Stay safe in the sun

Latest sports and active wear

Keeping fit with secondary breast cancer

Hot topic
Angelina Jolie and breast cancer genes

Our Caribbean trekking challenge
Celebrating life after treatment

Join the breast cancer dragon boat movement
Welcome to Vita

Summer’s here! While the possibility of picnics in the park or barbecues in the garden might be welcome, if you’ve had or are having treatment for breast cancer, hotter weather can bring challenges. Whether you’re dealing with hot flushes, hair loss or lymphoedema, or just want to know how to stay safe and cooler during the warmer months, you’ll find plenty of tips on page 12.

When the sun’s shining, it’s the perfect time to get outdoors and do something active. But if you thought active wear was all about tight-fitting Lycra, take a look at the latest colourful, comfortable sports clothing on page 6.

There are plenty of ways to include activity in your life, whether it’s a brisk walk to the local shops or something a little more intrepid. Years after they were diagnosed with breast cancer, friends Elaine and Sue jetted off to Cuba for an amazing trekking challenge (page 8). And on page 10, Christine tells us why women around the world are getting into dragon boating after breast cancer treatment.

If you have secondary breast cancer, exercise expert Lizzy Davis gives her top tips for getting active on page 14. But many of her suggestions are just as suitable for people with primary breast cancer.

I hope you’ll be inspired to get outdoors and enjoy the summer… while it lasts!

Gareth Fletcher
Editor
vita@breastcancercare.org.uk
Inbox

Your letters, emails and tweets

This issue’s star letter wins a gift set worth £55 from our friends at Elemis.

A heartfelt thank you to Vita for being a constant source of inspiration during my rollercoaster ride since my breast cancer diagnosis in 2008.

My ‘little’ lump was already in my lymph nodes which led to two operations, chemo and radiotherapy. I was off work for a year and had to support myself and my eight-year-old son, as my husband had left me early on in my diagnosis. At one stage I did not think I could function or work again. I had been a career woman and, to be honest, I thought that I was going a bit mad. But I dug deep and found the strength to go back to work. Two months later I was made redundant. I hauled myself back on my feet again and found a position in a similarly demanding environment.

In 2012 my mum passed away and in 2013 I had a ‘preventative’ hysterectomy. I went back to work after three weeks. I am not Angelina Jolie. I am an ordinary working woman. There is no accolade other than the pride I have in my son, who is now almost 16 and is very much my driving factor. I am determined to live life to the full.

There are times, of course, when I feel very much alone, as my cancer story seems very old news to friends, so I do not talk about it. This is why Vita is so important to me. I have been truly touched and brought to tears by some of the articles, which have encapsulated my feelings in a way I would be unable to express.

Thank you Vita for making me feel that I am not a freak or unusual, but instead part of a family who love and support each other.

Alison

Get in touch with Vita

Tweet @Vita_mag
Email vita@breastcancercare.org.uk
Write Vita magazine, Breast Cancer Care, 5–13 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0NS
Don’t forget to visit Vita online...

www.vita.org.uk

You said it

Our Spring ‘Hot topic’ article – Cancer doesn’t end when treatment finishes – caused some discussion on Facebook. Here are some of the responses from readers...

‘I feel really ungrateful when I moan about my weight gain and my aching joints, because I’m still here one year on.’ Su

‘I still struggle 4 years after my treatment diagnosed at 36.’ Emma

‘I feel guilty about moaning about side effects but it’s a relief to know it’s fine to moan about them.’ Melanie

‘I was 47 when diagnosed with cancer and I have my 60th birthday in July so all good as at least I’m still here.’ Elaine

‘The fatigue is just the worst, I’ve never been the same since, but I’m here and am learning to accept things slowly – 6 years on!’ Jayne

Top tweet

Just received @Vita_mag so it’s stop everything and tea and a great read #winning @littlejem17
Secondary breast cancer pin

Breast Cancer Care has launched a new pin badge dedicated to those lost to and living with secondary breast cancer. This ribbon pin is in the shape of the Breast Cancer Care pink ribbon and features a stripe running through the centre.

To buy the badge, and to see other products that help Breast Cancer Care, visit shop.breastcancercare.org.uk

News and views

Do you know any local community groups?

Are you, or is someone you know, a member of a community group? Whether it’s your local Women’s Institute, Inner Wheel Club or any of the other wonderful local groups, we have a team of dedicated speakers ready to pay your group a visit to tell the story of Breast Cancer Care.

We’ll share the inspiring stories of the women we support, show you the difference Breast Cancer Care makes and answer any questions you may have about our work.

We’d love to hear from you. If you’re interested in receiving a talk, contact Katy on 020 7960 3503 or email fundraising@breastcancercare.org.uk
While the outcome of May’s General Election wasn’t as close-run as many had predicted, the preceding six weeks of the campaign were a big success for Breast Cancer Care. We worked hard to make sure breast cancer was high on the election agenda. We published our Breast Cancer Manifesto, which called on the next government to make progress on secondary breast cancer, younger women, and on body image.

Thousands of local candidates were contacted by people like you, informing them about the manifesto and asking them to champion breast cancer if they were elected. And volunteers ran five very successful Breast Cancer Question Time events in their constituencies, where local people asked in-depth questions to their candidates about breast cancer.

Now, though, the hard work begins. We’ll be working with the government and MPs from all parties to ensure the voices of those affected by breast cancer are heard in parliament. There’ll be plenty of opportunities to get involved, so watch this space.

Stories about breast cancer appear in newspapers, on TV and online all the time, but how can you tell if they’re accurate? For example, you may have seen a recent story suggesting that drinking coffee can reduce the risk of breast cancer coming back (recurrence). In this case, while the study was interesting, much more research is needed before we can fully understand the effects that coffee and caffeine might have on the risk of recurrence.

If a newspaper publishes a story about breast cancer that we think needs further explanation, we’ll often publish a summary on the Breast Cancer Care website www.breastcancer.org.uk

We know that after a diagnosis, many women want to know if there’s anything they can do to reduce their risk of recurrence. And making small changes, like maintaining a healthy weight and taking regular exercise, can help. You can find more information about healthy living on Vita online.
Active wear has come a long way in the past few years. Gone are the days when the choices for sports kit were black, black and more black. Now you’ll find rails filled with a rainbow of colours, bold prints and innovative design.

Brands are realising that their customers want to look good and feel comfortable not only at the gym, but on their way there too. The growing trend for active wear is towards clothes that you can wear while working out, but that you feel equally comfortable in popping to the shop or meeting a friend for a coffee. So you’ll find more softer ‘cotton feel’ fabrics and less shiny Lycra on the rails.

And where, a few years ago, your first port of call for new gym kit would have been a specialist sports retailer, there’s now a multitude of high-street names adding a fitness line to their range.

All of this growing choice in fabrics and colours means that the clothes you work out in can be just as much an expression of your style and personality as the clothes you wear for the rest of your day.

Have fun with bold colours or choose a subtle print, it’s up to you.

Laura Fountain looks at the latest colourful sports clothing and active wear to help you feel comfortable and confident.
Team a plain top with some boldly patterned bottoms or vice versa.

Seamless running top £12.99 from H&M

Sports top £7.99 from H&M

Pure Simple Sport interval all over print tights £24 from JD Sports

Post-surgery Dotty swimsuit £14 for George at ASDA

Tahiti high neck swimsuit £42 from Nicola Jane

Breast Cancer Care’s free DVD *Eat well, keep active after breast cancer* includes a fitness class which is suitable for people 12 weeks after surgery and beyond. The class aims to help you increase your fitness and improve your overall health and wellbeing. For a copy, call the Helpline on 0808 800 6000 or visit the website.
Real lives

Our Caribbean trekking challenge

Years after they were diagnosed with breast cancer, friends Elaine Nicholas, 58, and Sue Youngman, 63, from South Wales flew thousands of miles for an incredible walking challenge.

Elaine had fancied doing a charity trek for some time. But Sue was initially unsure about a five-day walk through Cuba’s Escambray Mountains. ‘I thought I was too old,’ she says. But she changed her mind after seeing a woman in her 70s in the local paper who’d done something similar. ‘I agreed to do it as a way to celebrate 10 years of finishing treatment,’ she says. The pair flew out in November 2014.

Elaine and Sue found they were the fittest and best prepared of their group, thanks to all the training they’d done in the Brecon Beacons. ‘Cuba was an amazing experience,’ says Elaine. ‘It was a challenge but every day we woke up with a smile on our face.’

A changed outlook
Elaine had never done anything so adventurous before she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006. ‘It never entered my head to do anything like that before,’ she says. ‘Breast cancer changed my outlook on life and made me want to grab experiences where I could.’

Elaine found the period when hospital treatment finished difficult. ‘Your support network stops a bit and everybody thinks you’re back to normal,’ she says. ‘But I found going back to work very tiring. I got quite down.’

Sue’s experience was similar. ‘I was a shadow of my former self,’ she says, ‘and had no idea how I was going to rebuild my life. Breast Cancer Care helped me pick up the pieces.’

Sue took early retirement from her job in 2008. ‘I wanted a better quality of life and more time for myself,’ she says. ‘But most of all I wanted a dog!’

A special bond
The two women met and became close friends in 2011 on a Breast Cancer Care fundraising committee.

Sue believes their shared experience of breast cancer means they have a very special bond. ‘There’s something different about someone who’s been through that experience,’ she says. ‘You know they’ll never get fed up of hearing about your breast cancer.’

Elaine agrees. ‘You can share your experiences with somebody who empathises. There are things that someone who hasn’t had cancer doesn’t understand.’

Elaine and Sue now volunteer in a range of roles for Breast Cancer Care, including leading a Best Foot Forward walking group.

They also fundraise for Team Barbra, carrying a giant pink bra (called Barbra, of course) around events including the Cardiff Half Marathon and 20-mile Blenheim Palace Ribbonwalk.

Team Barbra has raised more than £36,600 for Breast Cancer Care.

‘People see our passion and the amount of effort we put in and just want to help,’ says Sue. ‘And as volunteers we see the benefits the money brings.’

Visit www.breastcancercare.org.uk/treks to find out about fundraising treks.
While I was putting on my bra I felt a small hard ball, which I thought was a cyst. I was on holiday so when I got back I saw my doctor and she referred me to the hospital.

When I was told it was breast cancer I felt totally lost and terribly alone. I called my husband. I was crying in the street and he came to pick me up. It was really hard to tell my friends and family. I knew they would be devastated. I called my mum, who is always very positive, but she cried and was unable to stop. I remember that at the end she said: ‘I cried but now I won’t and we are going to help you win this fight.’

My husband was scared. We were both scared. I have two boys who were three and five at the time. We told them about the cancer and the treatment (I had chemotherapy, surgery and then radiotherapy). As they were younger it was easier as we were the only source of information for them.

**Designing my own hats**

When I lost my hair I couldn’t find headbands and turbans I liked. I would have liked to have found nicely designed headwear online so I didn’t have to go to a shop. So I started creating my own. At this time I was working in publishing and I was travelling a lot. After the cancer, I wanted to enjoy life with my family and friends and to do something to help women affected by cancer.

We were living in France, my treatment had ended and a great opportunity came up to live in the UK. I set up my online business, Sowomen, producing the kind of hats I wished I’d been able to find online.

**Rose magazine**

While we were in France, I found out about a charity and magazine called Rose. It’s exactly the magazine I would have loved to read when I was having treatment. It’s distributed free in hospitals across France. It’s like Vogue for women with cancer. It’s all about how to feel better and where to get help.

I’d like to launch Rose magazine in the UK as a new charity. Sadly a lot of younger women are diagnosed with cancer and I think they would enjoy reading it.

I’d also like to develop Sowomen more by offering new products to help women with cancer feel more comfortable, confident and stylish.

I now enjoy spending time with my family and friends every day. I also do a lot of sport, including running, which helps me to feel healthy.

Visit Carine’s website www.sowomen.co.uk or email her at carine@sowomen.co.uk
The link between dragon boating – an activity that started in China over 2,000 years ago – and breast cancer may not be obvious. But dragon boat teams made up of people who’ve had breast cancer have been growing in popularity since the movement began in Canada in 1996.

Set up to challenge the conventional wisdom that after treatment, women should avoid upper body exercise for fear of developing lymphoedema, the dragon boat movement has since spread internationally. Now the benefits of physical activity for people with breast cancer are well known, and there’s evidence that regular exercise doesn’t cause or worsen lymphoedema. Today teams from all over the world meet and compete every four years at a festival of dragon boating.

Christine Bailey has been a member of the Pink Champagne Dragon Boat team in Bournemouth since 2009. She’d been diagnosed with breast cancer the year before. ‘I was very depressed and tearful after my treatment,’ she says. ‘I found out about the dragon boat team through the breast care nurses at the hospital, and I’ve never looked back.’

The Pink Champagne Dragon Boat team started in 2008. ‘The name Pink Champagne was chosen as a celebration of life,’ says Christine. ‘We have now about 35 ladies paddling. We paddle every Saturday morning all year round, and Monday evenings in the summer. The ladies range in age from their 30s to our oldest member who is 74. The older ones keep up with the younger ones. Age doesn’t mean anything, we feel 18 again as we paddle our boat.

‘It’s a good way to keep fit and lose weight, but it’s so much more than that. It gives you drive. Working as a team to get the dragon boat through the water is really uplifting. Going down the Christchurch River on a Saturday morning, when everyone else is shopping, really clears your head and makes you feel alive.’

The highlights for Christine are the friendships she’s formed and the excitement of meeting new people. ‘We’re always spreading the word that anyone with breast cancer has a seat on our boat.’

Dragon boating has taken Christine and the Pink Champagne team all over the world, from Dublin and Venice to festivals in Peterborough Canada and Sarasota USA.

‘It’s wonderful meeting people you’d never meet in ordinary life. You may not speak their language but you give them a hug and a kiss. They’re your friends.’

For more information about the Pink Champagne Dragon Boat team, visit www.pinkchampagne.org.uk
I didn’t want to be pitied

Two years after her own breast cancer treatment finished, Yvonne Dapaah helped develop and run a pilot programme supporting women whose hospital treatment had recently ended.

Yvonne, who had surgery for breast cancer in December 2012, attended a Breast Cancer Care Moving Forward course. ‘Going on Moving Forward changed my life,’ she says. ‘I didn’t know that there was life after cancer because cancer was all I thought about.

‘You have your friends and family around you, who love you, but no one really knows how you feel. You don’t want to be pitied, you want to meet someone who understands.’

On the course, Yvonne met and made friends with other women in her situation. She also found the information she was given invaluable. ‘Before Moving Forward, I didn’t know that I could exercise,’ she says. ‘I didn’t know the signs or symptoms of a recurrence to look out for. And it was amazing to meet other people like me.’

Two years on, Yvonne still feels the effects of breast cancer treatment. ‘I still have pain from my surgery – a double mastectomy. And every morning when I wake up my arms are quite stiff.

‘My mind is back to normal, but my body isn’t the same. And it doesn’t look the same. I have scars that remind me of breast cancer every day when I look in the mirror.’

Yvonne began volunteering for Breast Cancer Care to give something back. She became involved with planning a new pilot programme, called PROWESS (which stands for Promoting Recovery, Wellbeing, Equality and Support in Survivorship). The first pilot programme, which offered support in the community to women after their hospital treatment, took place over five weeks in 2015.

‘We had lots of meetings to talk about what the women would find useful, as well as workshops with healthcare professionals and training. We also went out into the community to promote the programme and recruit women.’

Among the aims of PROWESS are showing women where to go if they have health concerns or side effects; allowing them to get emotional support from other women who’ve had breast cancer; and giving them information to manage their own health in future.

‘The pilot went better than we’d hoped. We had a small group, so they were able to get a lot out of it. Some of the women were nervous and anxious at the start, but they loved it. They thought the best thing was having us, the volunteers, there because we knew what they were going through.

‘There were women who’d never spoken to anyone about their cancer before. I was glad to be a part of it.’

For more information about the PROWESS pilot visit www.breastcancercare.org.uk/prowess
Stay safe and cooler in the sun

With summer here, you may be concerned about the effects of hot weather during and after breast cancer treatment. Katie Parsons suggests ways to manage symptoms and stay comfortable in the heat.

Skincare

Breast cancer treatments such as radiotherapy and chemotherapy can make skin more sensitive.

Take care in the sun by covering your skin and wearing a hat. Use a sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF) and avoid the hottest part of the day (11am–3pm). Remember, it’s also possible to get sunburnt through clothing, so apply sunscreen underneath your clothes too.

Radiotherapy

If you’re having radiotherapy, avoid exposing the treated area to sun during treatment and afterwards, until any skin reaction has settled down. Make sure the area is covered or apply a high-factor sunscreen when you’re out in the sun, even when treatment is finished.

Lymphoedema

Lymphoedema causes the skin to stretch and it can become dry, flaky, itchy and prone to infection. Wear loose cotton clothes with long sleeves to protect the affected area from the sun, and wear a compression garment if you’ve been given one by your specialist. You should also try to avoid extremes of temperature – getting too hot then too cold, or too cold then too hot.

Avoid getting sunburnt, and use a good-quality sunscreen with a high SPF (such as SPF 50–60). Keep the affected areas covered. You can still burn through compression garments, particularly synthetic ones. Your lymphoedema specialist can advise you on which garments will offer the most sun protection.

Hair loss

If you’ve lost your hair because of chemotherapy, wear a hat or headscarf to keep your head covered while outside to help prevent burning. The most comfortable scarves are made from a natural fabric that’s gentle on the scalp and allows it to breathe. Soft cotton is probably best, as satin and silk materials can slide off the head more easily.

Wigs can sometimes feel hot and itchy, particularly in warmer weather, but you can try wearing a thin cotton lining or skullcap under your wig. You can buy these from wig suppliers or find them online.

Breast Cancer Care’s HeadStrong service can show you how to make the most of alternatives to wigs by using scarves, hats and other headwear.

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Hot flushes

Menopausal symptoms, including hot flushes, can be caused by treatments such as chemotherapy, hormone (endocrine) therapy or ovarian suppression (stopping the ovaries working). Hot flushes can vary for each person, from a couple a day to a few every hour. They range from a mild sensation of warming that just affects the face, to waves of heat throughout the body. Some women also experience drenching perspiration affecting the entire body.

Hot flushes can feel more intense during hot weather, so keep cool by using a fan, wearing loose-fitting cotton clothing and drinking plenty of water. Getting to know what triggers your hot flushes can help you avoid them. You can find out more about this in Breast Cancer Care’s Menopausal symptoms and breast cancer booklet.
Nordic Walking UK defines Nordic walking as an enhancement of ordinary walking using poles. Using the poles exercises upper body muscles as well as the legs, and gives support to propel the walker along.

I started Nordic walking in September 2014. I’d done a taster session organised by a local breast cancer support group and asked the breast care nurses at the hospital to refer me to the local council’s HEAL [Health, Exercise, Activity and Lifestyle] scheme. This promotes health and exercise for people following a cancer diagnosis. I completed the initial six-week training course and went on to train as a walk leader.

It has helped enormously with my recovery. It helped me to get fit again and, as a consequence, lose the weight I put on through inactivity and drugs during my treatment. It gave a structure to my life again with the weekly class, and it has become a sort of informal support network of women in the same situation. I have made some great friends through waking.

I’m not the most co-ordinated of people so I was a bit confused by the technique to start with and often found my arms and legs out of synch, but it quickly started to make sense and is now automatic.

I enjoy the walking itself as I walk everywhere on a day to day basis and very rarely use the bus or car. I also enjoy the social side of the group and the friends I have made through it. Our walks always end with coffee and cake at a local cafe!

Jane Eddleston
www.york.gov.uk/heal
Exercise may be the furthest thing from your mind if you’re having cancer treatment. But evidence is emerging about the benefits of physical activity for those living with secondary breast cancer (when cancer cells from the breast have spread to other parts of the body).

Although traditionally people with secondary cancer were told not to exercise, it’s now generally accepted that rest is not always best.

Research has shown that doing some regular physical activity, even for just 10 minutes at a time, can help boost energy levels and improve quality of life. Exercise can help you take control of your physical and mental wellbeing, and it doesn’t have to be strenuous or difficult to make a difference.

How much should I do?
Current guidelines recommend 30 minutes of activity five times a week. This can feel like a lot, and it may be easier to start slowly and break it up into more manageable sessions.

To start with, I suggest focusing on trying to break up the time you spend sitting down or being inactive. Five or ten minutes of walking might be enough at first. But over time, you should be able to walk for longer and possibly at a more strenuous pace.

The amount you do will depend on how you feel. Acknowledge your physical limitations and match your activity to how you’re feeling.

Five tips for getting started and staying motivated
• Find an activity you enjoy. This can include gardening and housework too!
• Set realistic goals, start slowly and build up gradually.
• Plan ahead and allow for changes as how you feel may vary from day to day.
• Take the stairs instead of the lift, get off the bus one stop earlier, or catch up with a friend over a walk rather than a coffee.
• Keep track of your activity using a diary, smart phone app or pedometer.

Aim to have a consistent routine. We all know that once we get out of a routine, it’s hard to find it again!

If you’re having treatment or have side effects
• Seek support from your medical team so you know what precautions to take and how to exercise safely.
• Try to walk even if it’s just around the house or garden.
• When your energy levels are low, try some breathing, stretching or balance exercises.
• Schedule activity for when you have the most energy in the day.
• Listen to your body and make a note of how you feel before and after your exercise.
• Progress at your own pace and know when to rest.

Five benefits of staying active
Regular physical activity may help:
• reduce the impact of treatment- or cancer-related side effects, such as fatigue, pain, nausea, lymphoedema and breathlessness
• control weight
• improve muscular strength and stamina and maintain bone health
• reduce anxiety and depression, and improve mood
• regulate blood pressure.

Exercise and secondary breast cancer in the bones
Physical activity may help strengthen the bones and reduce pain. Choose low-impact exercises and avoid contact sports.
• Walking is a great choice for bone strengthening.
• Swimming and riding a stationary bike are safe options too.
• Avoid extreme range of motion, such as twisting or large forward bends of the spine.
• Choose exercises that have a low risk of falling.
Exercise and secondary breast cancer in the lungs
Breathlessness, coughing and pain can all be symptoms of secondary breast cancer in the lungs. Research has found that when people with respiratory disease exercise regularly they are less breathless, have more stamina, are better able to perform everyday tasks and have a better quality of life. Light exercise can help increase the flow of oxygen to your blood. Incorporate daily breathing exercises, taking slow, steady, deep breaths, and try to visualise a setting that relaxes and calms you.

Exercise and secondary breast cancer in the liver
Some people with secondary breast cancer in the liver have no symptoms while others have a combination of pain, nausea, loss of appetite, hiccups, tiredness and fatigue. While physical activity may help reduce some symptoms, listen to your body and don’t push too hard.

Exercise and secondary breast cancer in the brain
Depending on where exactly secondary breast cancer in the brain is, the symptoms may include headaches, nausea, blurred vision, seizures, and dizziness or balance problems. While these symptoms may not prevent you from exercising, it’s important to choose a suitable activity so you don’t put yourself at unnecessary risk of injury. For example, an exercise bike may be better than cycling outdoors for people with balance problems. For safety, avoid exercising alone.

Try the following affirmations to keep yourself motivated.
‘Becoming stronger can help me regain the feeling of controlling my life and my body.’
‘I have already faced one of the hardest things in life. I can handle a little exercise.’

You can visits Lizzie’s website at www.canexercise.co.uk
For a copy of Breast Cancer Care’s Secondary breast cancer resource pack, go to www.breastcancercare.org.uk/publications or call 0808 800 6000.
I’m about to start treatment for breast cancer and want to take some vitamin and herbal supplements. Is there anything I should be aware of?

Many people ask about taking vitamin or herbal supplements during their treatment as they want to do as much as possible to be healthy. They often believe that these types of supplements are safe as they’re considered natural, but some may interfere with cancer treatments. There’s limited and sometimes conflicting evidence about the safety and effectiveness of many of these products.

Some vitamins, particularly high-dose antioxidants (including vitamins A, C and E, co-enzyme Q10 and selenium) may affect treatments such as radiotherapy or chemotherapy. Our Chemotherapy for breast cancer and Radiotherapy for primary breast cancer booklets provide further information. Some herbs have anticoagulant (blood thinning) properties, so you might be advised to stop certain herbal supplements before treatment such as surgery or chemotherapy.

Many breast cancers are stimulated by the hormone oestrogen to grow (known as oestrogen receptor positive or ER+ breast cancer). Some herbal supplements contain phytoestrogens. Phytoestrogens are natural plant-based oestrogens and have a similar chemical structure to the hormone oestrogen. At the moment, there’s not enough evidence to make recommendations on the use of supplements that contain phytoestrogens in women with breast cancer, so most doctors would advise against taking these.

You may want to look at the website www.cam-cancer.org which provides information about individual herbs and supplements. The Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre, based in the US, has an ‘About herbs’ section on its website. Our Complementary therapies booklet also contains general information about herbal remedies.

If you’re unsure about which supplements you should avoid, speak to your hospital specialist or GP (local doctor).

After treatment (surgery to the breast including mastectomy, lymph node surgery and radiotherapy), it’s possible to develop swelling in the breast or chest wall. This happens when the surgery or radiotherapy has caused damage to the lymphatic system.

Lymphoedema of the breast is different to normal post-operative breast swelling, which usually settles down after a few weeks.

We don’t know for certain why some people develop lymphoedema after treatment and others don’t. Signs and symptoms in addition to the breast being swollen include:

- the breast can feel heavier, firm and hard
- the skin can feel tighter, tender or painful
- the skin can be a red/pink colour and feel warm
- dimpling can appear on the breast giving an orange peel look (known as ‘peau d’orange’).
It’s possible to manage breast lymphoedema using a variety of approaches. Skincare is important and a lymphoedema specialist can advise you how to do this. The specialist will assess your breast and you may be measured for a compression bra or vest. Compression garments are designed to prevent further swelling by encouraging the lymph fluid to drain away from the affected area.

Wearing a well-fitting bra is important, and it may also help to sleep in a supportive bra. Your lymphoedema specialist may give you foam pads to put into a bra which can help soften the area by providing a massaging effect.

Other treatments that may be used to help manage your lymphoedema are:
- Kinesio taping: an adhesive tape applied to the skin
- Self lymphatic drainage (SLD): a massage technique that can be taught to you by your lymphoedema specialist
- Manual lymphatic drainage (MLD): a type of skin massage carried out by a trained therapist.

You can read more about these treatments in our Living with Lymphoedema booklet.

Maintaining a healthy weight can improve lymphoedema. Research has shown that physical activity helps increase lymph drainage and can reduce swelling. Swimming is particularly helpful for people with breast lymphoedema but any regular activity such as walking may help reduce your swelling. You can ring our free Helpline on 0808 800 6000 to order our Eat well, keep active after breast cancer DVD and for further information. The Lymphoedema Support Network produces information on breast lymphoedema and also has an information and support line 020 7351 4480.
The Royal Marsden Cancer Cookbook is more than a collection of recipes. The book begins with a lengthy section covering a wealth of topics, from how cancer treatment can affect diet and how to eat healthily during and after treatment, to the best ways to lose weight and what the evidence says about so-called ‘superfoods’.

The recipes – all reviewed by Consultant Dietitian Clare Shaw – are grouped into ‘during treatment’ (dishes with more energy and in a form that’s easy to eat) and ‘after treatment’ (healthy options that encourage a balanced diet).

Salmon (or tofu) with soba noodles and oriental greens

Serves 2
• small piece of fresh ginger, grated
• 2 garlic cloves, crushed
• 1 tbsp honey
• 2 tbsp soy sauce
• 1 tbsp mirin or sweet sherry
• 2 salmon fillets or 1 packet of firm tofu
• 100g dry soba noodles or 200g ready cooked
• 1 tsp sesame oil
• 2 tsp vegetable oil
• 2 spring onions, sliced into rounds
• bag of pak choi (about 6 heads) or other Chinese greens
• 1 tsp sesame seeds (optional)
• salt and freshly ground black pepper

Put the ginger, garlic, honey, soy sauce and mirin in a bowl and mix together. Season with salt and pepper. Add the salmon fillets or tofu and turn over so all the sides are completely coated in the marinade. Leave for at least 30 minutes to marinate, but longer if you have it.

If using uncooked noodles, cook them according to the packet instructions. Drain and toss them in the sesame oil and leave to cool.

Heat the vegetable oil in a frying pan. Drain the salmon, reserving the marinade. Place the salmon, skin-side down, in the oil and fry for 3 minutes, then flip over and cook for a further couple of minutes. Remove from the pan.

Add the spring onions and pak choi to the pan, and sauté for a couple of minutes, then pour in the reserved marinade. Allow to sizzle for a minute or two, then add a splash of water. The greens should wilt down very quickly.

To serve, remove and discard the skin from the salmon and break the flesh into pieces. Pile on top of the noodles, then add the greens and pour over any liquid left in the frying pan. Serve sprinkled with the sesame seeds, if using.

Cauliflower, chickpea and spinach curry

Serves 4
• 1 cauliflower, separated into small florets
• 1 tbsp vegetable oil
• 1 tsp cumin seeds
• 1 tsp nigella (black onion) seeds
• 1 onion, finely chopped
• 2 green chillies, finely chopped
• 1 piece fresh ginger, grated
• 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
• 1 tsp ground coriander
• 1/2 tsp turmeric
• 1/2 tsp ground fenugreek
• pinch of ground cinnamon
• 150ml hot vegetable stock or water
• 12 tomatoes, finely chopped
• 1 can chickpeas (about 240g drained weight)
• 250g spinach leaves, well washed
• squeeze of lemon juice
• salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring a saucepan of water to the boil and add salt. Add the cauliflower florets and blanch for about 3 minutes until just al dente. Drain and refresh under cold water.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the cumin and nigella seeds, and fry for a minute, then add the onion, chillies and ginger. Cook for a few minutes until the onion has softened, then add the garlic and all the spices. Pour in the stock, add the tomatoes and season with salt and pepper. Simmer for 5 minutes, then add the cauliflower florets, chickpeas and spinach leaves. Don’t worry about the spinach leaves crowding the saucepan, they will wilt down in no time.

When the spinach has wilted, taste for seasoning. Add more salt and pepper if necessary and then add a squeeze of lemon juice.
Divide the fruit between two glass dishes or large ramekins.

Mix together the double cream and Greek yogurt, until well combined, thick, but not set. Spoon this over the fruit.

Sprinkle the sugar over the cream and yogurt. You will need to do this in a very thick layer. Put in the fridge to chill for around 30 minutes. The sugar will dissolve into a dark lake. To introduce a little crunch, sprinkle over a little more sugar or eat with a thin, sweet biscuit.

Prue Leith’s muscovado heaven

You can use any fresh fruit or compôte, or even canned fruit, which takes even less preparation. Prue says it is particularly delicious with fresh mango or passion fruit, but use whatever takes your fancy.

Serves 2
- 200–250g fruit
- 100ml double cream
- 100ml Greek yogurt
- 4 tbsp muscovado sugar

The Royal Marsden Cancer Cookbook, by Clare Shaw and Catherine Phipps, is published by Kyle Books, priced £19.99.
Baldly Beautiful
Mum of two Andrea Pellegrini was 39 when she was treated for breast cancer.
A trained make-up artist, Andrea set up a YouTube channel to give make-up tutorials for women going through chemotherapy. The channel – called Baldly Beautiful – currently has 11 videos, covering topics from eyebrows and skincare to contouring and headscarf tying.
‘Starting up Baldly Beautiful really helped me have a focus while going through treatment,’ says Andrea, ‘and gave me something positive to do with my time. Helping others who, unlike me, aren’t make-up experts and don’t know how to make themselves feel and look better with make-up gave me a real sense of achievement and made me feel really happy.
‘Losing your hair, eyebrows and eyelashes is devastating. It’s horrific when you look in the mirror and don’t recognise yourself. But a bit of make-up and knowing how to apply it can change all that and give you the confidence to take on the world.’
Although Andrea is now at the end of her hospital treatment, she intends to keep Baldly Beautiful going.

App review: Smiling Mind
Available on iPhone, Android and desktop (free to install)

What’s the app for?
A lot is being written about the use of mindfulness to bring a sense of calm, clarity and contentment to daily life, particularly after a cancer diagnosis. Mindfulness is about focusing on the present moment to help reduce stress and improve quality of life. By being mindful, we become more aware of the sights, smells, sounds and tastes that are around us at any one time, as well as the thoughts and feelings that happen from one moment to the next.

Who is the app for?
It’s for anyone who wants to practise mindfulness meditation. This particular app has sections that are specific for all different age groups, from seven up to adult.

What I like about the app
• It’s easy to use.
• It guides you clearly through each section.
• The voice on the app is very easy to listen to.
• Before and after each meditation, you’re invited to assess how you’re feeling and how this might have changed after the meditation.
• You choose the length of meditation you have time for, from 2 to 8 minutes.

Reviewed by Rachel Rawson, Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist

ince Angeline Jolie revealed in May 2013 that she’d had a risk-reducing double (bilateral) mastectomy, the topic of breast cancer, family history and genes has had lots of media attention. Her further announcement in March 2015 that she’d had her ovaries and fallopian tubes removed, to reduce her risk of ovarian cancer, hit the headlines once again.

Breast cancer in families is a complex and sometimes confusing topic. And many women who’ve had breast cancer worry about what it means for their family members.

Worried about family members
If you’ve had breast cancer, you might have wondered whether other family members are also at risk. However, the vast majority of breast cancers are not inherited.

Having breast cancer yourself doesn’t necessarily mean that another relative, such as your daughter for example, will be at greater risk.

As breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, it’s also possible for more than one person in the same family to have it by chance.

Altered genes
A small number of women have breast cancer because they inherited an altered gene.

Women with an altered BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene have a higher risk of both breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Angelina Jolie has an altered BRCA1 gene – BRCA is short for BReast CAncer.

Having an altered gene doesn’t mean a person will definitely get one of these cancers, and the exact risk varies between people.

Only a small number of people will be offered genetic testing to look for altered genes, and this can only happen following genetic counselling.

Surgery and other options
If someone has been assessed as being at high risk of breast cancer because of their family history, there are several options open to them. These include regular breast screening with mammograms (breast x-rays) and MRI scans of the breasts; drug treatments to reduce the risk of breast cancer; and risk-reducing surgery.

Risk-reducing surgery involves removing both breasts – a bilateral (double) mastectomy. Like Angelina Jolie, women who have a bilateral mastectomy are usually offered reconstruction of their breasts.

While this type of surgery significantly reduces the risk of developing breast cancer by 90–95%, it cannot remove the risk completely.

Women who haven’t gone through the menopause may also be offered surgery to remove their ovaries and fallopian tubes to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer and breast cancer.

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More information
Breast Cancer Care’s booklet Breast cancer in families explains what a family history is and what it may mean to you and your family. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) also has an easy-to-understand guide called Familial Breast Cancer (www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg164/informationforpublic).

If you’ve had breast cancer and are concerned about your family history, speak to a member of your breast care team, who may be able to refer you directly to a genetic counsellor (a healthcare professional with specialist knowledge about genetics and inherited illnesses) or clinical geneticist (a doctor with specialist training in genetics).
Gimme a *bake*!

Strawberry Tea season is here, and what better excuse for a spot of baking? Try this delicious twist on a French classic.

**Sweet Eve strawberry and blackberry clafoutis**

*Serves 6*
- a little butter for greasing
- 150g Sweet Eve strawberries, halved
- 150g blackberries
- 1 tbsp brandy
- 60g plain flour
- 1/2 level tsp baking powder
- 100g caster sugar
- a pinch of salt
- 3 large free range eggs
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 250ml single cream
- icing sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease a baking dish.

In a bowl mix the strawberries and blackberries with the brandy and allow to sit.

Sift the flour into a bowl and stir in the baking powder, sugar and salt. In a separate dish whisk the eggs, vanilla and cream together then slowly add the mix to the flour, stirring until you have a smooth batter.

Place the brandied fruit into the greased dish, arranging it so that the rounded sides of the strawberries face upwards and pour the batter over the top.

Bake for 35 minutes until puffed up and golden brown.

Remove from the oven, dust with the icing sugar and serve.

**Get together with friends and do something lovely with strawberries**

Small or big, simple or fancy. In the garden, on a sunny kitchen table, at a picnic, even at work. However you do it, you’ll be raising money to help someone facing breast cancer get the support they need.

Order your free Strawberry Tea Starter Kit today at www.breastcancercare.org.uk/treat or call 0300 100 4442.

Thanks to Sweet Eve for this recipe
sweetevestrawberry.co.uk
The incredible 8,000-mile Ocean challenge

On 20 April 2015, a team of four incredible women set off in a 29-foot pink rowing boat – called Doris – on an epic challenge to row unsupported across the Pacific Ocean. The Coxless Crew aim to raise £250,000 and awareness for Breast Cancer Care and Walking With The Wounded, supporting women who have had to face adversity and overcome life-changing events.

The team is made up of Laura Penhaul, Emma Mitchell, Natalia Cohen and Isabel Burnham, with Lizanne Van Vuuren and Meg Dyos swapping with Isabel for the second and third leg respectively. They are ordinary women setting out to achieve something extraordinary.

The 8,446-mile journey from San Francisco to Cairns, Australia, via Hawaii and Samoa, is likely to take six months, with the women rowing in pairs in shifts of two hours on, two hours off, 24 hours a day. The team has to cope with huge sea swells, storms, cramped conditions and putting on wet clothes for their stint on the oars. They’re each burning 5,000 calories a day and enduring sea sickness, blisters and mental and physical exhaustion.

The Crew says: ‘The row has definitely already been the hardest thing physically and mentally we’ve ever done, and we have so much further to go yet. Knowing that the money we raise will go to support amazing women facing the challenges of breast cancer keeps us rowing.’

You can follow Doris and the team’s journey through a live tracker on their website coxlesscrew.com and on Twitter @coxlesscrew.

If you’d like to support the Coxless Crew you can text ‘DORIS’ to 70300 to sponsor £3.
Thank you, Dorothy Perkins!
Dorothy Perkins celebrated 10 years of its partnership with Breast Cancer Care by raising £94,000 over the past year. Stores up and down the country held Pink Fridays throughout October and also asked their customers to add a £1 donation onto their bill.
The Lakeside store in Thurrock held its first event of 2015 over Easter, with an Easter bonnet and all things pink fancy dress day. A few members of the team also took on the Electric Run at Wembley in May.
The Dorothy Perkins team will continue its fundraising in 2015 with a host of exciting fundraising ideas.

Newbury teams up with Breast Cancer Care
Newbury Racecourse will be supporting Breast Cancer Care with this year’s Ladies Day event.
Alongside a day of top-class racing, there will be plenty to keep racegoers entertained off the track, with the chance to win a holiday to Florida worth £4,500 in the ‘Most Stylish Racegoer’ competition, a cocktail mixologist show and street performers.
Music will also feature throughout the day, including an after-racing party featuring the ABBA tribute band Bjorn Again.
Donations from ticket sales, including a special strawberry afternoon tea package, and fundraising on the day will raise at least £25,000 for Breast Cancer Care’s services.
Newbury Racecourse has kindly offered Breast Cancer Care supporters a special discount of £5 off the price of a Premier Enclosure badge. Just enter promo code BCC15 when you book online at http://goo.gl/yHUK49

Roberts Radio tunes in
Roberts Radio is supporting Breast Cancer Care by donating £10 from the sale of the limited edition range of its Revival Mini, available in hot pink, marine teal and zesty lime. The Revival Mini offers style and superb sound quality with up to eight hours of battery life, making it truly portable. You can also link up an iPod or MP3 player to play personal playlists through the speaker.
The radio costs £130 (RRP) and is available from www.robertsradio.co.uk

Nominate Breast Cancer Care!
Do you or your family and friends work for a company that has a charity of the year?
Charity of the year campaigns are an excellent way to raise money for our services and engage new people with our work. Many companies give their staff the option to nominate and vote for their favourite charities, so keep an eye out for upcoming opportunities to put forward Breast Cancer Care.
Don’t forget to let us know that you’ve nominated Breast Cancer Care by calling Anna on 020 7960 3410.
Helping you face breast cancer

Looking ahead to life after treatment?

Moving Forward short courses
Looking at issues you may face after treatment, our short courses provide support and information on adjusting to life after a cancer diagnosis. Run in partnership with the NHS, courses take place across the UK.

Lingerie Evenings
For more confidence choosing a bra after surgery, join other women and trained fitters at a Lingerie Evening.
- Llandudno, 23 July
- Kent, 1 October
- Glasgow, 8 October
- London, 15 October

Best Foot Forward walking groups
For people of all fitness levels, walks last around 30 minutes, follow an easy route and finish at a local café for a cup of tea and a chat.
- Barnsley • Cardiff • Halifax
- Huddersfield • Salford • Sheffield
- Stockport

Moving Forward Information Sessions
Relaxed talks on Moving Forward topics, with a chance to ask questions and chat with others.
• Breast reconstruction
  Lanarkshire, 12 August
  Edinburgh, 7 October
• Complementary therapies
  Cardiff, 15 July
• Lingerie Session
  Barnsley, 28 August
• Managing menopausal symptoms
  London, 8 July
• Post-surgery bras and prostheses
  Huddersfield, 29 July
  Doncaster, 31 July
  Wythenshawe, 2 October
• Relaxation
  Cardiff, 30 September
• Signs and symptoms of a possible recurrence
  Solihull, 1 October

To find out more

Call our friendly Services team for more information about the support we offer on

0345 077 1893

We’re adding new dates and locations all the time, so if you don’t see a time that works for you, please get in touch.

Younger Women Together
Two days of information, support and sharing. Come to a Younger Women Together event and meet around 30 other women under 45 who’ve been diagnosed with primary breast cancer. All food and accommodation provided free. Email youngerwomen@breastcancercare.org.uk to find out more.
- Manchester, 18/19 September

Living with Secondary Breast Cancer
Regular meet-ups for people living with secondary breast cancer. With expert guest speakers. Email secondarieservices@breastcancercare.org.uk to find out more.
- Birmingham • Bristol • Cardiff
- Derby • Edinburgh • Forth Valley
- Glasgow • Halifax/Huddersfield
- Lanarkshire • Leeds • Liverpool
- Llandudno • Manchester
- North London/Hertfordshire
- Oxford • Romford • Sheffield
- Sutton/South London
- York/Harrogate
**TenderCush**

offers comfort and support following breast cancer surgery. Whether you’re sleeping, travelling, around the home or socialising, our products are specially designed to help. Our fabulous patented Shoulder Bag is a truly liberating product which offers support when out and about. Available now at www.tendercush.co.uk Tel 07980 470072. Also on Facebook and Twitter.

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**Anita Care** offers the most comprehensive range worldwide of silicone breast forms, beautiful and comfortable lingerie and stylish swimwear for all occasions. Designed specifically to give confidence and comfort to women who have undergone breast surgery using their 129 years of expertise. For all enquiries please call 020 8446 7478 or visit www.anita.com

**Banbury Postiche** offers a fantastic range of acrylic wigs with a next day delivery service available. We have a Customer Care team to support you, whatever your needs, our purely wigs range is guaranteed to have a style to suit and delight you. Please take a look at our website www.wigsuk.com or call 01295 757408.

**About The Girl**

Fabulous, stylish pocketed bikinis, tankinis and swimsuits, and gorgeous post-surgery lingerie. Receive a complimentary swim beanie with all pocketed swimwear purchases. Excellent personal customer services, advice and care, easy returns policy and quick despatch. Find our blog on style after surgery, visit www.aboutthegirl.co.uk or call 01444 417791.

**Amoena**

From gorgeous lingerie to luxurious loungewear, stunning swimwear and high-performance fitness clothing, we have just the right thing for every moment of your day. What’s more you can relax in the knowledge that, with their fine integral pockets, our bras and clothing will hold your breast form or partial shaper safely and securely. To browse or buy from our full range, go to www.amoena.co.uk or telephone us on 0845 072 4023 for our latest catalogue.

**Betty and Belle**

Winner of ‘Best lingerie shop in the UK’ award. Exquisite lingerie and specialist bra fitting shop with an extensive range of bras and swimwear to suit mastectomy, lumpectomy and reconstructions. Bra alteration and pocketing service.

Visit www.bettyandbelle.co.uk or call in at 35 Oxford Rd, Cheshire WA14 2ED; 0161 929 1472.

**The Bra Clinic Support after Surgery**

Mastectomy bra specialist Susan Cooper provides an essential specialist service for women when recovering from breast cancer surgery and treatment. For online shopping, clinics and information, visit www.thebraclinic.co.uk or call Susan on 07918 656 628 (m).

**Cool and Beautiful Nightwear**

Cool, ultra feminine, 100% cotton, mastectomy nightdresses. Discreetly pocketed for soft prostheses, with plenty of fabric in the skirt to allow for extra comfort. Designed as a result of personal experience and made in the UK. New nightdress available up to size 22 from www.coolandbeautiful.com or call 01568 750011 for more information.

**Nicola Jane**

With 30 years’ expertise in mastectomy fashion, our beautiful bras and stunning swimwear will help restore your confidence after surgery. All with fitted pockets to hold your prosthesis securely. Free returns and shops throughout the UK. Call 0845 265 7595 or visit www.nicolajane.com

**Pebble UK – Lymphedivas**

arm sleeves and gauntlets for lymphoedema, choose from over 80 different colours and designs. Made with moisture wicking fibres, unscented Aloe Vera treatment for skin friendly softness and fine knit construction for a lightweight feel. Available in three sizes, two arm lengths and two compressions.

Call 0800 433 4757 www.pebbleuk.com

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Our 2015 catalogue brings you stylish and supportive lingerie. Please check out our value-for-money range of everyday bras from £17.95 each (Diana and Victoria) or treat yourself to our French design heritage with Amelle or Suzanne, the latest addition to our range. Look no further for fashion and femininity! Call 01295 220524 or visit www.conturabelle.co.uk
Sowomen's headwear can help you manage your hair loss with confidence; our hats, turbans and scarves are made using soft, breathable fabric making them lightweight and easy to wear. ‘I believe that good headwear can really help women coping with hair loss to feel stylish, comfortable and confident’ says Carine, founder of Sowomen. Contact carine@sowomen.co.uk or visit www.sowomen.co.uk

Suburban Turban offers stylish, fashionable headwear and accessories for women experiencing hair loss. The collection offers styles for all occasions - from beautifully simple, super-soft jersey hats to chic berets and sparkling cocktail hats. We also offer a range of natural skincare products, chosen for their gentle, soothing benefits. To shop the range go to www.suburbanturban.co.uk Tel: 01306 640123

Womanzone ABC Distributer
NHS-approved specialists in caring for women after breast surgery. Working with healthcare professionals and Breast Cancer Care, we offer a wide range of lingerie, made-to-measure swimwear, free fitting and pocketing services. Visit our website www.womanzoneuk.co.uk for up to date products and prices or call us on 01925 220932.

Would you like to give something back?

We have many volunteering opportunities around the UK.
Whether you like the idea of supporting others, talking to groups, helping at our events, or just sharing your experiences, we’d love you to join us.

www.breastcancercare.org.uk/volunteer
Scotland and Northern Ireland
0345 077 1892
sco@breastcancercare.org.uk

Wales, South West and Central England
0345 077 1894
cym@breastcancercare.org.uk

East Midlands and the North of England
0345 077 1893
nrc@breastcancercare.org.uk

London and the South East of England
0345 077 1895
src@breastcancercare.org.uk

Free Helpline 0808 800 6000 Text Relay 18001
Calls may be monitored for training purposes. Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Breast Cancer Care.

LONDON
7 October 2015
Grosvenor House Hotel Park Lane, London

GLASGOW
4 November 2015
Radisson Blu Hotel, Glasgow

CARDIFF
15 March 2016
Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

Join us for a fashion show like no other! Celebrate our models’ strength and courage as they take to the catwalk following a diagnosis of breast cancer. Fashion, fundraising, fine food and first-class entertainment.

To book tickets, visit www.breastcancercare.org.uk/theshow or call 0345 092 0806.

Vita
To receive future issues of Vita email vita@breastcancercare.org.uk, call us on 0345 092 0808, or cut off this slip, fill in your details and return it in an envelope to our freepost address: Breast Cancer Care, RRKZ-ARZY-YCKG, 5-13 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0NS.

Name

Address

Postcode

If you have already sent us this form, you will continue to receive Vita four times per year. Breast Cancer Care volunteers will be sent Vita automatically. We will not pass your details on to any third parties. If you are a member of a support group or a healthcare professional and would like multiple copies, please call 0345 092 0808.