

## If Someone You Love Has Breast Cancer

A diagnosis of breast cancer can bring about unexpected and intense emotions. Your loved one may have feelings that range from strong fear, anger and frustration to vulnerability, depression and helplessness. Her emotions are normal. She has been forced to confront the possible loss or change of a breast, the fear of losing her feminine image, her health and even her life. It is important that you understand what she may be thinking and feeling.

### Suggestions on how to help.

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#### Providing practical support:

- Go with her to doctor visits
- Coordinate rides to treatment
- Cook or arrange meal delivery
- Take care of the children
- Do the grocery shopping
- Help with cleaning the house
- Do the laundry
- Water the plants
- Screen telephone calls
- Handle insurance needs
- Offer to care for pets
- Drive car-pool
- Keep a list of phone calls, gifts, flowers and meals

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#### Providing emotional support:

- Provide moral support
- Be a good listener
- Give lots of hugs
- Openly share your feelings
- Be there for her
- Continue to provide support after treatment is over
- Respect her need for privacy

**Q:** What side effects should she expect from surgery/treatment? How can she prevent or treat these side effects? What problems, specifically, should she report to you?

**A:**

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**Q:** What emotional effects should we expect?

**A:**

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**Q:** What kind of physical support will she need? (i.e., driving her to treatment, etc.)

**A:**

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**Q:** Where can she find a breast cancer or cancer support group?

**A:**

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**Q:** Is there a support group that we can both attend?

**A:**