

# Women's Health **UPDATE**

## Living Beyond Breast Cancer

(NAPSA)—Thanks to medical advances, more women are surviving a breast cancer diagnosis than ever before. That's one reason it's important to support the emotional healing process by addressing a spectrum of "survivorship" concerns.

Every woman deals with a diagnosis of breast cancer in her own way. You may have concerns about your long-term health or your emotional well-being. You may fear breast cancer could return. You are finding a "new normal"—integrating a history with breast cancer into your life experience.

For those who are making the transition into that "new normal" and starting to return to a regular routine, here are some tips from Living Beyond Breast Cancer, a national nonprofit organization for coping with the medical, emotional and practical concerns when treatment ends and the rest of life begins.

- **Speak with your doctor to create a long-term follow-up plan.** Whether you're one year or 10 years out from your diagnosis, as a breast cancer survivor, it's important to speak with your doctor to determine your schedule for ongoing medical checkups to monitor your health. It may also be beneficial to ask your doctor about how to manage lingering side effects, such as fatigue, bone loss, hot flashes, weight gain or lymphedema.

- **Keep your medical records and appointments organized.** Request a printed copy and organize your medical reports so they will be easier to reference during your follow-up



Photo credit: Laurie Beck Photography

### **You can put cancer into context and learn how to move forward and live beyond your diagnosis.**

care. And keep a calendar updated with your upcoming checkups and any tests you may have. While you are in follow-up care, it's very important to follow through with the medical visits your doctor has recommended for you.

- **Understand that you may need to create a "new normal."** Breast cancer can be a defining experience. You may want your life to return to the way it was before your diagnosis. While that may be the case for some women, for many others, breast cancer changes their outlook and perspective. Take the time to sort out your emotions and priorities. Don't feel pressured to "bounce back" immediately after treatment ends.

- **Take care of your emotional health.** Breast cancer survivors may experience various feelings and stages of anxiety, depression, anger or loneliness. For some women, the shock of diagnosis doesn't take full effect until after treatment ends. First and foremost,

you need to know that these emotions are normal. One way to ease your emotions is by staying connected to those who make you feel most comfortable sharing your feelings. You can reach out to breast cancer organizations, such as Living Beyond Breast Cancer, that offer telephone-matching services and can connect you to another woman in similar circumstances. Also, remember that trained therapists can help you along your journey. Regular exercise can be very helpful in improving your mood and outlook on life.

- **Live beyond your breast cancer.** Don't let breast cancer define you or hinder future possibilities. Remember to live each day with hope and take time to enjoy the simple pleasures in life. You may be physically and emotionally drained, but remember: You have done everything you can to fight the cancer. Feel proud of your hard work and now take time to recapture and enjoy your life.

At every stage of your breast cancer journey, Living Beyond Breast Cancer can help. For more information, visit [www.lbbc.org](http://www.lbbc.org) to download or order free education resources that provide emotional comfort and support.

Founded in 1991, Living Beyond Breast Cancer is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering all women affected by breast cancer to live as long as possible with the best quality of life. For more information, visit [www.lbbc.org](http://www.lbbc.org) or call the organization's toll-free Survivors' Helpline at (888) 753-LBCC (5222).