

If Someone You Love has Breast Cancer – You are a Co-Survivor

A diagnosis of breast cancer can bring about unexpected and intense emotions. Your loved one may have many feelings. These can include fear, anger and frustration to depression and helplessness. These emotions are normal. He or she has been forced to confront the possible loss or change of a breast, the fear of losing a positive self-image, health and even life. It is important that you understand what they may be thinking and feeling.

Suggestions on how you can help, as a Co-survivor.

Providing support:

- Go 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 or doing yard work
 - Do the laundry
 - Water the plants
 - Screen telephone calls
 - Help with paperwork such as insurance claims
 - 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 them
 - Continue to provide support after treatment is over
 - Respect their need for privacy
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If facing end of life:

- Attend grief counseling
- Take care of yourself too
- Talk with a hospice nurse
- Work with your family, friends and doctor
- Provide spiritual and emotional support
- Be a good listener

Q: What side effects should we expect from surgery/treatment? How soon will they begin? How can we prevent or treat these side effects? What problems, specifically, should we report to you?

A:

Q: What emotional effects should we expect?

A:

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

A:

Q: Where can a breast cancer or cancer support group be found?

A:

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

A:

Q: What can I do if I am feeling overwhelmed or depressed?

A:



For more information on breast health or breast cancer, please call our breast care helpline (1-877-465-6636) or visit our website. Susan G. Komen for the Cure does not provide medical advice.

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