax seeds
- Balance glucose metabolism through a low glycemic load, high phytonutrient index

Foods That Cause Hormonal Imbalance

- Saturated and trans fatty acids
- Refined sugars and carbohydrates
- Processed foods and artificial sweeteners
- Dairy products
- Alcohol consumption
- Xenobiotics, antibiotics, & hormones (in commercially raised livestock (meat & dairy))

Foods That Quench Inflammation

- Spices: curry, ginger, garlic, parsley, paprika, hot pepper
- Wild, cold-water fish (Omega-3) & seaweeds
- Grass-fed (pastured) meat, free range dairy, eggs
- Onions, garlic, hot peppers
- Olive oil, fish oil
- Green tea
- Leafy green & cruciferous vegetables
- Berries (blueberries, cherries, raspberries)
- Apples, pineapple, pomegranate, kiwi

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Reading Fruit or Vegetable Food Labels

Here are the basics:

1. Conventionally grown with the use of pesticides. There are only four numbers in the PLU. The last four letters of the PLU code tell what kind of vegetable or fruit. I.e., bananas are labeled with the code 4011

2. Genetically Modified fruit or vegetables. There are five numbers in the PLU code, and the number starts with "8". Genetically modified fruits and vegetables trump being organic. So, it is possible to eat organic produce that are grown from genetically modified seeds. A GMO banana would be: 84011

3. Organically Grown: There are five numbers in the PLU code, and the number starts with "9". Grown organically and is not genetically modified. An organic banana would be: 94011

Beginning in October foods will be labeled as belonging to one of four categories:



100% Organic: Made with 100% organic ingredients

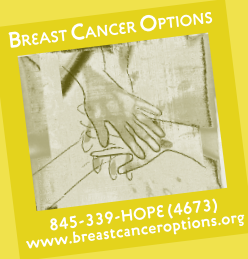
Organic: Made with at least 95% organic ingredients

Made With Organic Ingredients: Made with a minimum of 70% organic ingredients. Strict restrictions on the remaining 30% including no GMOs (genetically modified organisms)

Products with less than 70% organic ingredients may list organically produced ingredients on the side panel of the package. May not make any organic claims on the front of the package.

May

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Mother's Day						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
	Memorial Day					



How to Stay Healthy in a Toxic World

The average household and workplace contain at least 62 toxic chemicals that are used on a daily basis. Chemicals, including organophosphates, flame retardants and phthalates, can be found in food, plastics, furniture, food wrap, cookware, cans, carpets, shower curtains, electronics and even shampoo. They are everywhere around us. We are exposed to phthalates in synthetic fragrances, noxious fumes in oven cleaners, BPA in plastics and register receipts and a host of chemicals in cleaning and personal care products. The ingredients in common household products have been linked to cancer, asthma, reproductive and hormonal disorders, neurotoxicity. They get into our bodies through inhalation, ingestion and absorption. Learn what chemicals are in your environment and actively avoid them where possible.

BPA: Is linked to breast cancer, obesity, early puberty and heart disease. It is a hormone disruptor. About 93% of Americans have BPA in their bodies. Studies show that the amount leached can cause breast cancer cells to proliferate in the lab. Found in plastics, canned goods, heat-sensitive paper (receipts from gas stations, grocery stores, restaurant), polycarbonate plastic reusable water bottles, lining of food cans.

Solutions: Choose fresh and frozen over canned foods; Avoid clear plastic that contains BPA (code 7). Safer plastics are code 1, 2, 4 & 5; Use stainless steel, glass and ceramic. Don't microwave in plastic. Choose glass or ceramic containers. Don't cover your food with plastic wrap; Use non-toxic, reusable stainless steel bottles or BPA free plastics.

DRY CLEANING: Conventional dry cleaning uses perchloroethylene (PERC), formaldehyde, naphthalene, benzene. In addition to long-term effects on health, including cancer, short term exposures to air-borne PERC can cause skin irritation, dizziness and headaches.

Solution: Use dry cleaners that clean with the ecofriendly CO2 process. Or hand wash with unscented fabric detergent for delicates.

CLEANING PRODUCTS: Many cleaning products contain the sudsing agents diethanolamine (DEA) and triethanolamine (TEA). They form nitrosamines – which are carcinogens and penetrate the skin.

Solution: Make your own. Scour with baking soda; Use vinegar to clean glass.

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS: Parabens (propyl-, isopropyl-, butyl-, and isobutyl-) Widely used in cosmetic products. Mimics estrogen and has been connected with increased risk of breast cancer and reproductive problems in women.

Solution: Read the label! Use brands without these chemicals such as Aubrey Organics, Dr. Hauschka, Suki's Naturals, Weleda.

PFOA's (Perfluorooctanoic acid): PFOS & PFOA are no longer manufactured but persist in the environment. Found in: Some tampon brands (including 2 advertised as organic); Food packaging: Nonstick cookware; Stain resistant carpet treatments; Cleaning products; Paints and sealants; Some cosmetics; certain types of Seafood.

Solution: Check <https://pfascentral.org/pfas-free-products>

CHLORINATED PRODUCTS: Women with breast cancer have 50-60% higher levels of organochlorines in their breast tissue than women without breast cancer. Chlorine is found in many city water supplies, paper products, coffee filters, tampons and swimming pools. Harmful effects are intensified when the fumes are heated, i.e., shower or dishwasher.

Solutions: Use non-chlorine alternatives to bleach for household cleaning, laundry; Use unbleached toilet paper and tampons; Use natural coffee filters; Use a household water filter;

PHTHALATES: Estrogen-mimicking chemicals used as plastic softeners and solvents. Used in cleaning, laundry, personal-care products, fabric softeners, perfumes, scented detergents, scented candles, etc. The chemicals go directly into the bloodstream when applied to the skin. Known endocrine disruptors are linked to increased risk of breast cancer, early breast development in girls.

Solutions: Avoid items that say fragrance or perfume; look for "phthalate-free" or "no synthetic fragrance". Use unscented lotions, laundry detergents, microwave food in glass containers, use unscented cleaning supplies, avoid air fresheners and plastics labeled No.3, No.6 and No 7: Use beeswax candles scented with essential oils.

NON-TOXIC CLEANING RECIPES

Window Cleaner *Mix together:* 2 tsp. vinegar, 1 qt. warm water OR 2 tbsps. borax, 3 cups water. Rub dry with newspaper.

Air Cleaner *Houseplants* remove toxins from the air (benzene, formaldehyde). Best plants for removing toxins are Spider plants, Philodendrons, Aloe vera, English ivy.

RESOURCES

Download the Think Dirty App. www.thinkdirtyapp.com. Can identify the potential risks associated with the personal care products they use every day. Think Dirty focuses on the chemical content of the products.

Environmental Working Group Skin Deep Cosmetic Database www.ewg.org/skindeep. Provides databases with easy-to-navigate ratings for products and ingredients on the market. Gives alternatives.

THE ULTRAWELLNESS CENTER

At The UltraWellness Center, we are committed to helping you reach optimal health and vitality by identifying the unique underlying causes of disease and treating them. Our team of physicians, nurses, and nutritionists work with each patient to move toward their best health.

We work with cancer patients to help create an environment in their body where cancer is less likely to grow. For those who are in treatment we work with the oncologist team and focus on nutrition and lifestyle modification to strengthen the immune system, enhance detoxification and support the patient through their treatment. Post treatment, we work to decrease the risk of recurrence.

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June

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11	12	13	14 Flag Day	15	16	17
18 Father's Day	19	20	21	22	23	24
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Balancing Hormones: Circadian Rhythms

A good night's sleep may be one weapon in the fight against cancer – Researchers believe that the natural sleep/wake pattern for humans is the one most in tune with our inherent Circadian rhythms. The natural Circadian rhythm consists of daytime exposure to intense sunlight alternating with night-times of near total darkness. This sleep-wake cycle is important for the production of melatonin, a hormone which acts as an internal biological clock regulating body temperature, endocrine functions, and a number of disease processes including heart attack, stroke, asthma and cancer.

Melatonin is produced during sleep, in total darkness, from the pineal gland. With a disrupted circadian rhythm, the body produces less melatonin and the cell's DNA may be more prone to cancer-causing mutations. Light at night has become a major environmental pollutant disrupting this pattern and having great impact on hormone balance. Watching TV, sitting in front of computer screens, reading with artificial light into the wee hours, or sleeping with a light on, contribute to melatonin deficiency. In addition, modest sleep disturbances reduce Natural Killer cell activity part of the body's defense mechanism against viruses, bacteria, even cancer, and can impact the body's natural immunity. (www.cancer.gov/cam/attachments/MelatoninSummary.pdf)

Melatonin increases the level of naturally occurring antioxidants in breast cancer cells and acts like an anti-estrogen reducing the number of estrogen receptors on breast cancer cells. The longer you stay in the dark the more melatonin your body produces. Melatonin levels are believed to be inversely related to estrogen levels. For example, when melatonin levels are low, estrogen levels are believed to be high, and vice-versa.

Working the Night Shift: Circulating melatonin levels are abnormally low in ER-positive breast cancer patients thereby supporting the melatonin hypothesis for breast cancer in women working the night shift. The World Health Organization looked at evidence from a number of human and animal studies and found that night-shift workers had a 36-48% higher risk of breast cancer than those who worked during the daytime. Worst affected are flight attendants and nurses. Melatonin levels are believed to be inversely related to estrogen levels. For example, when melatonin levels are low, estrogen levels are believed to be high, and vice-versa. Therefore, if light-at-night or magnetic field levels suppress the normal nocturnal rise in melatonin, estrogen levels would subsequently be increased.

Compelling results of light's power to affect cancer rates come from studies of the blind. Their circadian rhythms are undisturbed by artificial light. Several different studies have shown the same results: Blind women have a 50% reduced risk of breast cancer than their sighted peers. Recently, researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital found that totally blind women have more than a 50% reduction in breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Risk in Blind Women - insciences.org/article.php?article_id

Melatonin suppression by electric and magnetic fields – Women and men who work in electrical jobs, including electricians, telephone installers, power line workers and electrical engineers or those who have a high occupational exposure to magnetic fields, such as those given off by mainframe computers, have a greater risk of dying from breast cancer. This increased risk has been linked to the suppression of melatonin from Electro-Magnetic Radiation. Overnight exposure of women to elevated levels of EMR increased estrogen levels, a known risk factor for breast cancer. In men, EMR exposure reduced levels of testosterone – a hormone drop that has been linked to testicular and prostate cancers.

More recent studies reported that exposure to magnetic fields created by house wiring during the night significantly decreased melatonin production. (Residential Magnetic Fields, Light-at-Night, and Nocturnal Urinary 6-Sulfatoxymelatonin Concentration in Women, Scott Davis et al) Sleeping in a room surrounded by all our favorite devices like cordless or cell phones, digital clocks, CD/radio players, computers and tv's can disrupt our hormone balance and suppress our nightly melatonin production. Generally, 3-5 feet away from most household magnetic fields is a safe distance from their effects. Most appliances today like microwaves, TVs, and computers are shielded, which drops the strength of the fields even further. If we sleep next to a cordless phone base station, and/or digital clock, or we have faulty electrical wiring, enough EMR exposures are emitted to suppress night time melatonin production.

Tamoxifen, the most popular drug given to prevent recurrence of breast cancer, loses its ability to halt the proliferation of cancer cells when exposed to EMFs. The level of EMFs that produced this effect (12mG) is found in common sources, including hair dryers, vacuum cleaners, or appliances with large motors, such as refrigerators.

Some Suggestions:

- Make sure your room is quiet and dark and your bed is comfortable.
- Avoid light at night as much as you can. If you need a night light to go to the bathroom, use one that's red which won't suppress melatonin.
- If possible, complete work during the day; sleep at night.
- Get a good night's sleep. Women who sleep 9 hours or more have a 70% lower breast cancer risk.
- Get up and go to bed at the same time every day.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise done early in the day may promote better quality sleep; vigorous exercise just before bedtime may delay sleep.

Melatonin is a potent hormone. Please consult a knowledgeable healthcare provider if you are considering taking melatonin supplements.



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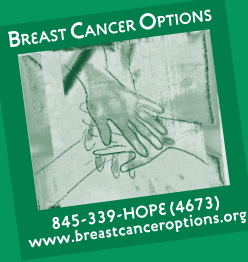


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Breast cancer staging		
Stage	Tumor size	Axillary lymph nodes
In situ		
0	Tiny clusters of cells in a breast duct (in situ); no invasive cancer seen	No spread
Invasive		
I	Up to 2 cm	No spread
II	Smaller than 2 cm	Has spread
	Between 2 and 5 cm	May or may not have spread
	Larger than 5 cm	No spread
III	Any size	Has spread
Metastatic		
IV	Any size that has spread to other organs in the body	May or may not have spread

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Integrative Therapies that May Help with Treatment Side Effects

Two people with similar diagnoses that are receiving the same treatment may not have the same side effects. They may even vary for the same individual from one treatment session to the next. Some side effects may show up immediately and go away when treatment ends and some continue when treatment ends. Some may show up long after treatment has stopped. People use a variety of therapies to reduce treatment side effects, improve their physical and emotional well-being and help with their cancer recovery. Therapies can include: Massage, Supplements, Mind-Body Practices, Acupuncture, Massage, Medical Marijuana, IV infusions, Exercise. **There are only limited studies for these therapies.**

INTERMITTENT FASTING: Consider a simple form of intermittent fasting. Limit the hours of the day when you eat, and for best effect, make it earlier in the day (between 7 am to 3 pm, or even 10 am to 6 pm, but definitely not in the evening before bed. Evidence shows that short term fasting can decrease toxicity and increase efficacy of chemotherapy as well as enhance the effects of radiation. It boosts the immune system to better fight cancer and reduces side effects and DNA damage in healthy cells in response to chemotherapy

MASSAGE THERAPY BENEFITS: It lessens nausea from chemo; lowers anxiety and depression; reduces fatigue and improves sleep after treatments; improves Immune function by increasing natural killer cells and lymphocytes which are crucial to the immune system; relieves pain associated with treatments and surgery; improves mood and allows relaxation and can help relieve lymphedema. Massage is a well-established stress-relieving therapy.

ACUPUNCTURE: Studies show that acupuncture is effective for cancer related fatigue management, joint pain caused by aromatase inhibitors and helps to manage insomnia caused by the cancer or by cancer treatments. (radiation, chemotherapy, endocrine therapy). Both acupressure and acupuncture are recommended for reducing chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. Peripheral neuropathy showed significant symptom improvements from an 8-week treatment regimen. More trials of adequate sample size, appropriate control group, and longer follow-up are necessary.

EXERCISE: Managing Fatigue from Chemotherapy & Radiation. Studies show that the best remedy for fatigue is exercise. It is important to make sure there are no underlying medical issues adding to the fatigue, like anemia, iron deficiency or low thyroid function. The main difference between cancer-related fatigue and just being tired is that you DO NOT feel better after getting more rest. Exercise at least 3 hours a week. Yoga is useful because it incorporates concentration and stretching. Cancer-related fatigue can be reduced by vitamins A, D, E), antioxidants andrs like coenzyme Q10.

IV VITAMIN C INFUSIONS: Studies show that Intravenous Vitamin C administration can improve quality of life in breast cancer patients during chemo-/radiotherapy. It affects C-reactive protein levels and pro-inflammation cytokines in cancer patients. There was a reduction of complaints induced by chemo and radiation: nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, depression, sleep disorders and dizziness. There were no side-effects of the IV vitamin C administration. It was shown to be a well-tolerated therapy and reduced quality of life-related side-effects.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA AND CANNABIDIOL: The term medical marijuana refers to using the whole, unprocessed marijuana plant to treat symptoms of illness and side effects. Marijuana plants have chemicals, known as cannabinoids. The two main ones are THC and CBD. Studies show therapeutic advantages for combining CBD and THC – particularly for treating peripheral neuropathy. THC has antispasmodic, analgesic, anti-tremor, anti-inflammatory, appetite stimulating and anti-emetic properties; CBD has anti-inflammatory, anticonvulsant, antipsychotic, antioxidant, neuroprotective and immunomodulatory effects and doesn't cause the euphoric effects that occur with THC. Our bodies contain an endocannabinoid system that regulates relaxation, appetite, sleep cycles, inflammation responses and cognitive functions. Trials have shown that oral THC stimulates appetite, slows down weight loss for patients with advanced cancers, reduces inflammation and may inhibit tumor growth. Most Common Ailments Treated with Medical Marijuana: Appetite; Nausea; Wasting syndrome (cachexia); Pain. Studies show therapeutic advantages for combining CBD and THC – particularly for treating peripheral neuropathy.

OZONE THERAPY: Ozone is a powerful antioxidant that helps reduce the oxidative damage caused by chronic inflammation to your body and your DNA. It inactivates bacteria, viruses, fungi, yeast and protozoa, stimulates oxygen metabolism, activates the immune system. Preliminary data demonstrate that ozone therapy is a supportive therapy for fatigue in cancer patients, both during cancer therapy and in a palliative setting with no significant side effects.



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August



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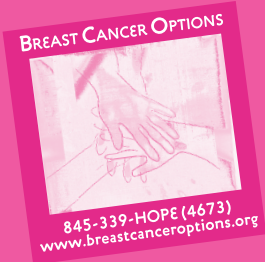
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*Donations are restricted to non-profit organizations located in the communities where Sawyer Savings Bank is active. Sawyer Savings Bank does not provide funding to individuals, political groups/ parties. Other restrictions may apply. Organizations need to complete the online grant application on or before January 31, 2023. Decisions will be made and announced on or before March 31, 2023. Donations will be awarded throughout 2023.

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How Lifestyle Choices Impact Breast Cancer Risk

The causes of breast cancer are complex, but certain factors – lifestyle, hormonal and genetic – are known to play key roles in breast cancer development. When it comes to breast cancer prevention, the risks you can't control — such as your age and genetic makeup – cannot be changed. You may have many risk factors and never develop breast cancer especially if you practice risk reduction strategies. However, once you have had a cancer diagnosis you are at increased risk for developing a second cancer. Studies have shown that obesity, alcohol use, lack of exercise and smoking significantly increase the risk for second primary invasive breast cancers. There are no guarantees but changes in your lifestyle may give you a good start toward breast cancer risk reduction.

LACK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Women who increased their physical activity after a breast cancer diagnosis, lowered their risk of death by 45%. Women who cut back on physical activity after diagnosis had a fourfold increase in mortality. Exercise has many benefits. It can chase the blues, help fight stress and raise energy levels. Exercise stimulates lymphatic circulation to help clear toxins and can help reduce the amount of estrogen in your body. That may also help normalize body weight and reduce breast density. **SUGGESTIONS:** Brisk walking, Swimming, Tai Chi, Yoga 3 to 5 days a week at moderate intensity for 20 to 60 minutes. Lack of physical activity is a modifiable risk factor for breast cancer recurrence and mortality.

WEIGHT GAIN: Weight gain after the age of 18 is associated with a 45% increase in breast cancer risk and higher rates of breast cancer recurrence and mortality in both premenopausal and postmenopausal breast cancer patients. **WEIGHT GAIN AFFECTS SURVIVAL!** The greatest impact is after menopause when circulating estrogen levels normally drop dramatically. The main estrogen source after menopause is the body's fatty tissue so the more body fat a woman has, the more estrogen she will have circulating. 80% of all breast cancers are fueled by estrogen. Women who are overweight and inactive have the highest risk for breast cancer. Women who are overweight but physically active do not have a higher risk.

HIGH STRESS LEVELS: Stress contributes to an increase in cancer by modifying cell responses to environmental factors. Stress affects the immune system, lowering Natural Killers Cells and T-lymphocytes – white blood cells that are key to immune response. Studies show that feelings of happiness and optimism can play a protective role against the disease and influence the interaction between the central nervous, endocrine, and immune systems. **SUGGESTIONS:** Let go of what you cannot control; Get the help you need; Do what you love. **STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES:** Yoga, Meditation, Guided Imagery, Exercise, Hypnosis, Prayer. We may not have control over cancer recurrence, but we can have control over the worry.

ALCOHOL: Alcohol is classified as a known carcinogen. It interferes with estrogen pathways influencing hormone levels. It effects the estrogen receptors and disrupts absorption of folic acid, a B vitamin needed for production and repair of DNA. It increases estrogen levels in the body and the risk of estrogen sensitive cancers. Having 3 or more drinks daily raises the risk of ER+/PR+ tumors by 51%.

BREAST DENSITY: Breast density is a major risk factor for breast cancer. Density makes it difficult for radiologists to see trouble spots on mammograms. Women with dense tissue in 75% or more of the breast have a 4 to 6 times higher risk for breast cancer than women without dense tissue. Increased density is a risk factor equal to age and BRCA1- BRCA2 mutations. **CAN BREAST DENSITY BE REDUCED?** The Answer is YES! Vitamin D and calcium help to decrease breast densities, suggesting that they could reduce breast cancer risk. Studies show that high fiber- low-fat diets (organic, high in vegetables and fruit) can alter density through their effect on sex hormones and circulating estrogens. Increasing physical activity among obese postmenopausal survivors may also be a reasonable intervention in reducing breast density on mammograms.

SMOKING: There is interaction between breast cancer risk, smoking, and the genes that break down tobacco smoke carcinogens. Smoking damages the milk ducts and DNA. Exposure to passive smoking increased breast cancer risk by 68% in premenopausal women; Active smoking increased the risk of breast cancer by 46%. There is a 30- 40% increased risk among -- Women who are current or long-term smokers --Women who started smoking at a young age--Women who started smoking before the birth of their first child. Smoking is also associated with increased risk of breast cancer before age 50 in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers. **IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT!** Breast cancer risk decreases as the number of years since quitting smoking increases. At 10 years of not smoking the risk of breast cancer is the same as a woman who never smoked.

EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES: A woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer increases with greater exposure to estrogens. Xenoestrogens are manmade estrogenic compounds found in household products, pesticides, cosmetics and personal care products. Reducing these exposures can be a factor in reducing the risk of developing breast cancer. **SUGGESTION:** Be an informed consumer and avoid harmful products.

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September

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Screening and Detection

Most breast cancer is due to genetic mutations that happen as a result of aging and life in general, rather than inherited mutations. About 85% of breast cancers occur in women who have no family history of breast cancer. The most significant risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman and growing older. A woman's risk of breast cancer doubles if she has a first-degree relative (mother, sister, daughter) who has been diagnosed with breast cancer, but less than 15% of women who get breast cancer have a family member diagnosed with it. Only 5-10% of breast cancers are linked to known gene mutations inherited from one's mother or father. We need to be aware of how our breasts normally look and feel and notice any unusual breast changes because, the signs of breast cancer are not the same for all women.

When should I start having mammograms? How often should I have a mammogram? What are the benefits and harms of mammograms?

Women at increased risk are advised to consult with their doctors to develop individualized plans for surveillance and appropriate risk/reduction strategies. It is important to understand that there are three basic purposes for the use of mammograms:

Screening – Screenings help to detect breast cancer in earlier stages offering more treatment options and improving survival rates.

Surveillance – to closely watch women at high risk of developing breast cancer

Diagnosis – mammograms used to analyze abnormalities that have already been detected.

Mammograms – 3D is better: Tomosynthesis - Digital Mammography creates a 3D picture of the breast allowing doctors to see between layers of tissue. It's uses the same technology as a regular mammogram but creates a 3-D digital image. Regular mammograms are 2-D providing a less accurate flat image especially for women with dense breasts. 3D mammography makes it easier to catch breast cancer early, accurately and see the real cancer size. It reduces the number of false positives and lowers the call-back rate for women who get 2D mammograms.

The Timing of When to Get a Mammogram: Studies show that mammography may be the most accurate during days 1-9 of the menstrual cycle. This is a low-estrogen, low-progesterone phase and breast tissue tends to be less dense, so mammograms are more apt to spot small, hard-to-see tumors. This is important if you are pre-menopausal.

Young Women with the BRCA Gene – Young women age 20-30 who inherit BRCA genetic mutations have a high risk for developing breast cancer. They need to see a BRCA expert before they start mammograms at a young age. Research suggests that exposing them to even small doses of radiation via screening mammograms may do more harm than good as they have an impaired ability to repair the damage to their DNA. They are more vulnerable to the harmful effects of radiation in comparison with non BRCA positive women. Even a small amount of radiation exposure from a mammogram can damage DNA.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging: MRI is used if a breast problem is detected using mammography, other imaging or physical exam. It offers better sensitivity than mammography for breast cancer detection in women with BRCA genes and women with dense breasts. It is more expensive but insurers generally cover it for BRCA I & II carriers and for women recommended by their physician.

Ultrasound: About 40% of women, usually younger, have dense breast tissue and ultrasound can determine if a suspicious area is a non-cancerous cyst or solid tissue (dense mass).

Clinical Breast Exam: Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam every 3 years as part of a regular health exam especially if they are from high risk families. After age 40, women should have a breast exam by a health professional every year. If a woman has a strong family or personal breast cancer history a clinical breast exam may be recommended more frequently.

Breast Self-Exams: 40% of breast cancers are discovered by women or their partners. Regular self-exams help them learn what is normal in their bodies so they notice slight changes that may send women to the doctor. Self-exams can help detect breast cancers that mammograms miss.

Thermography: A non-invasive non-radiation imaging test that uses an infrared camera to read heat from increased blood vessel flow and metabolic changes which indicate abnormality before a tumor is formed. Lifestyle changes may be made that could possibly reverse these changes and prevent a tumor from forming. It is FDA approved as an adjunct to mammography only when used in conjunction with standard of care screening.

Dense Breasts: About half of women undergoing mammograms have dense breasts. Dense breast tissue appears as a solid white area on a mammogram, and fat appears as a dark area. Mammogram X-rays do not penetrate dense tissues as well as they do through fat. Depending on the density of your breasts and breast cancer risk factors, additional screening, ie. 3-D mammogram, ultrasound, or MRI may be ordered.



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Detoxification

Supporting your body's ability to detoxify effectively helps to maintain wellness and may prevent illness later in life. Our bodies are constantly detoxifying as our metabolism processes waste and as we absorb, inhale and ingest allergens, pathogens, chemicals and other toxins.

Cancer and other diseases are on the rise. Arthritis, allergies and obesity are also increasing. Symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, pains, immune weaknesses, gastrointestinal problems and psychological distress are being seen by physicians in record numbers. Although a connection between increased toxicity and increased disease incidence seems obvious, more research must be done to connect them.

It is important to understand how to avoid or eliminate toxins and this can be accomplished in a number of ways. We can reduce our toxic load by the choice of the food we eat, the water we drink and by purchasing toxin free personal care and household products but they cannot be entirely avoided.

Detoxification can have positive and negative side effects. On the positive side you may experience an increase in energy levels as your body gets rid of toxins. On the negative side you may feel side effects in the first few days: headaches, sore muscles, cranky moods, insomnia and fatigue. These reactions are sometimes called healing crises, caused by increased levels of toxins in the body due to elimination and cleansing.

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Detoxification Methods Benefits and tips

Skin brushing

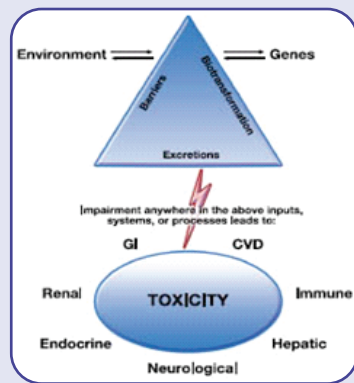
This is an easy way to stimulate the lymph system, which in turn enhances the body's natural detoxification processes to excrete toxins through the skin. Use a dry skin brush made of vegetable bristles that are neither too stiff nor too soft. Immediately before showering or bathing, start with the feet and gently brush up toward the heart. Brush from the extremities toward the center. Brush gently in a circular motion around your abdomen and breasts. It only takes a minute or two...not long! It shouldn't scratch, but you should feel some friction against the skin.

Epsom salts baths

The salts draw toxins out of your body. Start with a clean tub, take a shower first, then fill the tub with the hottest water you can stand. Begin with 1/4 cup of epsom salts, work up to 4 cups, bathing for as long as 1/2 hour. Get out of the tub slowly.

Saunas, hot tubs or sweat lodges

The heat of the sauna causes you to sweat. While sweating, your body releases toxins, including heavy metals that the body stores in fatty tissue. Sweating therapy reduces fat stores releasing these poisons for excretion through the stimulation of receptors in the fat. Make sure that you drink sufficient liquids to offset the loss of body fluids through sweating. The ingestion of cold-pressed oils can prevent mobilized toxins from being re-absorbed by the intestines.



Increasing Lymph Flow: The lymphatic system is the "garbage disposal of the body and relies on our conscious movement. Rebounding is an effective therapy for increasing lymph flow and draining toxins from the body. The up-down movement forces lymphatic fluid to flow and flush toxins while stimulating the immune system.

Detoxification Tips: paying attention to these will help reduce and release Toxin Overload

- Diet, nutrition, assimilation and elimination
- Breathing, oxygenation and clean air
- Chelating ionizing radiation
- Emotional cleansing
- Internal cleansing
- Avoid toxins
- Fasting
- Activating elimination through the skin
- Lymphatic system activation
- Mental detoxification
- Spiritual cleansing
- Life energy flow
- Sunlight
- Love

Detoxification is a powerful tool and should be done under knowledgeable and professional supervision.

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November

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5 Daylight Savings Ends Fall back	6	7 Election Day	8	9	10 Veterans Day	11
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BREAST CANCER ADVOCACY: Addressing Racial Disparities



Male Breast Cancer

Characteristics:
Similar to female breast cancer; some differences due to hormones

Statistics:
Fewer than 1% of all breast cancers occur in men

Research:
The conclusions of studies done on women are extrapolated to men
Planned and ongoing studies increasingly include men

Diagnosis:
Often diagnosed later and at a more advanced stage due to lack of screening programs

Survival:
Similar rates as for female breast cancer

More men
are being included
in clinical trials
for breast cancer

thanks to the passing of updated guidelines from the FDA.

SELF ADVOCACY: In modern medicine, patients and survivors are empowered to know as much as possible about their disease, its treatments and the potential effects of the disease and/or the treatment on their body. Women are no longer passive patients, but rather they are informed consumers, survivors, advocates and activists who are speaking up for themselves and others and speaking out on issues relevant to their treatment and the prevention of breast cancer.

Being your own advocate helps to make sure you are receiving the best care possible. Being an informed consumer helps you to work with your health-care providers. Advances in science and technology have increased options for treating breast cancer, but it is advocates that have changed the way people deal with this disease. Survivors, and their supporters need to be effective advocates in the current environment of rising health care costs and restrictive referral policies. Becoming an advocate helps individuals get through their breast cancer experiences, gain a feeling of control over their lives and make an impact for others. **Self-Advocacy Is Important!** By being a pro-active, education cancer patient/survivor, you can share treatment decision making with your medical team, impact the health care you receive and the quality of your life.

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN BREAST CANCER: The mortality rate from breast cancer has decreased in the White population in recent years due to the emphasis on early detection and more effective treatments. Although mortality rates have declined in some ethnic populations, the overall cancer incidence among African American and Hispanic populations has continued to grow. Lack of insurance, fear of testing, delay in seeking care, barriers to early detection and screening, more advanced stages of disease at diagnosis among minorities, and unequal access to improvements in breast cancer treatment may explain the differences in survival rates between African American and White women. New strategies and approaches are needed to promote breast cancer prevention, improve survival rates, reduce mortality, and improve the health outcomes of racial/ethnic minorities. Breast cancer deaths have declined 42% in the past 30 years, thanks to increased awareness, earlier screening and improved therapies. But all these advancements have not changed the fact that the disease does not affect all racial and ethnic groups equally. Black women continue to have the lowest survival rate of any racial or ethnic group. The five-year survival rate for a black woman with breast cancer is 81% versus 92% for white women. Black women also are more likely to die from breast cancer at any age – with young black women dying at double the rate of young white women, according to the National Cancer Institute. Black women were likely to have an advanced-stage diagnosis than white women and are at an increased risk to develop triple-negative breast cancer, a subtype linked to some of the worse outcomes. It is vital that leaders and medical professionals from minority population groups be represented in decision-making in research so that racial disparities in breast cancer can be well-studied, fully addressed, and ultimately eliminated.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE! Advocacy is a tool for change. Participation in a clinical trial is one way for patients and survivors to be involved in research but only 3-5% of eligible patients and/or survivors participate. Including Black populations in the design of clinical trials is another key element that will add to our understanding of why these disparities exist and how to address them. The involvement of all patients is necessary as partners in research, from the development of an idea through study design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of results. The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) has had a seat at the table in peer review and grant proposals since the early 90's. Through the establishment of the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program (DoDBCRP), patient advocates have increased their roles as partners in research, making a unique contribution by giving a "face" to the disease and reminding researchers of the human element.

ADVOCACY AS A TOOL FOR POLICY CHANGE: To learn how you can become engaged in research: NBCC Project LEAD, National Cancer Institute Office of Advocacy Relations (NCIOAR), California Breast Cancer Research Program (CBCRP), Research Advocacy Network (RAN), Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORRI) Patient Engagement Program, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Advocates have challenged corporations; the pharmaceutical industry; local, state and federal legislators; healthcare institutions and providers; health agencies and the media.

What You Can Do: Tell your state and federal legislators about the gaps you see in patient care – sharing personal stories - because they need to understand the issues patients are facing in order to promote effective legislation.

December

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Ten Mistaken Beliefs About Breast Cancer

Cancer is caused by many factors. Research based on huge numbers of people have helped get a clearer picture of what increases or decreases our risk. There is a ton of awareness about breast cancer, but there are still many mistaken beliefs that cause women more anxiety than necessary.

1. Women have a 1-in-8 chance at any age of getting breast cancer.

REALITY: Most people think they have a higher risk of breast cancer than they actually do. Estimates are that a woman age 20 has a 1 in 2,000 risk of developing breast cancer in the next 10 years; at age 40, 1 in 100; age 60, 1 in 28; age 85, 1 in 8. About 50% of breast cancer occurs among women age 62 or older.

2. I'm too young to worry about breast cancer.

REALITY: You're never too young to get breast cancer. While a breast lump or mass in a younger woman is much less likely to be cancer than a lump in an older woman, it could be cancer and needs to be checked out. 25% of women with breast cancer are younger than 50, with a few as young as late teens.

3. Needle biopsies can disturb cancer cells and cause them to spread to other parts of the body.

REALITY: There's no conclusive evidence for this claim. Despite some previous concerns, studies have found no increased spread of cancer among patients undergoing needle biopsies compared to those who did not. If the disease spreads, it's not because of the biopsy.

4. If I'm diagnosed with breast cancer, I must have surgery immediately.

FACT: Although many women would prefer immediate treatment, most of the time it's safer to take time to get a second opinion, and make sure you have the right information about the type of treatment that is best for you.

5. Having a mastectomy to treat breast cancer is more likely to increase a woman's life expectancy than having a lumpectomy.

FACT: The life expectancy and survival rates are the same for most breast cancers whether a woman is treated with a lumpectomy or a mastectomy. It's true that there is a small risk that breast cancer may return after a lumpectomy with radiation. However, in those cases, a woman who goes on to have a mastectomy has the same survival rate and life expectancy as a woman who had a mastectomy after initial diagnosis.

6. Most women with breast cancer have a family history of the disease.

FACT: About 80% of women with the disease don't have a family history and most women with a family history of breast cancer will never get it. Only women who have close blood relatives with breast cancer have a higher risk of the disease than the general population. Having a first-degree relative (mother, sister or daughter) with breast cancer almost doubles a woman's risk. Having two first-degree relatives increases her risk about threefold. Women with a father or brother who have had breast cancer also have a higher risk of breast cancer.

7. A diagnosis of breast cancer means I'm going to die.

REALITY: The number of women surviving at least 10 years after proper treatment is 85-90%. Breast cancer that has metastasized, or spread to other parts of the body, poses the greatest challenge, although women with metastatic breast cancer often live for years with their disease.

8. If your mammogram is negative, there is nothing to worry about.

REALITY: Mammograms fail to detect as much as 20% of breast cancer in women over 50, and as much as 40% in younger women. Younger women at high risk should talk with their doctor about the benefits and limitations of starting mammograms when they are younger and learn about other technologies. Clinical breast exams and knowing what is normal for your breast are also crucial pieces of the screening process.

9. After I've survived 5 years, my breast cancer won't return.

REALITY: Breast cancer can recur at any time, although 75% of recurrences occur within five years. 25% can recur any time after five years.

10. Small-breasted women are less likely to get breast cancer.

REALITY: There's no connection between the size of your breasts and your risk of getting breast cancer. Recommendations for routine screenings and checkups are the same regardless of breast size.



If you have breasts or know someone who does... Please show your support

About Breast Cancer Options

www.BreastCancerOptions.org 845/339-HOPE (4673)

Breast Cancer Options (BCO) is an organization of breast cancer survivors, advocates and healthcare professionals who understand that when you are diagnosed with breast cancer, you are suddenly faced with some of the most important decisions you will ever make about your own healthcare. All of our services are free.

When you explore your options, we want you to understand:

- You do not have to face all this, including physician visits, by yourself.
- You are important and deserve answers. We will help you get them.
- What information and sources are credible and reliable.
- Which lifestyle changes and complementary therapies can be integrated in treatment.

Support Services

- **Camp Lightheart** – A free sleepover camp for children who have a parent with breast cancer or have lost their parent to the disease. *One of the only existing services for children in this situation.*
- **Retreat for Women with Metastatic Breast Cancer** – This retreat is free for women with stage 4 breast cancer. *One of the few services for stage 4 women in NYS.*
- **Massage and Acupuncture Program:** Free services for women with breast cancer in our catchment area.
- **Companion/Advocate Program** – Trained, knowledgeable and sympathetic breast cancer survivors accompany newly diagnosed patients to medical visits.
- **Peer-led Support Groups** – On Zoom or in person when feasible. See our web site or call for locations and times. Includes young survivor, metastatic and mixed groups
- **Peer-to-Peer Mentoring** – Talk to someone who has gone through the same experience.
- **Telephone and E-mail Consultations** – Questions are answered with information from reliable sources.

Education/Information

- **Annual Healthy Lifestyles Calendar** – Call or email for a copy.
- **BCO News E-mail updates:** Sent out to Breast Cancer Survivors and Healthcare Professionals all over the world. Sign up on our website- www.breastcanceroptions.org
- **Breast Cancer Options web site** offers a variety of up-to-date information and resources.
- **Annual Integrative Medicine Conference:** Top professionals in complementary/integrative therapies speak and present workshops on the most current modalities.
- **Healthy Lifestyles Programs:** A series of workshops to look at the ways we can make small, easy changes in our daily lives to improve our health both before and after a cancer diagnosis.

Advocacy

- **BCO** is an advocate for breast cancer patients at the regional, state and national levels.
- We can help with referrals for insurance and legal problems.

Breast Cancer Options is a 501C3 nonprofit organization since 2000 and one of the largest providers of peer support, advocacy and education services in the Hudson Valley.

MAKE A DONATION!

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101 Hurley Avenue, Suite 10
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Thank you!

All donations are tax-deductible and truly appreciated!