

standards of care  
for younger women with breast cancer

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of care

BREAST CANCER  CARE

**Breast Cancer Care has developed standards of care for younger women with breast cancer to make sure your specialist needs are not overlooked during treatment.** As a younger woman you may find yourself facing a number of issues and concerns that are different to those experienced by older women.

The standards provide information about key issues you may want to discuss with the health professionals involved in your breast cancer treatment and care. They also advise on the kind of information and support you should be given access to as a younger woman with breast cancer. The standards have been developed in conjunction with younger women with breast cancer as well as breast cancer specialists.

**It may be useful to take this leaflet with you when you meet with your breast cancer specialist or breast care nurse.**

# standards of care

## for younger women with breast cancer

### As a younger woman with breast cancer you should:

- 1.** receive treatment and care from **health professionals who are sensitive to the specific issues** and concerns that you may face as a younger woman with breast cancer.
- 2.** have the opportunity to be **put in contact with other younger women** who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. You should also be told about long-term sources of support for younger women.
- 3.** be offered the opportunity to discuss some of the complex life decisions you may be facing in a **supportive environment with a skilled counsellor**, especially if you are having difficulty coping with making major life decisions sooner than you expected.
- 4.** be given an **explanation of the risk of menopausal irregularity or early menopause** as a result of some treatments. You should also be given advice on coping with an early menopause or the menopausal side effects of treatment.
- 5.** be given a full explanation during initial treatment discussions about the **possible impact of treatment on fertility**. This should include advice about contraception and pregnancy after treatment.
- 6.** if appropriate, be given full information about **any possibilities for preserving fertility**. This should include information about chances of success from fertility treatment and the possible impact of delaying breast cancer treatment.
- 7.** **be offered counselling if you are diagnosed with breast cancer during pregnancy or within a year of giving birth** to help you cope with the situation. If you have to be treated with chemotherapy during pregnancy you should have access to a specialist with experience in this area.
- 8.** **be fully informed of the potential impact some treatments may have on your bone health** and advised of possible management strategies to minimise this impact.
- 9.** **have as full a family history taken as possible** with respect to cancer risk. If appropriate you should be offered a referral to a genetic service for testing and counselling.
- 10.** be supplied with information about any **local sources of support to help you with childcare arrangements** during your hospital visits or recovery.
- 11.** be given the opportunity to be put in touch with **specialist advisers to discuss the financial implications associated with breast cancer**. These might include employment rights, state benefits, coping with a loss of income and implications for mortgages and insurance.

Breast Cancer Care's booklet *Younger women with breast cancer* looks specifically at the different issues, feelings and experiences you may have as a younger woman diagnosed with breast cancer.

Macmillan Cancer Relief has produced *Ten Minimum Standards of Care for Breast Cancer*, which cover key issues for all women with cancer. Our standards of care for younger women are designed to complement these. The Macmillan standards of care can be found in our booklet *Treating breast cancer*.

## Services for younger women at Breast Cancer Care

- **helpline** open on weekdays and Saturdays – 0808 800 6000
- **volunteer peer supporters** – younger women with personal experience of breast cancer trained to offer one-to-one support
- **telephone support groups**
- **younger women's forums**
- **internet chat forums** – [www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk)
- **written information**

If you are a younger woman with breast cancer and you would like to find out more about what's on offer, do get in touch. Call our free helpline on 0808 800 6000 (textphone 0808 800 6001) or visit [www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk).



Breast Cancer Care's Lavender Trust raises money specifically to fund information and practical support for younger women with breast cancer. These are the only UK-wide services targeted towards this group. If you would like further information about how you can help, please call 020 7384 4617 or see [www.lavendertrust.org.uk](http://www.lavendertrust.org.uk).

Breast Cancer Care is the UK's leading provider of information, practical assistance and emotional support for anyone affected by breast cancer. Every year we reach over 750,000 people with breast cancer or breast health concerns. All our services are free.

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