

Newly Diagnosed



If you are newly diagnosed with breast cancer many thoughts and questions run through your mind. One of the most important questions is “**What do I do now?**” Take your time as you deal with the fear, grief and shock of hearing you have cancer, but also be proactive in preparing for the journey and navigating through the financial and medical system.

The diagnosis and treatments will affect your life and others that care about you. Ask questions; learn everything you need to know to make good decisions with your medical team for the best outcome. It won't be easy, so don't give up; seek help. You will find your inner strength to fight this disease emotionally, medically, mentally, physically and spiritually.

Here are a few important considerations as you begin this journey to becoming a cancer fighter:

1. Become an informed patient. Talk with your doctors about your choices, medical treatments and what will be the best plan for you and why.
2. Bring someone with you and take notes during your doctor appointments; do not go alone, you need an extra set of ears and support.
3. Financial options, Insurance coverage? Co-pays, Family Medical Leave, Medicare, short term disability, Medicaid, or Social Security.
4. Get a second opinion or more if you feel the need for other options or recommendations.
5. Prepare for 6 to 12 months of treatments.
6. Ask for a social worker while you are in the hospital to file for Social Security and health benefits.
7. Do you have special needs such as hearing, sight, speaking, or walking?
8. Complete your Health Care Directive form.
9. Pull your support team together.

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10. Create a survivorship care plan.
11. Who will care for you after surgery?
12. Who will drive you to and from your clinic appointments?
13. Who will help you at home?
14. Tell your employer; request a work schedule adjustment.
15. How much sick leave do you have?
16. Read your cancer patient resource booklet.
17. How do you feel about complete or partial breast removal, treatments, breast reconstruction, and recurrence?
18. Talk about what your beliefs or concerns are about:
 - a. Cancer
 - b. Chemotherapy
 - c. Hormone Therapy
 - d. Hospitals
 - e. Radiation Therapy
 - f. Surgery and Reconstruction Surgery
 - g. Survival
 - h. Impact on family, friends and relationships
 - i. New body changes and self-image
 - j. Changes to your lifestyle
19. Build on your faith and community.
20. It is OK to cry, be mad or sad.
21. Meet with an Oncology Psychologist or therapist to help you cope with a cancer diagnosis and treatments.
22. Talk with another breast cancer survivor or ask about a support group in your home area.

Additional Information:

- <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/taking-time>
- <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/life-after-treatment.pdf>
- <https://survivorship.cancer.gov/>