

Sources of Support

Learning you have breast cancer can change your life and the lives of those close to you. These changes can be hard to handle. It is normal for you, your family, and your friends to have many different and sometimes confusing feelings.

You may worry about caring for your family, keeping your job, or continuing daily activities. Concerns about treatments and managing side effects, hospital stays, and medical bills are also common. Doctors, nurses, and other members of the health care team can answer questions about treatment, working, or other activities. Meeting with a social worker, counselor, or member of the clergy can be helpful if you want to talk about your feelings or concerns. Often, a social worker can suggest resources for financial aid, transportation, home care, or emotional support.

Friends and relatives can be very supportive. Also, you may find it helps to discuss your concerns with others who have cancer. Women with breast cancer often get together in support groups to share what they have learned about coping with their disease and the effects of their treatment. It is important to keep in mind, however, that each woman is different. Ways that one woman deals with cancer may not be right for another. You may want to ask your health care provider about advice you receive from other women with breast cancer.

Several organizations offer special programs for women with breast cancer. Women who have had the disease serve as trained volunteers. They may talk with or visit women with breast cancer, provide information, and lend emotional support. They often share their experiences with breast cancer treatment, breast reconstruction, and recovery.

You may be afraid that changes to your body will affect not only how you look but also how other people feel about you. You may worry that breast cancer and its treatment will affect your sexual relationships. Many couples find it helps to talk about their concerns. Some find that counseling or a couples' support group can be helpful.

Information Specialists at 1-800-4-CANCER and at [LiveHelp \(http://www.cancer.gov\)](http://www.cancer.gov) can help you locate programs, services, and publications. Also, you may want to read the NCI fact sheet "[National Organizations That Offer Services to People With Cancer and Their Families.](#)"