

# MY BREAST CANCER JOURNEY



## A RESOURCE FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

- The different kinds of breast cancer
- Treatments
- Exercises after breast surgery
- Post-mastectomy resources
- Coping with side effects from treatment

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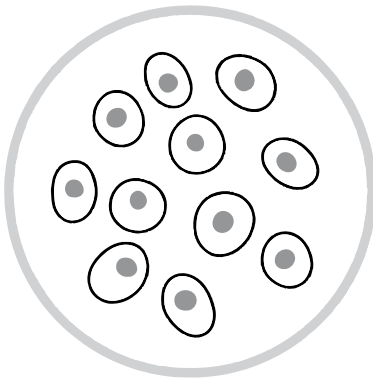
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## WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body change and no longer grow or behave normally.

When the cells in the breast grow out of control, it may lead to non-cancerous (benign) breast conditions such as atypical hyperplasia and cysts or non-cancerous tumours such as intraductal papillomas. In some cases, however, changes to breast cells can cause a cancerous (malignant) tumour.

Breast cancer starts in the cells of the breast. A group of cancerous cells (a malignant tumour) is created and can grow into and destroy nearby tissue in the breast. These cells can also spread (metastasize) through blood vessels and lymph vessels to other parts of the body in some cases. There are different types of breast cancer depending on which cells in the breast turn into cancer.



**NORMAL CELLS**



**CANCER CELLS**

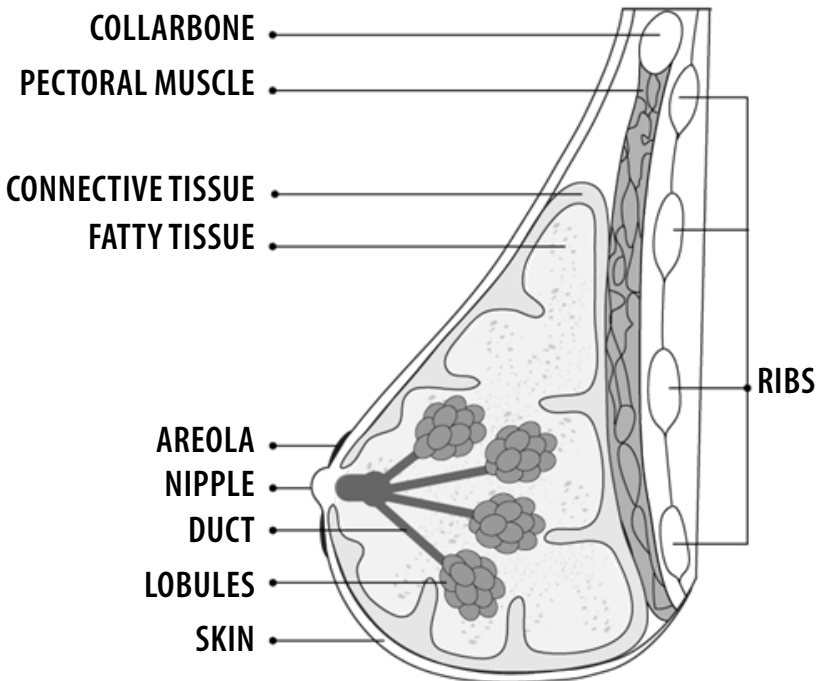
# WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF BREAST CANCER?

A breast is made up of three main parts:

- the lobules (the groups of glands that make milk)
- the ducts (the tubes that carry milk to the nipple), and
- the connective tissue (which consists of fibrous and fatty tissue) surrounds and holds everything together

## THE BREAST

*Diagram of side view cross-section of the breast*



Breast cancer can begin in different parts of the breast. Most often, breast cancer starts in cells that line the ducts and this type of breast cancer is called Ductal Carcinoma. Cancer can also start in the cells of the lobules and this type of cancer is called Lobular Carcinoma. Both ductal carcinoma and lobular carcinoma can be in situ, which means that the cancer is still where it started and has not grown into surrounding tissues. They can also be invasive, which means they have grown into surrounding tissues.

There are several other less common types of breast cancer, which can also develop. These include inflammatory breast cancer, Paget disease of the breast and triple-negative breast cancer.

## HOW IS BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSED?

Breast cancer can happen at any age, in both women and men. Different people have different symptoms of breast cancer while some people do not have any signs or symptoms at all.

Many patients first noticed a change in their breast(s) and notice symptoms such as lumps, pain, or changes in size that may be of concern during a breast self-exam. Other patients found evidence during a screening procedure. Doctors will often use additional tests to find or diagnose breast cancer. They may refer individuals to a breast specialist or a surgeon.

Once breast cancer is diagnosed, other tests are completed to find out if cancer cells have spread within the breast or to other parts of the body. This process is called staging. Your care team will need to know the location of the cancer, which could be just in the breast, in the lymph nodes under your arm, or if it has spread outside the breast. The type and stage of breast cancer will help your care team decide what kind of treatment you need.



*It is recommended by patients that each patient should consistently bring a person (spouse, partner, family member, or friend) to each appointment for note taking, support and an extra pair of ears and eyes. This person can also phone in to the appointment if not available in person.*

# HOW IS BREAST CANCER TREATED?

## YOUR CARE TEAM WILL DISCUSS THE TREATMENT OPTIONS THAT WORK BEST FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL SCENARIO.

Breast cancer is treated in several ways and treatment for breast cancer will depend on

- the type of breast cancer,
- the stage of cancer and
- which treatments the person chooses to have

Patients with breast cancer often receive more than one kind of treatment. Every breast cancer journey is different and is based on your staging, family history, current health condition and personal decisions. It is important for patients to remember to not compare their treatment plan to that of another breast cancer patient.

### **SURGERY**

The main goal of surgery to treat cancer is to completely remove the tumour or cancerous tissue. Surgery is most effective at completely removing cancer that is at an early stage, is localized and has not spread to other parts of the body.

### **CHEMOTHERAPY**

Chemotherapy uses specialized medicines to shrink or kill cancer cells. Chemotherapy drugs can be oral medication or medicine administered through an IV into your veins, or sometimes both. Chemotherapy can also be used in conjunction to a treatment plan with radiation/surgery and targeted therapies.

### **RADIOTHERAPY**

Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays to destroy cancer cells and damage a cancer cell's DNA so that it stops dividing and growing. Radiation therapy may be used alone to treat cancer or with other treatments such as surgery or chemotherapy.

# OTHER TREATMENTS FOR BREAST CANCER

## HORMONE THERAPY

The goal of hormone therapy is to slow or stop the growth of cancer cells by either adding, blocking or removing specific hormones from the body. Hormone therapy may be used with other treatments.

## IMMUNOTHERAPY

Immunotherapy helps to strengthen the patient's immune system or restore the immune system's ability to fight cancer by administering medicines.

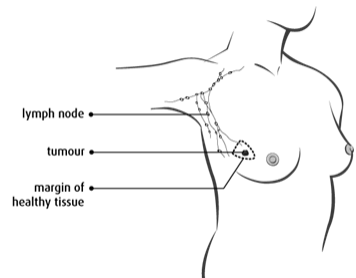
## TARGETED THERAPY

The goal of targeted therapy is to slow the growth of cancer, destroy cancer cells or relieve symptoms with medicines, which target the molecules.

# SURGICAL OPTIONS

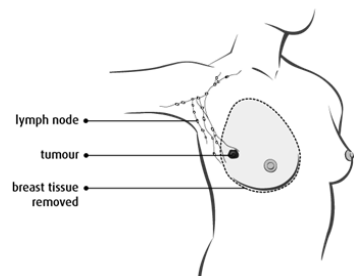
## OPTION 1: PARTIAL MASTECTOMY OR BREAST CONSERVING SURGERY (LUMPECTOMY)

Surgery to remove cancer or other abnormal tissue from the breast and some normal tissue around it, but not the breast itself. The breast is a little different after breast-conserving surgery, but often the changes are not very noticeable.



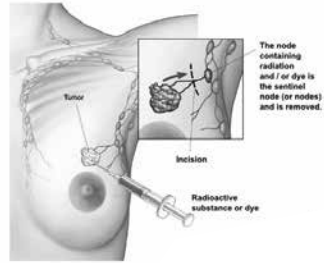
## OPTION 2: SIMPLE MASTECTOMY

Removes all of the breast and the tissue that covers the chest muscles (called the pectoral fascia). The nipple may or may not be removed.



### **OPTION 3: SENTINEL LYMPH NODE BIOPSY**

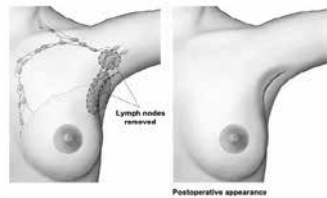
A sentinel lymph node biopsy (SLNB) removes the sentinel node to see if there is cancer in it. The sentinel lymph nodes are the first lymph nodes that drain the breast. If the cancer cells do spread, they will most likely spread to the sentinel lymph node.



If the sentinel lymph node does not contain cancer, no more lymph nodes need to be removed.

### **OPTION 4: AXILLARY LYMPH NODE DISSECTION**

An axillary lymph node dissection (ALND) is the removal of lymph nodes in the axilla or arm pit to check if cancer cells have spread.



### **OPTION 5: MASTECTOMY AND IMMEDIATE RECONSTRUCTION**

Immediate reconstruction is done at the same time as the mastectomy. Some women have breast implants placed immediately after the mastectomy (called direct-to-implant reconstruction). Alternatively, you may have delayed reconstruction, which is done months or years after the mastectomy, and other breast cancer treatments are completed.

Both breasts can be removed even if only one breast is affected; removal of both breasts ensures symmetry and may improve self-esteem.

### **OPTION 6: SKIN SPARING MASTECTOMY AND IMMEDIATE RECONSTRUCTION**

If you plan to have a breast reconstruction, your doctors may try



to do a skin-sparing mastectomy when they remove the cancer. A skin-sparing mastectomy is like a simple mastectomy except that the surgeon does not remove the skin that covers the breast. Not everyone is eligible for a skin sparing mastectomy.

*\*Ask your plastic surgeon for a copy of the Breast Reconstruction Booklet for more information*

## **EXERCISES AFTER BREAST SURGERY**

### **EXERCISES TO IMPROVE YOUR SHOULDER MOVEMENT**

It is important to start moving your arm on the side you had breast surgery as soon as possible after surgery, usually one week after surgery you should be back to your baseline of movement. This will help prevent scar tissue from forming. Too much scar tissue could reduce the movement in your shoulder. Moving your arm and doing exercises will also help you return to your daily activities sooner.

### **GET BACK THE FULL RANGE OF MOTION IN YOUR SHOULDER**

*In the first 6 weeks after surgery, your goal is to get back the full range of motion in your shoulder.* Full range of motion means being able to move your arm and shoulder the same way you did before your surgery.

If you get your full range of motion back before 6 weeks, include stretching exercises as part of your exercise routine. This is especially true if you feel a stretch in your chest or under your arm during certain exercises. The exercises will help prevent scar tissue from forming that can get in the way of your range of motion later.

These exercises are also important to help keep your arm and shoulder flexible if you have radiation therapy.

### **REGAIN STRENGTH IN YOUR SHOULDER**

*After you get back the full range of motion in your shoulder, your goal*

is to make your arm stronger. Start with light weights (about 2 to 3 pounds) or a light resistance band. Progress slowly.

## MANAGE YOUR PAIN

*Feeling sore or some pain when exercising is normal.* For example, you may feel like something is pulling inside. This is normal. You are feeling your scar tissue stretching. If it is very painful or uncomfortable, take a break. However, do not stop exercising completely. Start slowly, and keep doing the exercises 1 step at a time. Be patient with yourself. You will slowly get stronger.

## WHEN TO EXERCISE

- Begin exercises slowly, without tiring or straining yourself. Do not force any movements. This includes activities you do at work, at home, or during sports and hobbies.
- Start with whatever you are able to do and slowly add more until you are able to repeat each exercise 5 to 10 times, 3 times a day. Hold each stretch for 3 to 5 deep breaths. Continue with these exercises every day until you can use your arm the way you did before.
- If you can, do the exercises in front of a mirror so you can make sure you keep good posture.

## FIRST SET OF EXERCISES

You can start these gentle and safe exercises on the first day after surgery.

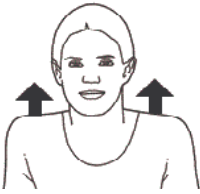
Do each exercise 10 times. Repeat each exercise 3 times a day.

### 1. Making a fist – ball squeezes



- A. Open and close your fist 10 times every hour during the day.
- B. Try using a soft squeeze ball or sponge.

## 2. Shoulder shrugs



- A. Sit upright in a comfortable position.
- B. Raise your shoulders up towards your ears, bring your shoulder blades together at the back
- C. Lower your shoulders, and relax.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times

## 3. Head turning and tilting



- A. Stretch your neck as tall as possible, while keeping your chin in.
- B. Turn your head slowly, looking over each shoulder as far as you comfortably can.
- C. Tilt your head to one side and then the other, bringing your ear as close to your shoulder as you comfortably can.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

## 4. Shoulder circles



- A. Begin by making small, slow forward circles with your shoulder. Make sure you are moving your shoulder and not your elbow.
- B. Slowly increase the size of the circles as you are able.
- C. Reverse the direction of the circles and repeat steps A and B.

## 5. External arm rotation



- A. Sit or stand.
- B. Keep your upper arms and elbows close to your sides and elbows at right angles.
- C. Turn your forearms outwards while keeping your elbows at your side.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times.



## 6. Pendulum

- A. Bend over and use your unaffected hand to support yourself on a table.
- B. Swing your affected arm (like a pendulum) from left to right and back.
- C. Then, swing your whole arm forward and back.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

## SECOND SET OF EXERCISES

The purpose of these exercises is to help regain the full movement of your shoulder.

*Start these exercises, once your drain is removed.*

If you do not have a drain, start them 4 days after your surgery.

- Hold each exercise for 15 to 30 seconds.
- You should feel a stretch or pulling feeling, not sharp pain.
- Repeat each exercise 10 times
- Do these exercises 3 times a day.

## 7. Elbow push-back

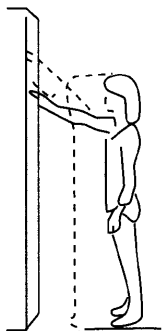
This exercise helps increase the movement in the front of your chest and shoulders. You can do this exercise standing up against a wall or lying down on your back on a bed or the floor.

- A. Place your fingers behind your head or your upper neck.
- B. Spread your elbows out to the side as far as possible.
- C. When you get to the point where you feel a good stretch (but not pain), take 3 to 5 deep breaths and hold the stretch. Keep your neck straight and relaxed as you do this.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times.



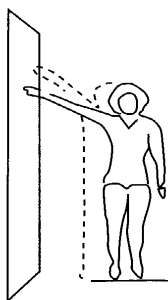
### 8. Shoulder flexion wall exercise

This exercise helps increase the forward movement of your shoulder. Try to reach a little higher each time. As you improve, move your feet and body closer to the wall.



- A. Stand facing a wall.
- B. Slide or walk your fingers up the wall as far as possible. When you get to the point where you feel a good stretch (but not pain), take 3 to 5 deep breaths and hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- C. Return to the starting position by walking your fingers back down the wall.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

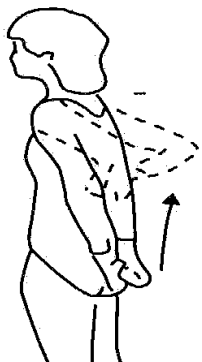
### 9. Shoulder side lifts wall exercise



- A. Turn sideways with your affected side toward the wall.
- B. Slide or walk your fingers up the wall as far as possible. When you get to the point where you feel a good stretch (but not pain), take 3 to 5 deep breaths and hold the stretch for 10 seconds.
- C. Return to the starting position by walking your fingers back down the wall.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times.
- E. Try to reach a little higher each time. As you improve, move your feet and body closer to the wall.

### 10. Back climb exercise

This exercise helps you improve the movement behind your back. You need this for activities such as hooking your bra, buttoning up a blouse, or zipping up a dress. You can do this exercise sitting or standing.



- A. Place your hands behind your back holding your surgery-side hand.
- B. Slowly slide your hands up the centre of your back as far as possible. When you get to the point where you feel a good stretch (but not pain), take 3 to 5 deep breaths and hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- C. Lower your hands slowly.
- D. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

**Note:** When exercising after the 6 weeks, if you have implants you should no longer activate chest muscles in workouts. Doing so may cause your implants to retreat into your armpits. Ask your fitness instructor to offer modifications.

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE

### LOOK GOOD . . . FEEL BETTER PROGRAM

The best medicine does not always come in a bottle - that is why Look Good Feel Better provides complimentary workshops. It is more than makeup - it is a safe environment alongside other women dealing with similar issues and challenges. You will also take home a complimentary kit with information and products.

What you will experience at a two-hour workshop:

- Information on how to alleviate appearance-related effects of cancer and its treatment, including cosmetic hygiene, sun care, skin care, cosmetics and nail care
- Discussion and demonstrations on hair alternatives

Register for a workshop  
online at <http://www.lgfb.ca/en/>



## **CLINICAL TRIALS**

A clinical trial is a type of research study that helps to find new ways to diagnose, treat, manage or prevent a disease. Clinical trials test new drugs, new ways to do radiation or surgery, or any combination of these. Clinical trials help us learn about how to make cancer treatment and cancer care better. Most of the treatments prescribed by physicians went through the clinical trial process at some point; this is how it was determined that they would benefit patients.

During your appointment, members of your Care Team will talk about the types of treatments that are used to treat your type of cancer. One of your options may be a clinical trial. You will never have to take part in a trial without your knowledge or permission. Clinical trials may give patients access to new forms of treatment. They also help our staff keep up with advances in cancer care.

If you would like to take part in a clinical trial, ask your Oncologist if there is a trial that is right for you. You can also learn more about clinical trials online by visiting <https://itstartswithme.ca/>

## **POST-MASTECTOMY RESOURCES**

### **POST-SURGERY CLOTHING**

Wear loose, soft clothing for the first 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery. You can wear a soft cup bra for support during the first few days after surgery. It is recommended you start with a soft, front-fastening, sports bra. Do not wear a bra with underwire for the first 6 weeks after surgery. La Vie en Rose Muse Mastectomy Bras can be used after breast mastectomy surgery.

Due to swelling and drainage, prosthesis are not fitted right away after surgery. Cotton or foam padding inserts for your bra may be available free of charge from the Canadian Cancer Society in a variety of sizes. These can be washed or replaced if any drainage leaks onto the padding.

Knitted knockers are also available on line:

<https://knittedknockerscanada.com/>

## **ASSISTIVE DEVICES PROGRAM (ADP) FOR BREAST PROSTHESIS**

The Ministry of Health & Long Term Care (MoHLTC) through the Assistive Device Program will assist permanent residents of Ontario with the cost of selected supplies or equipment. Women who require breast prosthetics qualify for this program.

Private Insurance companies may cover the remainder of the cost of the prosthetic that is not covered by the Assistive Device Program. Be sure to contact your insurance carrier to find out whether your plan has this coverage for prosthetics. Where there is no coverage, patients are responsible for covering the remaining amount.

### **What kind of breast prostheses are covered by the Assistive Devices Program (ADP)?**

- The ADP will provide a grant to help pay for a portion of the cost of external silicone breast prostheses.
- The ADP does not fund brassieres, temporary breast prostheses, silicone nipples or breast implants.

### **Who can apply?**

Any permanent resident of Ontario who has a valid Health Card Number and have a long term disability require prosthetic breasts or limbs. *Note: Your income is not taken into consideration.*

### **Who does not qualify?**

ADP does not help pay for prostheses available under the Workplace and Safety Insurance Board (WSIB), or for Group A veterans for their pensioned conditions. For further information, please refer to the Service Ontario website at [www.Ontario.ca](http://www.Ontario.ca)

### **How do I get my breast prosthesis(es)?**

Select any vendor in Ontario that sells breast prostheses and has staff trained to fit you properly. Once you are fitted with your prosthesis(es), you will pay the vendor and obtain a receipt of payment.



### **How do I apply for the ADP grant?**

You may print the application form off of their website at [www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca) or obtain an application form by contacting the ADP directly.

Complete the application form in full, attach the original receipt from the vendor and mail to:

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Assistive Devices Program  
7th Floor, 5700 Yonge Street Toronto, ON M2M 4K5

### **How much money will I receive?**

Coverage is subject to change, please call Toll-free: 1-800-268-6021 or visit the Assistive Devices Program Website at [www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program](http://www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program)

*Note: Remember to check all of the applicable boxes in the section entitled “Confirmation of Eligibility” on the application form.*

### **How will payment be made?**

A cheque will be issued within eight weeks of the Assistive Devices Program receipt of your application.

### **Does this mean that the full cost of my breast prosthesis(es) will be covered?**

Not always. If the vendor’s retail price is more than the grant amount, you will be responsible to pay the difference. Be sure to ask your vendor how much of the total cost you are responsible for.

### **Will my private insurance cover any additional costs?**

Certain insurance companies may cover additional costs. The ADP recommends that you check with your insurer.

### **How often can I apply?**

You can apply every two years if the prosthesis is worn out or is no longer usable.

If, during the two years, you require a new breast prosthesis because your body size or shape changes or because of a change in your medical condition, you may apply once for a replacement.

The ADP does not provide the grant for a replacement during the two years if the original prosthesis is lost, stolen or damaged due to misuse.

### **What documents must legal agents provide if signing on behalf of the applicant?**

Legal agents must attach applicable documents, such as Power of Attorney or Continuing Power of Attorney.

### **Should I keep my receipts?**

You are required to send your original receipt to the ADP with the application form. You should keep a copy of your receipt for two years. Note that for income tax purposes, you can only claim receipts for expenditures that exceed the amount of the ADP grant.

### **Is there a warranty?**

Manufacturers of breast prostheses provide a two-year warranty. You are encouraged to speak to the fitter of your breast prosthesis(es) for more information.

### **What if I have more questions?**

Call the Assistive Devices Program at:

Toll-free: 1-800-268-6021

E-mail: [adp@ontario.ca](mailto:adp@ontario.ca)

TDD: 1-800-387-5559 (*for the deaf*)

Website: [www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program](http://www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program)

## **COPING WITH SKIN PROBLEMS FROM RADIATION TREATMENT**

External radiation therapy can make your skin in the treatment area dry, red or itchy. It may look and feel like it is sunburned or it

may get darker or tanned. Skin problems are common with external radiation therapy because the radiation travels through your skin to reach the tumour or treatment area.

Some people have changes to their breasts after radiation therapy for breast cancer. These changes usually go away after your treatment ends, but it may take a few months or longer. You may have:

- soreness or swelling in your breasts
- changes to your breast size
- changes to the way your skin feels – the texture of your skin may be different or the skin can be more sensitive

## **COPING WITH TEMPORARY HAIR LOSS**

Losing hair is one of the most stressful side effects of cancer treatment. Not every person will lose his or her hair during cancer care. In fact, two patients taking the same medication may experience different hair-loss side effects. There is no best way to deal with hair loss. The best way is the one that is the most comfortable. It depends on how comfortable you are with baldness and keeping your head warm in cooler weather.

### **BEFORE TREATMENT BEGINS**

- Give yourself time. Losing your hair may be difficult to accept. It may take time to adjust to how you look, then more time to feel good about yourself again. It is okay to feel upset. At the same time, understand that losing your hair is usually temporary and hair will re-grow after you complete treatment.
- Remember you are still you. Losing your hair and experiencing other physical changes brought on by cancer and its treatment may come as a shock. It may be disorienting to look in the mirror and not recognize yourself. Remember that you are still the same person on the inside. Try to celebrate who you

are and focus on those qualities.

- Take some reference photos from several angles. This will help you later if you decide to get a wig and want to match your current hairstyle.
- Some decide to go wig shopping with their current hairstyle and find it to be comforting still having your own hair.
- Some prefer to cut their hair short so that when hair loss occurs it may seem less dramatic.
- Use a mild shampoo and conditioner on hair. Be sure to rinse thoroughly and pat hair dry. NEVER RUB. Heat (blow dryers, curling irons), perms and hair coloring tend to irritate the scalp. If you do use a blow dryer, use it on the lowest setting. Use silk pillowcases to avoid knots.
- *Please speak with a nurse regarding special instructions if you are receiving radiotherapy involving the head.*

## WIGS

Shop around! A wig is an investment so take your time and make sure it is right for you. When shopping for a wig, take along a family member or friend you can trust to be objective.

Consider buying synthetic wigs. They are comfortable, easy to care for and affordable. When trying on a wig, test it first by shaking your head several times and bending over.

Wear the wig for 20 minutes to ensure it is comfortable. When you buy a wig, it is “raw.” That means that it will require styling and cutting to suit your features. Your hairstylist will often cut your wig to suit your taste.

## INSURANCE COVERAGE

Often private insurance will cover the cost of a wig if you are undergoing treatment. Call your insurance provider to find out if you qualify under your plan.

If you do, ask your physician to fill out a prescription. In order to be reimbursed for your wig you must submit:

1. Physician's prescription
2. Insurance form
3. The original receipt for the wig

The company will reimburse you the cost once they have received the appropriate paper work. Patients without private coverage should save their receipts to include when filing their income tax returns.

## **WIG RESOURCES**

*Note: For patients who do not have extended health insurance coverage and require financial assistance, please request that your care team refer you to Social Work to discuss options in attaining wigs.*

### **WIGS TO WELLNESS & MASTECTOMY BOUTIQUE**

519-915-5696 | [wigstowellness.com](http://wigstowellness.com)  
4454 Howard Ave., Windsor, ON

*Offers wigs, hats, accessories, mastectomy prostheses and bras, post-surgical healing kits, lymphedema sleeves. House calls can be made if necessary. Not wheelchair accessible.*

### **LENA'S WELLNESS BOUTIQUE**

226-348-8320 | [lenaswellness.ca](http://lenaswellness.ca)  
1485 Azalia Cres, Windsor, ON

*Wigs, Toppers, Headwear, and Accessories*

### **SALON CURE**

519-945-7801 | [saloncure.ca/wigs/](http://saloncure.ca/wigs/)  
6525 Wyandotte St. E. Windsor, ON

*You can have your wig trimmed and custom fitted at no cost. This can be done at a private appointment if desired. If you do not see a style or colour that suits your needs, please contact us. New wigs are arriving all the time.*

## **SALON TOPAZ – THE WIG BOUTIQUE**

519-996-3539 | [salon-topaz.square.site/the-wig-boutique](http://salon-topaz.square.site/the-wig-boutique)

3021 Dougall Ave., Windsor, ON

*Self-referrals accepted, walk-ins welcome, appointments preferred for wig fittings, wheelchair accessible.*

## **S.B. HAIR AND BEAUTY PRODUCTS INC.**

519-945-8483 | [sbhairandbeauty.com](http://sbhairandbeauty.com)

7650 Tecumseh Rd. E., Unit E50, Windsor, ON

*Self-referrals accepted walk-ins welcome. Located inside Tecumseh Mall*

## **YOU-NIQUE – PLACE FOR WIGS**

519-972-9266 | 3224 Bliss Road, Windsor, ON

*By appointment only, wheelchair accessible.*

## **SAFFRON ALTERNATIVE HAIR DESIGN CENTRE**

519-380-9411 | [saffron-ahd.com](http://saffron-ahd.com)

325 Wellington St. W., Chatham, ON

*Self-referrals accepted serves Chatham-Kent, London, Sarnia, and Windsor.*

## **SASSY HAIR CONNECTIONS**

519-351-3518 | [sassyhairconnections.com](http://sassyhairconnections.com)

584 Queen St., Chatham, ON

## **CONTINENTAL HAIR**

519-337-3699 | [continentalhair.com](http://continentalhair.com)

565 Murphy Rd., Sarnia, ON (*Lower Level of building*)

## **HAIR ALTERNATIVES BY BETTY DEES**

519-337-8111 | 216 Vidal St. Sarnia, ON

## **SILHOUETTES BOUTIQUE**

519-337-8700 | [silhouettesboutique.com](http://silhouettesboutique.com)

125 N. Christina St., Sarnia, ON

# WIG CARE SUGGESTIONS

## CLEANING FREQUENCY

Generally, a wig should be washed after 6-8 wears in Spring and Summer, and after 12-15 wears in Fall or Winter. Factors such as air quality and humidity will contribute to frequency of washing, as it does with your own hair.

If you would like your wig customized, it is recommended that you have a professional hairstylist cut and style it. If you can use your own hairstylist, this is best because he or she knows how you normally wear your hair.

## WASHING YOUR SYNTHETIC WIG

- Brush the wig gently with a wig brush.
- Add a few drops of shampoo into a basin filled with tepid water.
- Gently agitate the wig - do not rub the hair. Focus more on the inner cap.
- Rinse well and add some conditioner to the wig.
- Rinse well and lightly squeeze excess water out then towel blot.
- You may choose to spray some leave in conditioner to add lustre to the wig.
- Shake the wig to fluff it a bit and then allow to air dry on a vented wig stand. If this is not available, you can place the wig on a slender object such as a can of hairspray, etc.
- Never use a Styrofoam head for drying purposes as this could stretch the wig.

## STYLING YOUR SYNTHETIC WIG

It is important to choose a wig that will suit your desired style. The joy of a synthetic wig is the lack of day to day maintenance. Synthetic wigs have a memory to bounce right back into the original style after being washed. You may add some styling products such as gel, mousse or hairspray to achieve a slightly different look but they can

only be altered to a small degree, so make sure you are happy with the style you choose. Make sure all products used are made specifically for synthetic wigs. Never use any heated styling implements such as blow dryers etc. as they will destroy the wig.

## **HUMAN HAIR WIGS**

Human hair wigs can be treated just as your own hair. Washing instructions are the same as above, however you may use all human hair products as opposed to wig products. You can also use blow dryers, curling irons and flat irons on human hair wigs.

## **OTHER SIDE EFFECTS FROM CANCER TREATMENT**

Other side effects can include anxiety, appetite changes, constipation, diarrhea, dry mouth, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, memory loss or trouble concentrating, lymphedema etc.

Lymphedema is swelling that happens when lymph cannot flow normally and builds up in the soft tissues of a limb. Lymphedema usually happens in parts of the body where lymph nodes have been removed or damaged by cancer treatment. These areas include the underarm (axilla), neck, groin and pelvis. Symptoms of lymphedema include swelling in the limbs, feeling puffy or heavy, tight or warm feeling in the limb, hardening or thickening of the skin etc.

It is important to share with your care team any side effects you may be experiencing in order for them to support you in managing those side effects.

Here are some other tips for managing side effects:

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Following a healthy diet, staying hydrated and exercising regularly are important for looking and feeling better about yourself. Talk with your doctor about making healthy lifestyle choices. A dietitian may help



develop a nutritious meal plan, and a rehabilitation therapist may help develop a personalized exercise plan for you. There are many resources available within the cancer centre and in the community including social workers, dieticians, reading materials, and so much more.

- Pamper yourself. Take time to do something pleasurable to take your mind off your diagnosis. Watch a movie, read, take a walk, listen to music, get a manicure, pedicure, facial or massage. Try behavioural health strategies, such as relaxation techniques, deep breathing and meditation.
- Build a support system. Share the challenges of your side effects with friends and family. In addition, a cancer support group is a great way to meet other people dealing with a diagnosis. In this setting, you can get ideas and advice about how others coped with changes in their appearance. You may also find it helpful to meet with a psychologist or counsellor.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Paula Young: [paulayoung.com](http://paulayoung.com)

Get Well Gang: [getwellgang.ca](http://getwellgang.ca)

## OTHER RESOURCES

### HATS, SCARVES AND TURBANS

Some people find that the easiest and most comfortable choices are hats, scarves, or turbans. You may have these already, or buy custom items made for people who are getting Chemotherapy. Hats, scarves and turbans can be purchased at department stores or specialty shops within the city.

### HATS

A hat is the easiest hair alternative because all you have to do is put it on and you are ready to go! This option is great for days when your energy is low. Select a hat with loose weave fabric so that your scalp can breathe. The hat should come down low at the back of the neck for best coverage. Bamboo is a popular soft fabric chosen for hats.

## CANADIAN HAT RESOURCES



## COOLING CAPS

Cold caps and scalp cooling systems are tightly fitting, helmet-like hats filled with a cold gel or liquid that you wear during chemotherapy infusions. These devices have helped many people keep some or quite a bit of their hair during chemotherapy that can cause hair loss. Some insurance companies do cover this.

## SCARVES

A head wrap is another terrific alternative, although it does require some practice. When making a head wrap, select a cotton, cotton blend, or rayon scarf. These fabrics are less “slippery” and are more likely to stay in place. A 28-inch scarf usually makes a good head wrap.

## TURBANS

Turbans are also a great look! You can either dress them up or down depending on what your look is that day. When a hat does not provide enough coverage on its own, wearing a turban or scarf underneath should help. The turban should come down low at the back of the neck for best coverage.

## SEWING SERVICES

The Windsor Regional Cancer Centre has volunteers who donate their time and expertise to sew turbans, hats and laryngectomy covers for patients. These items are available for pick up in the Cancer Program lobby area.

## **CANADIAN BREAST CANCER NETWORK**

*Breast Cancer and You:*

A guide for people living with  
breast cancer



## **HEALING PRETTY BOOK**

*by Jackie Apostol-Pizzuti*



## **CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY**

*Radiation Therapy*



## **CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY**

*Chemotherapy and Other  
Drug Therapies*



## **WRH – MY CANCER JOURNEY**

*For more information about what  
to expect after being referred to the  
Cancer Centre*



# **Patient Education** *The right information at the right time.*

The goal of the Patient Education program is to improve the patient's experience throughout their cancer journey. Our program is working to create new and better ways for patients to get the information they need and at the time they need it.

The right information at the right time is a key philosophy in our program. To deliver this requires patient and family involvement in how our educational materials are developed and delivered. Patient and family input is essential to how information is communicated and we try to build it into everything we do. We are proud to say that our educational materials are patient reviewed and patient approved.

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*This patient guide provides information only - it does not replace medical advice. Speak to your health care team about any questions you may have.*

*For other patient symptom management guides, please go to:  
[cancercareontario.ca/en/symptom-management](https://cancercareontario.ca/en/symptom-management)*



OUTSTANDING CARE – NO EXCEPTIONS!

**Erie St. Clair  
Regional Cancer Program**

Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

1995 Lens Avenue, Windsor, ON N8W 1L9

519-253-5253

[www.wrhcancerprogram.ca](http://www.wrhcancerprogram.ca)

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