

You've Just Been Diagnosed with Breast Cancer: Now What?

Don't be overwhelmed. We have talked to both experts and young women going through what you are and here is what they advise:

- Meet with everyone on your health care team.**
Make sure you understand what is going on and what each person on your team will do. This team can include, but is not limited to, your oncologist, surgeon, plastic surgeon, fertility specialist, genetic counselor and others.
 - If you want children at any point in the future (think ahead ladies!), speak to your oncologist and a fertility specialist BEFORE starting treatment.**
Treatment can sometimes limit or destroy your fertility options. Understand all possible results of your treatment, as well as all of your fertility options to make the decision that's right for you.
 - If you are taking any form of birth control or have an IUD, talk to your doctor about how treatment will affect your current birth control regimen.**
Treatment can disrupt or interrupt your birth control, so you may need another form of birth control during, as well as after treatment.
 - Have your doctor give you the pros and cons before undergoing a lumpectomy or mastectomy.**
Many women have said they didn't really understand the effects of these procedures on their minds and bodies. Make sure your doctors fully explain the process, outcome, and any possible issues before making these very important decisions.
 - Genetics can play a role in breast cancer. Talk to a genetic counselor and find out if genetic testing is right for you.**
Genetic counselors can explain if such testing would be useful, how it can help determine your treatment and what the genetic findings may hold for your family, including men and any future children. Remember: knowledge is power!.
 - Bulk up your "team."**
Many women have benefited from seeing a navigator, a nutritionist, a pastoral care specialist, a survivorship coordinator, support agencies, physical therapists, lymphedema therapists and many more. Don't forget any extra supporters, like family and close friends.
 - Make sure you know what resources are available to you. There are numerous local and national organizations out there, including the many listed on this website.**
We know that there are implications beyond your medical treatment. If you need help figuring out how this diagnosis will affect your emotions, relationships and job, know that we have both advice and resources on this website that can help you with all of that.
- Join a support group.**
- Meet people who know what you are going through. They are a great resource and can offer incredible support. We have a list of such groups on the website under "Find Support," plus you can help connect with people in your area on our social media platforms.

**GULF STATES YOUNG BREAST
CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK**

