

**BREAST  
CANCER  
NOW**

**LIVING WITH BREAST CANCER**

# When your partner has breast cancer

**SUPPORTING YOU NOW**



## CONTENTS

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| About this booklet             | 4  |
| Diagnosis and the early days   | 5  |
| Breast cancer treatments       | 8  |
| Physical and emotional changes | 11 |
| Supporting your partner        | 15 |
| Changes to your relationship   | 22 |
| Family and friends             | 25 |
| Looking after yourself         | 29 |
| Life after breast cancer       | 31 |
| Useful organisations           | 33 |

## About this booklet

If your partner has breast cancer, it's natural to feel worried or scared. You probably have lots of questions about what to expect and how treatment will affect your partner.

In this booklet you will find out more about breast cancer and treatment. We will also suggest ways for you to support your partner and how to look after yourself too.

We focus mainly on primary breast cancer (breast cancer that has not spread beyond the breast or the lymph nodes under the arm) in this booklet. If your partner has been diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, you may find our booklet **When your partner has metastatic (secondary) breast cancer** helpful.

You don't have to read this booklet from cover to cover if you don't want to. You can pick out the sections that are helpful to you now and come back to the other sections when you feel ready.

If you'd like to talk to someone about how you're feeling or have questions about any of the information in this booklet, call us free on **0808 800 6000** or Ask Our Nurses by email through our website **breastcancernow.org**

# Diagnosis and the early days

## How you might feel

Finding out your partner has breast cancer is very difficult and there's no right or wrong way to feel.

You may have lots of questions about what will happen to your partner and what impact breast cancer will have on your life. Some people are scared their partner might die.

It's normal to be concerned about the future. It can help to take things a day at a time rather than worrying about things that may never happen.

Some people describe being on an emotional rollercoaster and say their feelings change frequently. Here are some words partners use to describe their feelings:

**stressed** overwhelmed **alone** scared at a loss  
isolated **up and down** worried **can't sleep**  
helpless **struggling** devastated sad  
**freaking out** **terrified** shocked **powerless**  
frightened **confused**

Your feelings may begin to settle as the weeks and months go by. But some people continue to find it difficult to cope with how they're feeling.

If you're struggling to cope, you could talk to your GP or your partner's breast care nurse. You may also find it helpful to call our helpline on **0808 800 6000**. There's more information about looking after yourself on page 29.

## How your partner might feel

Most people are shocked to hear they have breast cancer, and they go on to experience many different emotions.

Some people describe feeling angry, sad, frightened and depressed, while others describe feeling relieved the cancer has been found and is going to be treated.

Your partner's feelings may change from day to day or even hour to hour. How they feel may depend on many things, including their personality, cultural background, how prepared they were for the news, and any previous experience of breast cancer.

Some people feel they must put on a brave face for family, friends and even for the doctors and nurses looking after them. Others prefer to share their feelings and draw strength and support from people close to them.

Sometimes you and your partner will have similar feelings at the same time. At other times your feelings will be very different, which can be difficult.

For more information about how your partner might feel, see our booklet **Diagnosed with breast cancer: what now?**

## Getting information about breast cancer

While you're coming to terms with the emotional impact of your partner's diagnosis, you and your partner will quickly be given lots of information about test results, treatments and side effects.

Some people want to learn as much as possible, go to appointments with their partner and be involved in discussions about treatment decisions. Others prefer to be a quiet support. Everyone's different.

How involved you are will depend on your own and your partner's wishes. It's a good idea to talk to your partner early on about how they would like you to be involved.

Some people say they feel helpless during their partner's treatment. Finding a practical role can be a good way to provide support. This could involve taking notes during appointments or making lists of questions to ask the consultant. There's more information about supporting your partner on page 15.

Whichever approach you take, having some basic information, and knowing how to find out more, is often helpful.

Many people use the internet to look for information. Depending on how your partner feels, this may be something you want to do together or alone.

Be aware that some sites can be unreliable, so our website **breastcancernow.org** is a good place to start. It can also be helpful to focus on trustworthy websites that reflect UK practice, such as NHS.UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, Cancer Research UK and other recognised UK charities.

If you don't have access to the internet, or prefer not to use it, we have a range of printed publications. Our helpline is also on hand if you would like further information or to talk to someone.

## Breast cancer treatments

Treatment for breast cancer may include:

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Radiotherapy
- Hormone (endocrine) therapy
- Targeted therapy
- Bisphosphonates

If you would like more detailed information about treatment for primary breast cancer, see our **Treating primary breast cancer** booklet.

You can find out more about why certain treatments are recommended by reading our booklet **Understanding your pathology results**.

## **Surgery**

Surgery is often the first treatment for people with breast cancer. It involves an operation to remove the cancer with some or all of the breast tissue. It's done to reduce the risk of the cancer coming back in the breast and to try to stop it spreading elsewhere in the body. Surgery may also remove some of the lymph nodes from under the arm.

## **Chemotherapy**

Chemotherapy destroys cancer cells using anti-cancer drugs. It's usually given after surgery to reduce the risk of breast cancer returning or spreading. This is called adjuvant chemotherapy.

Some people will have it before surgery (neo-adjuvant chemotherapy).

Your partner's specialist team will advise them on whether to have chemotherapy depending on the type of breast cancer they have and how far it has spread.

## **Radiotherapy**

Radiotherapy uses high energy x-rays to destroy any cancer cells that may be left behind after surgery. It's given to reduce the risk of the cancer coming back in the breast after surgery. Whether your partner has radiotherapy will depend on the type of breast cancer and the type of surgery they have had.

## **Hormone (endocrine) therapy**

Some breast cancers use oestrogen in the body to help them to grow. These are known as oestrogen receptor positive or ER-positive breast cancers.

Hormone therapies block or stop the effect of oestrogen on breast cancer cells. Different hormone therapy drugs do this in different ways.

If your partner's breast cancer is ER-positive, their treatment team will talk to them about hormone therapy.

## **Targeted therapies**

Targeted therapies are a group of drugs that block the growth and spread of cancer cells. They target and interfere with processes in the cells that cause cancer to grow.

The most widely used targeted therapy in breast cancer treatment is trastuzumab (Herceptin). Only people whose cancer has high levels of HER2 (called HER2-positive) will benefit from having trastuzumab. HER2 is a protein that helps cancer cells grow.

## **Bisphosphonates**

Bisphosphonates are a group of drugs that can reduce the risk of breast cancer spreading in women who have been through the menopause. They can be used if the menopause happened naturally or because of breast cancer treatment. Your partner can talk to their treatment team about whether bisphosphonates would be suitable for them.

# Physical and emotional changes

## After surgery

Surgery for breast cancer will change the appearance of your partner's breast or breasts. It may also cause a loss of sensation.

How you prepare for these changes is down to you as a couple. Some couples find it helps to prepare by looking at photographs of people who have had similar surgery, but this is a very personal choice. Your partner's breast care nurse or surgeon can often provide photographs.

In the weeks immediately after surgery, your partner's breast area may look bruised and swollen, and scars are often obvious. The scar and surrounding tissue may also be tender and uncomfortable for some weeks after your partner's operation.

Some couples find it helpful to look at the scar together after the operation. On the other hand, you may not want to look at the scar or your partner may not want you to see it. It helps to keep talking so you know what each other is thinking, rather than trying to guess.

As the swelling, bruising and scars settle down, many people begin to adjust to the changes in the appearance of the breast area. But it's not unusual for your partner to continue to be worried and distressed about this. Your partner may be concerned that you won't find them attractive, and this may affect how they feel about sex and intimacy (see page 23).

## Hair loss

Many people will lose either some or all of their hair as a result of their treatment for breast cancer. Hair loss caused by chemotherapy can include the loss of all body hair, eyelashes and eyebrows. For some people this may be the most distressing side effect of their treatment.

Your partner may opt to have scalp cooling to try to reduce hair loss. This involves cooling the scalp during chemotherapy. It reduces the blood flow and therefore the amount of drugs reaching the hair follicles on the head.

The effectiveness of scalp cooling depends on the chemotherapy drugs used. It does not work for everyone, and it can be very disappointing for your partner if they still experience hair loss after having scalp cooling.

Hair loss caused by chemotherapy is almost always temporary. Your partner's hair will usually start to grow back when their treatment is finished.

There's no right or wrong way to feel if your partner loses their hair. Some people find their partner's altered appearance difficult to adjust to, while others do not.

Many people choose to wear a headscarf, hat or wig when they lose their hair. Your partner may like you to be involved in choosing a wig or headwear, and this may help you adjust to their hair loss.

For more information about hair thinning or loss, see our booklet **Breast cancer and hair loss**.

## Tiredness

Extreme tiredness and exhaustion is also known as fatigue. It's a very common side effect of breast cancer treatment and may last for weeks or months after treatment has finished.

Fatigue doesn't always go away with rest or sleep and may affect your partner physically and emotionally. They may feel tired or exhausted and have no energy to complete even simple everyday tasks. But they may also have days when they are able to carry on as normal.

It can be difficult to see your partner unable to do the things they once did, and it's not always clear how best to help. It might be useful to ask your partner what they would like you to do. This can help them to feel in control. It can also give you the opportunity to talk together about whether there are other family members or friends who may be able to help.

Macmillan Cancer Support has an information booklet called *Coping with fatigue*, which you may find useful. Order it free from Macmillan's website [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk) or call 0808 808 00 00.

## Menopausal symptoms

Breast cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, hormone (endocrine) therapy or ovarian suppression (stopping the ovaries working either permanently or temporarily) can cause menopausal symptoms.

Most people will have menopausal symptoms during and after their treatment for breast cancer. Changes to hormone levels in the body are the main cause of these symptoms.

Menopausal symptoms include:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Vaginal dryness
- Weight gain
- Mood swings
- Loss of sex drive

These can affect your partner's self-esteem, body image and confidence.

Encouraging your partner to talk, and really listening to how they are feeling, can help you understand how you can best support them.

Our booklet **Menopausal symptoms and breast cancer** includes information on coping with these side effects of treatment.

## **Supporting your partner**

Knowing how best to support your partner after their diagnosis is not always easy. It can be hard to know what your partner needs, and their needs may not be the same as yours.

## **Communicating with your partner**

An important way to support your partner is by communicating effectively with them. You can do this by listening to them and talking with them.

It's natural to want to try to "fix" things, but it's not always possible to offer solutions. Simply hearing and acknowledging someone's worries can be very reassuring.

There may be times when you don't feel able to listen sensitively to your partner. You could suggest a break from listening and arrange to return to the conversation later. This can also give you time to take things in and start again feeling more refreshed.

## **Useful tips for active listening**

- **Avoiding distractions** – sit somewhere quiet and switch off the TV and mobile phones
- **Letting your partner know you're listening** – look at them, nod or ask questions and make comments
- **Checking you've understood what your partner has said** – repeat back words they use and try to summarise what you've heard. For example: "It sounds like you feel... Have I got that right?" This shows your partner you're listening and allows them to correct you if you've misunderstood
- **Avoiding interrupting while your partner is talking** – make sure your partner has finished saying everything they want to before you reply
- **Encouraging silence** – silence can allow time to think about what has been said and how you may want to respond. It may feel awkward at first but try not to rush in if there's a pause or break in conversation
- **Using touch to provide comfort** – if it's appropriate, and you know your partner values physical touch, you could hold their hands or give them a hug

## Talking with your partner

Many people with breast cancer find it helpful to talk about what they're thinking and how they're feeling. However, some people prefer to cope on their own and don't want to discuss their emotions or their diagnosis.

### Encouraging conversations

Try to gauge how much your partner wants to talk. If they begin to tell you something about their cancer, ask them if they want to talk more about it.

If they do, you could encourage them to talk by asking gentle, open-ended questions. For example, you could say: "What did you feel like when the doctor said...?" or "You said you feel frightened. What is it that frightens you the most?"

If your partner is feeling angry about their diagnosis, they may sometimes direct this anger at you. This reaction can be hurtful, particularly if you're trying to support them. But try to remember this is often because they're upset about having cancer, rather than being upset with you.

You might try to avoid having difficult conversations with your partner to protect them from your worries and fears. However, avoiding conversations may make your partner feel like you're not interested in how they're feeling.

Open communication about how you're both feeling can help you to understand and support each other and bring you closer together. It could also encourage your partner to share their feelings honestly with you.

However, there may be times when one of you doesn't feel like talking or when you can't talk openly.

## **Useful tips for talking**

Often, being able to talk comes down to finding the time and space to do so. It might be helpful to set aside a time when you're able to talk undisturbed, somewhere you both feel at ease.

Some people find it easier to talk when they're not looking at each other face-to-face. It might help you speak more freely if you talk while doing something else, such as when you're walking, driving or eating together.

Sometimes you and your partner may prefer to talk about everyday things. Having a "normal" conversation can help you both feel that cancer hasn't taken over your life.

## **Communicating in other ways**

There are other ways to show your partner you care, such as:

- Physical affection, like a hug or holding hands
- Spending quality time together, and if possible spending time outside the house and enjoying each other's company in different surroundings, such as a local coffee shop or park
- Simple thoughtful gestures, such as running a bath or giving inexpensive gifts you know they'll appreciate

## **If you need support with communicating**

If you're having problems communicating with your partner, there are places to go for help. Along with our helpline and website you may also benefit from contacting an organisation such as Relate (see page 33).

## Attending appointments

Your partner may find it supportive if you go to appointments with them. Or they may prefer to go to some or all of their appointments on their own.

If your partner does want you to go with them, you may find it helpful to talk beforehand about how involved they want you to be in any discussions and to plan any questions you want to ask.

If you're working, taking time off to attend appointments may not always be easy. Try to find out how long your partner will be in hospital and how long any treatment sessions and courses last. Then try to come to a suitable arrangement with your employer. Some employers may expect you to use paid or unpaid holiday, while others are more flexible.

If you can't attend an appointment in person, it might be possible to attend virtually or on the phone. Alternatively, with the permission of your partner's specialist, your partner might be able to record the consultation so you can listen to it together afterwards. You may also be able to speak to your partner's breast care nurse, with their consent.

## **Supporting your partner with treatment decisions**

Your partner may be given choices about their treatment, and they might ask you for advice and support in making these decisions. Talking about the options with your partner can help you to understand their thoughts and clarify any questions they may have for their healthcare team.

It's important to be guided by your partner about how much information they want about treatment options. It's also helpful to acknowledge that your partner's questions may be different to yours and that any treatment decisions are theirs to make.

Supporting your partner to gain the information to make an informed choice can help them feel more in control. It can be difficult if your partner makes decisions you don't agree with, but it's important to consider their feelings and respect their choices.

## Practical support

Many people want to carry on doing as much as possible during their treatment. However, side effects can make it more difficult to continue with everyday tasks, and asking for help is not always easy.

Offering to do more practical tasks can be a very useful way of supporting your partner. This could include:

- Shopping
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Washing
- Administration, such as sending emails or paying bills
- Childcare responsibilities
- Driving
- Gardening

It might be best to ask your partner what they would like you to do, so they can continue to do the things they want to do themselves. This will help them feel in control.

## Changes to your relationship

When your partner is diagnosed with breast cancer it will often change your relationship with them.

Some couples become closer and their relationship gets stronger.

But if your partner was previously independent and becomes emotionally or practically dependent on you, this can put a strain on your relationship.

A cancer diagnosis and treatment might mean you and your partner adopt different roles in the relationship compared to before. This can be difficult to cope with.

Your partner's perspective may change, and you both might focus on new priorities and re-evaluate what's important.

Counselling can be very helpful, and discussing your feelings with someone impartial can help you both to see things more clearly. Organisations like Relate (details on page 33) offer relationship counselling. Many hospitals also have counselling services, some specialising in cancer, and there may be services in your local community too.

## LGBTQ+

Being diagnosed with breast cancer affects LGBTQ+ relationships in many of the same ways as heterosexual relationships. However, you may have different concerns if you or your partner identify as LGBTQ+.

Your partner's healthcare team will be better able to support you both as a couple if they are aware of your sexuality. It can help to talk to your partner about any concerns either of you may have about this. You can find further support and information at LGBT Foundation, Stonewall and OUTpatients.

## Sex and intimacy

Being diagnosed with breast cancer will almost certainly affect how your partner feels about sex and intimacy.

They might experience a lack of confidence and altered body image due to the side effects of treatment.

Changes to your partner's body during and after treatment may also affect how you feel about them sexually. Getting used to looking at these changes together may help make being intimate easier in the long term. Sometimes, the longer you leave this the harder it can be.

You may both be too tired to even think about sex. Or you may want to have sex but both be nervous about how it will feel.

Although it's important not to make any demands on your partner, it's equally important you don't ignore your own feelings.

If you're frightened of hurting your partner during sex, let them know how you feel. It can be difficult to talk about sex, but articulating and listening to each other's concerns can help avoid misunderstandings.

You may be able to discuss and explore other ways to have sex or be intimate that are comfortable and satisfying for you both. Given time, the way you approach sex together can bring you closer.

Find out more about sex and intimacy during and after breast cancer in our booklet **Your body, intimacy and sex**.

If you're having problems, you and your partner might find it helpful to talk to the breast care nurse or GP. You might also find it useful to contact a specialist organisation like Relate or the College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists (COSRT), or to discuss your feelings with a counsellor, either together or separately.

## Fertility

Some breast cancer treatments can affect a woman's ability to become pregnant in the future. This may have a significant impact on your plans as a couple and might affect how you view your relationship in the long term.

If having children is important to you and your partner, fertility preservation can usually be offered before starting treatment. You and your partner can ask the specialist or breast care nurse about the different choices available and ask for a referral to a fertility specialist.

For more information about fertility, see our booklet **Fertility, pregnancy and breast cancer**.

## **Family and friends**

### **Telling family and friends**

Telling friends and family your partner has breast cancer can be very difficult. Before you do this, you and your partner may want to discuss who you want to tell and when and how much you want to tell them.

At first your partner may be reluctant to let people know. This is perfectly understandable. However, if you have a close network of family and friends it can be more stressful not telling them.

Some people may react to the news better than others, and some people won't know what to say. There may be friends or family members who can't deal with the news and withdraw from you. This can feel hurtful to you and your partner. Even if they're not directly affected, the reality of breast cancer or any serious illness can raise personal fears. You may want to stay in touch with these people in less direct ways, such as by email or text.

## **Involving family and friends**

Friends and family may offer their support straight away and go out of their way to help. But there may also be people who want to be supportive but don't know how to approach you because they worry about intruding at a difficult time.

If you and your partner would like to involve other people, it's important to find a way of telling them how they can help without putting them under any obligation.

Talk with your partner about the things you may be struggling with so that you know what to say if people do offer to help. It may be useful to offer a choice of tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping or collecting children from school, as it may be more convenient for someone to do one thing rather than another.

Sometimes it can be hard to let go of things you feel particularly responsible for, such as taking your partner to hospital appointments or food shopping. However, allowing someone else to help occasionally will free up your time and give you a chance to relax.

If there are times when you have plenty of practical help but don't have enough emotional support, a friend or a family member might be happy to listen to you. Try to maintain these relationships and any activities you share, as they may help you feel less isolated when people are rallying around your partner.

## Dealing with visitors

You may find that people drop in to see you and your partner. Although this is well-intended, unplanned visits can be inconvenient. If your partner is feeling upset or unwell, or if you're tired or not in the mood for company, this can be frustrating.

It might help to work out the times and days that are best for you both to have visitors. You can then let your friends and family know these. This way you'll be less likely to be caught at an inconvenient time.

There may be times when you prefer not to take phone calls. Letting people leave a message or encouraging them to text or email so you can respond when you're ready can help in the short term.

However, try not to put off calling people back as they may think you're avoiding them. If answering calls becomes too stressful, try emailing or texting people to keep them up to date, or ask a willing relative or friend to keep people informed on your behalf for a while.

Families can be complicated, and there may be some people who you have a strained relationship with. With so much happening in your life, you might think that now isn't a good time to be building bridges, or you may want to put things aside and resolve any issues. Try not to let any existing tension become worse, especially while you and your partner concentrate on the cancer treatment and its side effects.

## **If you have children**

If you have children, whatever their age, you may worry about how they will react to your partner's diagnosis.

Very young children may not understand at all, teenagers may not know how to deal with the situation, and adults may feel they should be old enough to cope but find it hard.

It's usually best if you and your partner decide together how and what to tell your children. Children are very good at picking up on other people's emotions and can often tell if something isn't right. If they think you're keeping a secret from them, they may feel left out and think they've done something wrong. Although every family is different and there are no set rules about talking to children, being open and honest with them helps them to trust you.

If your children live at home, your role in caring for them may change while your partner is having and recovering from treatment. Your children are likely to notice if your partner is less able to care for them, whether one of you has always taken most of the responsibility for looking after them or you have shared it equally.

The extra attention your children need may leave you feeling overwhelmed. Your partner may see a shift in their relationship with the children and may feel rejected, helpless or even jealous at times. Making any decisions concerning your children together will help your partner feel involved and ease some of the pressure on you.

If you would like to find out more, see our booklet **Talking with children about primary breast cancer**.

## Looking after yourself

To be there for your partner, you need to look after yourself.

Make sure you eat properly, get some regular exercise and try to get enough sleep.

It's also important you have some time for yourself. This could be going for a walk, having a drink with a friend or spending part of your day writing your thoughts in a diary. Allow yourself this time without feeling guilty.

If you're finding it difficult to do these things or are feeling overwhelmed, let a friend, family member or your GP know.

## Coping at work

Some people continue to work after a diagnosis of breast cancer and only take time off to attend appointments and undergo treatment. Others find it difficult to cope with work.

Partners of people with breast cancer can also find it difficult to continue working or to work the same hours as before.

You or your partner may need to stop working or reduce your hours at work. This may put pressure on your finances and change the dynamics of your relationship.

If your partner is being treated for breast cancer and you're struggling to continue working, you could consider talking to your employer about measures that might help you manage. You may be able to work flexible hours or take time off to be with your partner.

You could also look at ways to try to ease the pressure of your work. If your employer has an HR department or occupational health adviser, they may be able to offer you support at work.

## Talking to other people

It can help to talk to close friends or family about how you're feeling.

Occasionally you may feel very alone, even if you have friends and family around you. It can seem that no one else really understands what you're going through.

Having somebody to talk to can help you feel supported and prevent you becoming overwhelmed. Communicating with people in a similar situation can help. You may find our online forum or Someone Like Me service a good place to start.

You can also call our helpline on **0808 800 6000**.

## Life after breast cancer

As treatment varies from person to person, the time it takes to recover also varies. While chemotherapy may last a few months, hormone therapy can continue for several years.

When your partner does complete their treatment, you may have mixed emotions. While you will probably be keen to get your life back on track, you may also feel like things will never quite be the same as they were before.

There may be a huge sense of relief that the treatment is over, but you may also feel lost, frightened and unconfident. You may also feel like you are lacking support when hospital appointments and contacts become less frequent. This may make you feel uncertain about your role now.

It's likely this will be a strange time for your partner too, and some of the feelings you have may be very similar. The physical and emotional effects of breast cancer may also continue to have an impact on you both long after treatment comes to an end.

Your partner may continue to have check-ups and mammograms. When these appointments are due you may both feel worried and anxious that the cancer has come back. It's natural to feel like this, and the worry and anxiety usually lessen with time. But if you find yourself constantly worrying about your partner's cancer coming back, it might be helpful to talk to your GP or your partner's breast care nurse.

Some couples develop a new and more adventurous attitude to life after breast cancer, while others simply accept a new normal. You may discover a deeper bond with each other, or you may find that the feelings you once had for each other change.

Call our helpline on **0808 800 6000** or visit **[breastcancernow.org](https://breastcancernow.org)**

It's important to support your partner to move forward without putting pressure on them. When your partner has finished treatment, you might both want to read our booklet **Moving forward**. It looks at some of the common concerns people have once they have finished their hospital-based treatment.

## Useful organisations

### **College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists (COSRT)**

([cosrt.org.uk](http://cosrt.org.uk))

- Information and support about sexual and relationship issues, and find a therapist.

### **LGBT Foundation** ([lgbt.foundation](http://lgbt.foundation))

- Delivers advice, support and information services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities.

### **OUTpatients** ([outpatients.org.uk](http://outpatients.org.uk))

- Supports and advocates for LGBTIQ+ people affected by cancer.

### **Macmillan Cancer Support** ([macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk))

- Information and support on all aspects of cancer, from diagnosis and treatment to finances, work and practical issues.

### **Mind** ([mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk))

- Information about and help for mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

### **Relate** ([relate.org.uk](http://relate.org.uk))

- Offers counselling services for every type of relationship nationwide.

### **Stonewall** ([stonewall.org.uk](http://stonewall.org.uk))

- Supports lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people.



**We're the UK's leading breast cancer charity. And we're combining the power of science and support to change breast cancer.**

**Life-saving science**

Uncovering how breast cancer develops and spreads. New and better treatments that can find and destroy cancer cells. And one day, cures that can stop it in its tracks entirely.

**Life-changing support**

Expert information on everything from signs and symptoms to chemotherapy. Help so you can live well. Meeting people who are going through the same thing – people who just get it.

**Change-making campaigns**

Making sure everyone knows the importance of checking their breasts and chests, and the signs to look out for. Pushing for better diagnosis and care. Making sure everyone can get the drugs they need.

**We don't get any government or NHS funding for our information or support. We rely on our supporters to make change happen.**

So if you've found this information helpful and you'd like to support us, go to: **[breastcancernow.org/give](https://breastcancernow.org/give)**

# About this information

**When your partner has breast cancer** was written by Breast Cancer Now's clinical specialists, and reviewed by healthcare professionals and people affected by breast cancer.



For a full list of the sources we used to research it:  
Email **health-info@breastcancernow.org**



You can order or download more copies from:  
**breastcancernow.org/publications**



We welcome your feedback on this publication:  
**health-info@breastcancernow.org**



For a large print, Braille or audio CD version:  
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## Medical disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that our health information is accurate and up to date, but it doesn't replace the information and support from professionals in your healthcare team. So far as is permitted by law, Breast Cancer Now doesn't accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information included or referred to in it.

**BREAST  
CANCER  
NOW**

**Whatever breast cancer brings, we're here.**

Information on everything from symptoms to treatment and beyond. Support to help you live well. Meet people going through the same thing – people who just get it.

We're here with life-changing information and support now. Whatever you're going through. However you need it.

Call **0808 800 6000** to talk to one of our nurses.

Visit **breastcancernow.org** now for breast cancer information you can trust.

**Breast Cancer Now**

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10 Whitechapel High Street  
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Trusted  
Information  
Creator



Patient Information Forum

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