Care and support
for younger women with breast cancer

The charity building strength through support
When you’re young, breast cancer is often the last thing you expect to have to think about.

A diagnosis may feel overwhelming and isolating, and information on your particular concerns may be difficult to find. But we’re here for you.

We understand how important it is to have reliable information and to meet other women in similar situations. Our unique services help you feel less alone and more in control of decisions about your treatment, lifestyle and future.

Meet women like you
Younger Women Together
At a Younger Women Together two-day residential event, you can meet around 30 other women under 45 who’ve been diagnosed with primary breast cancer. You’ll hear from expert speakers on treatment, fertility, relationships, diet, exercise and more.

The events are held regularly across the UK, with food and accommodation provided free. We also run a separate residential event especially for younger women with secondary breast cancer (cancer that has spread to another part of the body). Check the website for upcoming dates and locations and if you don’t see an event that works for you, get in touch.

Call 0345 077 1893 or email youngerwomen@breastcancercare.org.uk

Talk to someone who understands
Someone Like Me: phone or email support
Sometimes it can feel like no one really understands how you feel. With a network of around 200 trained volunteers, many of whom were diagnosed as younger women, we’ll match you to someone who’s been in a similar situation and understands your particular questions and concerns.

Call 0345 077 1893 or email someoneilikeme@breastcancercare.org.uk

If you’d prefer to talk to a volunteer by email, check our website breastcancercare.org.uk/slm to find out more.

Online Forum
Meet other younger women who understand what you’re going through in our friendly community, for support day and night.

forum.breastcancercare.org.uk
Standards of care for younger women with breast cancer

As a younger woman with breast cancer, your particular concerns may be different from those of older women. That’s why we’ve developed standards of care which outline the care and support you should receive and may want to discuss with your treatment team. The standards are designed to support you to bring up topics in the following areas:

**Treatment and care**

1. Ensure you receive treatment and care that’s sensitive to your concerns as a younger woman.

2. Have a detailed family history taken to assess inherited cancer risk. If appropriate, you should be referred to a cancer genetics service for counselling and told about genetic testing.

**Planning treatment**

3. Ask about the risk of irregular periods or early menopause as a result of some treatments and be advised on how to cope with these and other effects of treatment. This could include changes to body confidence and sexual wellbeing, as well as your concentration, memory and decision-making.

4. Be aware that some treatments could affect the health of your bones and discuss with your treatment team possible ways to minimise this.
Addressing fertility

5. Talk to your treatment team about the possible effect of treatments on your fertility and be advised about contraception and pregnancy after treatment. If you were diagnosed when pregnant, you should ask to be referred to a specialist with expertise in treating women diagnosed during pregnancy.

6. Ask for a referral to a fertility specialist, if you hope to have children in the future, to discuss options for trying to preserve fertility before starting chemotherapy or hormone treatment. Every breast clinic should have a process for referring women promptly to a fertility specialist. The referral shouldn’t depend on local in vitro fertilisation (IVF) funding arrangements. The fertility specialist should tell you about the chances of success from fertility treatment and the possible impact of delaying breast cancer treatment.

Getting support

7. Seek out specialist information and support. This includes meeting or talking to other younger women in a similar situation online, on the phone or face to face.

8. If appropriate, get support and information on talking with children about breast cancer and communicating with your child’s school.

9. Seek out expert financial and employment advice. This could include information about benefits and rights at work, coping with loss of income during treatment, and implications for mortgage and insurance.

10. Have your emotional wellbeing assessed and get psychological support if needed.

If you’re concerned that your care and treatment are not meeting the standards above or need to know where you can access appropriate information and support, call us free on 0808 800 6000.

‘I had questions that no one seemed able to answer. There weren’t many other younger women being diagnosed in my area, so I found Breast Cancer Care invaluable. I discovered I wasn’t the only person with these fears and they were actually quite normal.’

Linda, diagnosed at 29
‘The Younger Women together course was a great opportunity to meet other people in a similar position to me. We got really helpful practical advice about managing the side-effects of cancer treatment and I even got to go to a laughter workshop. Thank you Breast Cancer Care for another brilliant experience’ Lauren, diagnosed at 31
When you have breast cancer, everything changes.

At Breast Cancer Care, we understand the emotions, challenges and decisions you face every day, and we know that everyone’s experience is different. That’s why we offer support and information and campaign for better care.

We’re the only specialist UK-wide charity providing support for women, men, families and friends affected by breast cancer. Our free services include support over the phone with a nurse or someone who’s been there, our welcoming online forums, reliable information and local group support. We’ll help you feel more in control.

Call us free on 0808 800 6000 or visit our website breastcancercare.org.uk