

# vita

breast  
cancer  
care

The breast cancer magazine • Issue 31 Spring 2017

Free

**When worry gets  
out of control**

**Cancer and work:  
*talking to your employer***

**Caring for hands,  
nails and feet**

**Delicious  
spring recipes**

**Your breast  
cancer questions  
answered**

**I can't go back  
to the old me**

But I'm embracing life  
after breast cancer



## Welcome to Vita

Anxiety is a normal part of life. Everyone knows what it's like to feel anxious now and again. But sometimes anxiety can become stronger and might not go away. And that's when it can be overwhelming.

It's not unusual for anxiety to appear or become worse after someone has been diagnosed with breast cancer. The important thing is to know how to spot the signs of anxiety and what to do to manage it. On page 12, a clinical nurse specialist gives plenty of self-help tips to reduce anxiety and explains how your doctor can help.

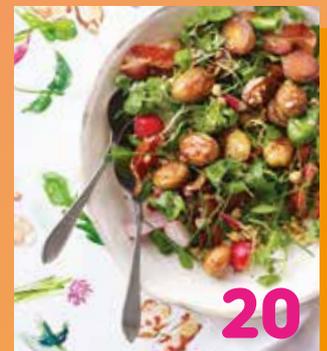
We also look at another issue that's very common but not often talked about: vaginal dryness. Caused by some treatments for breast cancer, this sensitive side effect can have an impact on a woman's sex life and mental wellbeing, and it won't get better on its own. On page 14, we explore the methods you can try to alleviate vaginal dryness.

Cynthia – our spring cover star – struggled with fatigue during her treatment. Like many women, she found the extreme tiredness that came with treatment extremely frustrating. But she decided it was her body's way of telling her to be kinder to herself. On page 9, she tells us about making friends on a Moving Forward course and why she doesn't think she can go back to being the old Cynthia.

### Gareth Fletcher

Editor

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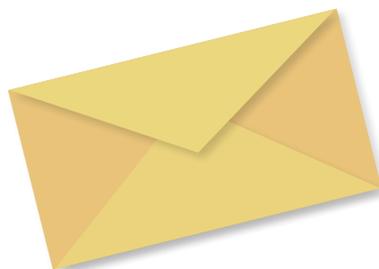
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# Inbox

Your letters, emails and tweets



## We want to hear from you!

We love to get letters and emails from you, the Vita readers. We like to know what you think of our articles and real-life stories, to hear about what's making you tick, or just to know how you're doing. But our inbox has been a little light recently.

So why not get in touch with us? We'll print a selection of your letters or emails. And to say thanks, for each issue we'll give away a beautiful gift – courtesy of our friends at Elemis – to the author of our favourite 'star' letter.

You can email or write to us at the addresses below. We can't wait to hear from you!

The Hero Collection for Breast Cancer Care by Elemis



## You said it

In the Winter issue Alison, who has secondary breast cancer, shared her story of trekking to the top of Ben Nevis to raise money for Breast Cancer Care. Alison's story caused lots of positive comments on Facebook.

**Karen:** I have just started chemo again for secondary breast cancer and you have really inspired me today reading your story! Well done and best of luck!

**Vicky:** Was a pleasure to meet you and conquer 'The Ben' together.

**Christine:** Thank you for your positive story. Long may it continue.

**Michaela:** Thank you for sharing your breast cancer journey. You're an inspiration to us all.



## Get in touch with Vita

**Tweet** @Vita\_mag

**Email** [vita@breastcancercare.org.uk](mailto:vita@breastcancercare.org.uk)

**Write** Vita magazine, Breast Cancer Care, Chester House, 1-3 Brixton Road, London, SW9 6DE

## Don't forget to visit Vita online [vita.org.uk](http://vita.org.uk)

- Read our real-life stories and healthy living articles.
- Download the latest and past issues.
- Check out our blogs on living with breast cancer.

## A grand tour

Breast Cancer Care is the official charity partner for The Women's Tour 2017. And this year the most prestigious women's cycling event in the world is coming to the streets of London for the first time. The five-stage tour, which opens with a race through the Northamptonshire countryside on 7 June, will culminate in the capital on Sunday 11 June.

This year it's also the 25th anniversary of the Pink Ribbon, the symbol of the care and support we give to anyone affected by breast cancer. To celebrate, we're turning London's streets pink on the morning of The Women's Tour and staging our own cycling event – the Pink Ribbon Tour. This closed-road 25km circuit will allow 1,000 women to ride the same route as the professionals.

To find out how you can get involved, go to [breastcancercare.org.uk/pinkribbontour](http://breastcancercare.org.uk/pinkribbontour)



# News and views

## Any questions

Users of Breast Cancer Care's online Forum may have noticed an addition to the usual discussion boards that first appeared in summer 2016.

The Ask Our Nurses category allows you to post a question on the Forum for Breast Cancer Care's nurses, who will respond within one working day. It means that other Forum users can read the question and response, and benefit from the information too.

The Forum has always allowed people affected by breast cancer to connect with and support each other. But in July 2016, members were also given access to support and information from Breast Cancer Care's specialist breast care nursing team.

During a six-month pilot, the Ask Our Nurses section of the Forum generated nearly 350 new discussions, with over 100,000 page views.

Ask Our Nurses is now a permanent feature of the Forum. So if you have a question about any aspect of breast cancer, you can be sure you'll get an accurate and prompt response.

Visit [breastcancercare.org.uk/forum](http://breastcancercare.org.uk/forum)



## New service in the Highlands

Breast Cancer Care has launched a new Living with Secondary Breast Cancer service in the Scottish Highlands. The meetings will take place once a month in Inverness, and quarterly meetings can also be joined remotely through videoconferencing at three other locations.

'We're really pleased to be able to introduce this service,' said Angeline Macleod, a breast care nurse from NHS Highland. The service launched at the Centre for Health Science in Inverness. 'We've also got videoconferencing facilities in Caithness, Sky and Fort William so that people in outlying areas can also join in,' said Angeline.

The sessions give women with secondary breast cancer the chance to meet others like them. All sessions are facilitated by a counsellor and once a quarter the meetings will include talks from guest speakers, who are experts in their field.

'Often women with secondary breast cancer don't get the opportunity to meet somebody else with secondary breast cancer,' said Angeline. 'One of the wonderful things that comes from this group is being able to share experiences.'

To find out more information or to register, call **0345 077 1893** or visit **breastcancercare.org.uk**



## App and away!

Breast Cancer Care is launching an exciting new mobile app to give day-to-day hints and tips on moving forward after breast cancer treatment. Called BECCA, the app gives users hundreds of simple and inspiring suggestions on everything from healthy living, exercise and coping with side effects to beauty, fashion and finding support.

Damalie, one of over 1,000 people who've been testing the app, said: 'BECCA is like a friend reminding you to look after yourself. It gives you information but only if and when you need it, and then it's there at the touch of a button.'

'The advice we got during and after treatment you can forget – you forget to look after yourself, to have some me time. You go on BECCA and she reminds you.'

'I've learnt to look after my body. I don't take it for granted anymore. I try and exercise, I know my limits and have taken on a healthy lifestyle.'

You can see the testing version, which is online, by registering at **breastcancercare.org.uk/becca**

At the end of April 2017, you'll be able to download the new and improved BECCA as a mobile app to your iPhone or Android phone.



# Top tips for healthy hands, nails and feet

Rachel Rawson suggests ways to keep your hands, feet and nails in tip-top condition during and after treatment.

Summer is on its way, and getting your hands, feet and nails into shape can involve some work, especially if they've been affected by treatment for breast cancer. I've pulled together some top tips – from patients and clinical research – and some products new to the market that might be worth a try.



**Neutrogena**

**Norwegian Formula**

**hand & nail cream**

## Care for cuticles

Noticing lines and indentations, pigmented or discoloured nails during and after treatment is not unusual. Your nails may become more brittle, so they won't grow as long as they used to and may break more easily. Some simple steps may help keep them in good shape.

Keeping the cuticles moisturised seems to be the key to nail health and growth. Something as simple as almond oil can be beneficial.

You might also want to try a specific cuticle cream of your choice. Lush makes a cuticle cream called **Lemony Flutter** which contains several different types of oil.



**Lush Lemony Flutter**  
**cuticle butter**

## Helping hands

Keeping your hands moisturised can help not only the cuticles and nails but will also keep the skin in good condition and help reduce the risk of lymphoedema.

There are so many different hand and body creams on the market so finding one that works for you is the key. You might want to try **Neutrogena hand and nail cream**.

## Feet first

We tend to forget about our feet until it's summer and we want to show them. But when you've had chemotherapy your feet will probably have taken a hit. Very dry and cracked heels are really common and you may have noticed that your toenails are lifting or look like they need some extra care.

There's some evidence that using a cream with a high urea content (10%) can really help to get the moisture to those dry areas. **Udderly Smooth cream** is one that some patients recommend.



**Udderly Smooth  
Extra Care Cream  
with 10% urea**

## Nail it!

Lots of people ask us about wearing nail varnish to protect their nails when having chemotherapy. The general advice is to avoid it as it tends to dry the nails out more. It doesn't mean that you can't still enjoy wearing nail varnish, but you may want to find a less harsh alternative such as a water-based one.

**Little Ondine** stocks a great range of water-based colours. The range also has a base and top coat, and there's no need for drying acetone-based varnish removers because the nail varnish peels off.

If you have a nail varnish you love, you might want to use it occasionally until your nails recover and buy an acetone-free varnish remover. **Sally Hansen acetone-free nail polish remover** is available from ASDA.

When your nails are recovering after treatment, you could consider trying something to strengthen them. Products such as **OPI Nail Envy** may help if you have very dry, brittle and flaky nails. You can buy the clear version or it now comes in a range of colours. It's widely available at varying prices, and QVC often features it with other products from this range.



**Little Ondine Lava  
nail polish**



**OPI Nail Envy  
Original Formula**

# It seemed like

# fate

The year after she finished hospital treatment for breast cancer, Jill Thompson was appointed Trustee and Treasurer of Breast Cancer Care.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer after a routine mammogram in October 2014. It came as a complete shock because I hadn't felt a lump or any other changes.

However, I have many friends (some very close) who have had breast cancer. It was strange going through experiences I'd watched as a friend and helper.

I was recommended the Breast Cancer Care website by a breast care nurse. I read everything on the site that seemed relevant, and carried on using it through my treatment and afterwards.

I never felt brave enough to post, but I read the Forum all the time and learnt so much from what other people were posting. Frequently, I'd read it in the middle of the night when I couldn't sleep.

I recommend the site to anyone who asks me how to help friends who've been diagnosed.

## I felt quite lost

I finished active treatment in June 2015 and, like most people, I felt quite lost. I'm on tamoxifen and have yearly mammograms and check-ups but, other than that, I'm on my own.

The website really helps with answers to niggling questions about side effects and recurrence. It also helps me understand what my friends with secondary breast cancer are going through.

I'm gradually starting to forget that I had it. As a friend said to me, you start to have days when you stop thinking about it and gradually those days increase until they become the norm.

The best outcome is my newly flat stomach from the DIEP reconstruction – I've never had such a great looking stomach (if you ignore the scars).

## Not just a job

Having given up full-time work in 2005, I already volunteered for several charities including two days a week for Citizens Advice. I'm a chartered accountant by training and worked in finance and investment, so I have transferable skills.

Purely by chance (and because I was looking at the website) I saw that Breast Cancer Care was looking for a new Trustee and Treasurer in early 2016. It seemed like fate.

Trustees are volunteers just like all the hundreds of others at Breast Cancer Care. We're responsible for determining the strategy of the charity, which the executive team delivers. Trustees are there to act in the charity's best interests and to safeguard the assets.

As Treasurer, I act as the financial conscience of the organisation, understanding the bigger picture and ensuring that we have robust and effective financial controls and appropriate policies for finance and investment. I'm there to assess and

control risk and to review financial performance.

Having had breast cancer means that this charity really matters to me. It's not just a job or something to put on a CV.

I have benefited from the services that Breast Cancer Care offers and I want to make sure we maximise the number of people who can benefit in the same way.



To find out more about the trustees and what they do, go to [breastcancercare.org.uk](http://breastcancercare.org.uk)

# I CAN'T GO BACK TO THE OLD ME

Three years after her diagnosis, Cynthia Langdon was proud to be the face of Breast Cancer Care's World Cancer Day campaign.



I was diagnosed with HER2 positive breast cancer, which had spread to my lymph nodes, in 2014. I was 54. I was very tearful during treatment. I knew I had to have the treatment to make myself better. But it was scary because I didn't know what to expect.

I had six months of chemotherapy, a lumpectomy, three weeks of radiotherapy and 12 months of Herceptin.

I felt tired, very tired. It was frustrating because I like to be up and out doing things. I'm not a person that likes to sit still. I was concerned how tired I was, so I decided to do my own bit of research about it. Then I understood that it's not

a normal tiredness, it's a fatigue where even your bones ache. I wasn't told that by the oncologist or the nurses.

I decided to be kinder to myself. It was my body saying to me: 'Look Cynthia, you really have to rest.'

## Looking for guidance

I suppose I expected to go back to normal, how I was before I was diagnosed. The treatment's done now, so I should be fine – let's carry on as I was before. But it wasn't like that because I had different feelings.

Having breast cancer affected my quality of life, mentally and physically, and I knew that I had to boost my confidence. However, I also knew that I could not do this alone.

I was curious about Breast Cancer Care's Moving Forward course. I wanted guidance and support on how to live my life after a breast cancer diagnosis. And I wanted to interact with other people who had experience with breast cancer.

They would understand me and I would understand them.

I went on the Moving Forward course in January 2015. The course had everything I needed to feel great about me. I learnt how to like and love the new me.

It was great meeting other women and being able to talk freely, openly and honestly to people who understood. I've met two brilliant ladies and if I do feel low or down, I know that I can pick up the phone or send an email and they'll respond and we'll end up laughing.

## No going back

It felt wonderful to be a face of Breast Cancer Care's World Cancer Day campaign in February 2017. Knowing that I'm contributing to raising greater awareness of Breast Cancer Care feels wonderful.

I don't think I can go back to the old Cynthia, and the cancer coming back in another part of my body is always at the back of my mind. But it's down to me to embrace life after breast cancer.

To find a Moving Forward course in your area, turn to page 25.

# *I want to give people the support I wish I'd had*

Gemma Wells, 24 from Edinburgh, supports women with an inherited altered breast cancer gene through Breast Cancer Care's Someone Like Me service.

**W**hen I had a double mastectomy with reconstruction in January 2016, I felt as though I had little support.

My mum had breast cancer when I was about 12. Then her cancer returned when I was about 20. The second time my mum was diagnosed I had to be so strong, for my mum and my little brother.

She was offered genetic testing, and tested positive for the altered BRCA1 gene. As a result I went for the test too.

At the time I'd never heard of it. It was starting to be in the news with Angelina Jolie, but I still didn't really understand.

I thought I'd have the test and they'd tell me it's all fine. When they told me I had inherited the altered gene I thought: but I look fine, I feel fine, there's nothing wrong with me.

I found out about the BRCA1 gene – which significantly increased my risk of breast cancer – in March 2014 aged 21.

## **The right decision**

I was told about different solutions to help manage my risk, but because of my age nothing was really relevant at the time. I probably couldn't have surgery until I was 25, or screening until I was 30.

I tried to forget about it. But every time I heard the word 'cancer' I thought: Maybe today is the day I'll get it. It felt like cancer was everywhere and I couldn't go through life avoiding it.

Then I found a lump in my breast.

It turned out to be a cyst, but I realised

I had to make a decision. It felt like a sign.

I met with a surgeon and saw a psychologist. I had so many different appointments. They told me all the positives as well as the negatives – the nasty stuff – to help me make up my mind. I was very mature for my age so they realised I knew what I was doing, and they agreed to do the surgery.

I had the surgery aged 23. It was absolutely the right decision.

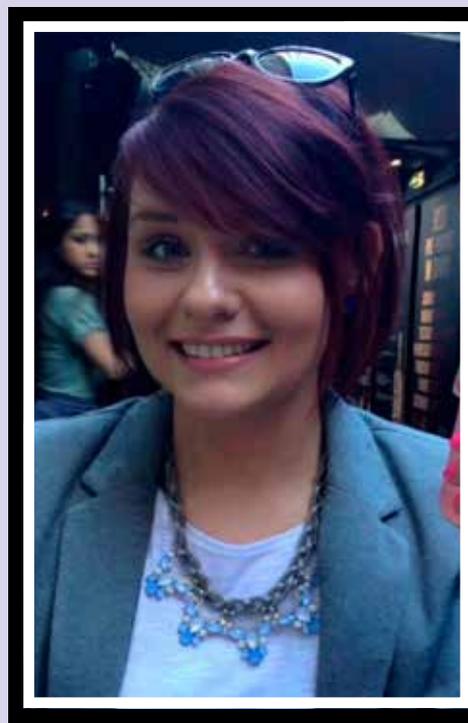
## **Gaining confidence**

I had a lot of support from family, especially my mum. She saw it as her own fault, and while she wanted me to have the surgery she didn't want to push me into anything. My partner was really supportive too.

I didn't really talk about it to other people though. I really wanted someone who didn't know me but who knew what I was going through, who could answer all my questions – like could I ever wear a bikini again?

After my surgery I wanted to support other people, so I contacted Breast Cancer Care. I started as a Someone Like Me volunteer, offering one-to-one telephone support, last April. I share my experience of having a BRCA1 diagnosis, but I'm also there if anyone whose mum has breast cancer wants to talk.

Before becoming a volunteer I never really spoke about my experience. I avoided the subject. It's made me really



confident in talking about it, and now I'm really proud to because it has a positive effect on other people.

To anyone newly diagnosed with an altered BRCA gene, I'd say take time to do what's right for you. And go out and look for the support.

The surgery was not as bad as I thought it would be. I thought I'd never see the light at the end of the tunnel, but one year on I'm absolutely fine. I may get frustrated about little things. But when I take a step back I realise it was worth it.

To find out about Someone Like Me, call **0345 077 1893** or visit **[breastcancercare.org.uk](http://breastcancercare.org.uk)**



# The story of my life

After she was diagnosed with incurable secondary breast cancer at 45, Claire Myerson found a novel way to record her life for her children and family.

**A**s I'm quite young and my life is limited, I worried who would tell my children the story of my life when I'm no longer around. I hadn't talked to my teenage son and daughter about my early life.

I went to Breast Cancer Care's Younger Women Together with Secondaries event in Manchester in October 2015. We had a talk about supporting teenagers and children, and the importance of making memory boxes and writing letters. While I'd thought about this before, I'd never managed to work out a practical way to do it that I was comfortable with.

Then in January 2016 I heard a programme on Radio 4 by journalist Jonathan Freedland, about his sister who had recently died from cancer. It was called 'How my sister said goodbye', and he explained that she had recorded her own version of Desert Island Discs.

## A record of me

I did some research, and found Story Terrace – a company that helps you write your life story. They matched me with a ghostwriter. I had three interviews, and we talked through my life together. It was a great way of going

back, remembering little stories I hadn't thought about for years.

I gave them around 30 photos, and they put together my life story as a book, which I then put in a memory box for my kids and family. I had to pay to do it. But it's a record of me and my life, and the important thing is that it's written in a way I'm happy with.

They also recorded all the interviews and gave me copies of the recordings, so my kids and family can hear my voice.

It was a fantastic experience. It gave me a lot of pleasure but also gave me a bit of peace and a sense of calm.

## Talking to teenagers

At the Younger Women Together event, there were about 10 other women with older children. It was the first time I'd been in a group of women in a similar position and I realised I was not alone. We all had the same concerns – how much to tell, what to say and how to say it.

I'd felt incredibly guilty, about what will happen after I'm gone and how hard it'll be for my kids. Being a teenager is a difficult time emotionally anyway without having a parent with cancer.

The advice at the event was fantastic

– be open and talk to your children, because if you don't they'll still try to find out anyway, and they might come up with something that's not accurate. I get a huge amount of support from my kids, but they couldn't do that if I wasn't honest with them.

To anyone with secondary breast cancer who has teenagers I'd say: talk to them. Make sure they understand. Allow them to be part of what's happening and to support you.

If you're not sure how to do it, speak to Breast Cancer Care. The staff on the Helpline are fantastic – you can talk it through with them.

But don't put it off. The process of talking lowers anxiety – and a problem shared is a problem halved.

It's hard – you'll cry and feel very sad. But it's a massive relief once you've done it.

**To find out more about Breast Cancer Care's secondary breast cancer support services, visit [breastcancercare.org.uk](http://breastcancercare.org.uk) or call 0808 800 6000.**

# When worry gets

# OUT OF CONTROL

Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist Rachel Rawson explains how to spot the signs of anxiety and explores some simple ways of coping.

**A**nxiety is a normal human experience that many people live with. But when it becomes very strong or lasts for a long time it can be overwhelming.

After breast cancer it's not unusual for anxiety to get worse or to appear for the first time. It can leave you with a sense of worry or dread – where hours can be spent thinking over worst-case scenarios – and gets in the way of daily life.

## When the bucket overflows

Being diagnosed with breast cancer, having treatment, dealing with side effects, then learning to find your new normal is stressful. While having a degree of stress in life is fine, when it builds up it can lead to anxiety, which can be hard to cope with on a daily basis.

The charity Anxiety UK has a useful way to think about stress and anxiety. Imagine that stress levels are like water in a bucket. If stressors are added to the bucket, even tiny ones like the school run or commuting to work, over time the buckets fills up. Then one day, often after what seems like a trivial trigger, it overflows.

At times like this the simple things in life can seem overwhelming, and the physical and psychological symptoms that anxiety brings can be difficult to understand and cope with.

## Recognising the signs

Physical feelings of anxiety can include a racing heart, light-headedness, headaches, churning in the pit of the stomach and, for some people, panic attacks.

The psychological signs of anxiety can be harder to identify. Experiencing a sense of dread or numbness, the mind racing, restlessness, not being able to concentrate and fearing the worst are all symptoms of anxiety.

Recognising these signs and symptoms can sometimes be difficult and seeking help and support is often the hardest thing to do. But taking this first step can be the key to breaking the cycle of feeling fearful and insecure.

## Reducing anxiety

Finding a way to have a bucket with holes in the bottom can, in the long term, reduce overall stress levels and anxiety. Each one of these holes could be something positive that's done to manage anxiety. There are lots of different options but it will take time to find out what works for you.

Being able to recognise what makes anxiety worse, talking about it and seeking help are all positive steps towards finding a way to manage anxiety.

## Useful resources

- Mind ([mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)) provides information and support to anyone with anxiety or other mental health issues.
- Anxiety UK ([anxietyuk.org.uk](http://anxietyuk.org.uk)) works to relieve and support people living with anxiety and anxiety-based depression.
- Smiling Mind is a free guided meditation app that can help with anxiety.

*'Seeking help is often the hardest thing to do'*

## 9 ways to reduce anxiety

**1 Talking** about what triggers anxiety with a friend or partner – someone who knows you well and you can trust – can help. Talking to someone away from the home environment can also help. Speaking to a breast care nurse, calling Breast Cancer Care's Helpline, posting on the online Forum or joining a support group can be useful ways of knowing you're not alone.

**2 Breathing** more deeply can make you feel a lot calmer. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to keep your shoulders down and relaxed, and place your hand on your stomach – it should rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.

**3 Keeping a diary** can help you see how you're feeling day to day as well as what helps or triggers stress and anxiety.

**4 Exercise** can help you manage anxiety and panic attacks. Thinking about exercising can be overwhelming, but just going for a short walk every day can give you some time to yourself. There are lots of different types of exercise. The important thing is to find something you enjoy.

**5 Reassure yourself** that the symptoms you're experiencing are caused by anxiety and will pass. This can help you feel calmer and less fearful of future bouts of anxiety.

**6 Yoga and mindfulness** may help you relax, sleep better and manage the symptoms of anxiety and panic attacks. There are lots of mindfulness apps available, some of which, like Smiling Mind, are free.

**7 Big tasks** can feel impossible, but breaking them down into smaller tasks can make them feel easier to complete.

**8 Talking therapies**, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), are becoming more widely available. CBT focuses on changing the way you think and behave and teaches coping skills for dealing with different problems. Having access to counselling or therapy may also be useful. A trained therapist will work with you to understand the causes of your anxiety, and to find strategies to help manage it.

**9 Certain types of medication** can be helpful and these can be used in addition to other self-help strategies. Antidepressants and beta-blockers are two of the most commonly used medications.

You can call the Breast Cancer Care Helpline free on **0808 800 6000**.

# SOLVING A SENSITIVE VAGINAL DRYNESS AND BREAST CANCER

**W**e get lots of calls to our Helpline about vaginal dryness. But while it's common, it can be a difficult subject to bring up.

'It is embarrassing so it is not talked about,' says Debby Holloway, nurse consultant in gynaecology. But, she says, women should be able to have an open conversation about it with their healthcare professional.

Vaginal dryness won't get better on its own, so seeking help to manage it is important.

## All about oestrogen

'Vaginal dryness happens due to a lack of oestrogen,' explains Debby.

Some breast cancer treatments block or reduce the amount of the hormone in your body. Because oestrogen helps maintain the vagina's moisture and elasticity, a lack of it can cause the vagina to become dry and less supple, and may make sex or intimacy painful.

If it's not treated it can get worse, and may lead to loss of sex drive and emotional problems alongside the physical ones.

'If it hurts when you have sex,' says Debby, 'this can lead to not wanting to have sex as there is a fear it can hurt. This circle is difficult to break.'

## Ways to help dryness

'There are many different products that can be used for vaginal dryness,' says Debby, 'and some of them are available on prescription or can be bought from a chemist or online.'

While you might want to try some of the products mentioned on these pages, talk to your specialist team too. Vaginal dryness and irritation can also be caused by an infection, so it's a good idea to see your GP to rule this out.

## 1. Try moisturisers or lubricants

Vaginal moisturisers – such as ReplensMD, Senselle or Hyalofemme – provide long-term relief for dryness and discomfort, and are not just for use during sex. You can use most types every few days, and they're most effective when used regularly over time. Moisturisers are usually applied with a pessary (a small, soluble block that dissolves in the vagina) or tampon-style applicator.

Vaginal lubricants are shorter acting than moisturisers, and only provide temporary relief. They're intended to help prevent friction and pain during sex and intimacy, and work best if used by both you and your partner. Lubricants are available as a pessary or a tube of liquid or gel. You could try Yes, Pasante TLC or Sylk.

It's worth trying different brands – you might prefer some to others – and you can use lubricants and moisturisers alongside each other. But don't be tempted to substitute moisturisers or lubricants with Vaseline, hand cream or body lotion.

# ISSUE TREATMENT

Vaginal dryness is a very common side effect of some breast cancer treatments. Katie Parsons explores some things that might help.

## 2. Ask about oestrogen products

The most commonly used treatment for vaginal dryness is hormone replacement therapy (HRT), but this is not usually recommended for women after a diagnosis of breast cancer. However, some specialists may prescribe a topical hormone treatment, which is applied directly to the area, to help reduce dryness and discomfort. This could be an oestrogen pessary, vaginal tablet or cream.

When you use vaginal oestrogens, it's thought that very small amounts of the hormone are absorbed into the body. Therefore, vaginal oestrogen may be more safely prescribed for women taking tamoxifen, because tamoxifen is thought to counteract any oestrogen entering the bloodstream.

If you're taking an aromatase inhibitor – such as letrozole, anastrozole or exemestane – vaginal oestrogen is not usually recommended. But it might be worth asking your specialist team if switching to tamoxifen is an option.

## 3. Intercourse can help

If it's comfortable for you, sexual intercourse can stimulate blood flow to the vagina and help maintain its suppleness and elasticity. Using a vibrator or masturbating can also help in the same way.

## 4. Exercise your pelvic floor

Doing regular pelvic floor exercises can increase blood flow and relax your pelvic muscles. Knowing how to relax these muscles can help ease pain during sex or intimacy, and also help you feel more relaxed during procedures such as a smear test.

You can feel your pelvic floor muscles if you try to stop the flow of urine when you go to the toilet (but don't do this often because it can be harmful to the bladder).

To strengthen your pelvic floor, sit comfortably and squeeze these muscles 10 to 15 times in a row. Don't hold your breath or tighten your stomach, buttock or thigh muscles at the same time. When you get used to doing this regularly, you can try holding each squeeze for a few seconds. Every week, add more squeezes, and rest the muscles between sets.

## Six other things that might help

- If penetrative sex is too painful, consider other forms of intimacy.
- Keep lubricants near the bed so you don't have to get up to find them.
- Don't use scented soaps, lotions, bath oils or panty liners as these can dry out the vaginal area.
- Try switching to a different washing powder or fabric conditioner, as some can irritate the area.
- If you smoke, try to cut down or give up completely.
- If you need to have a smear test and are experiencing vaginal dryness, tell the nurse or doctor beforehand so they're aware.

You can order or download our booklets **Menopausal symptoms and breast cancer** and **Your body, intimacy and sex** from our website [breastcancercare.org.uk](http://breastcancercare.org.uk)

# Your questions

Breast Cancer Care's experts answer your questions about

**Q I've been reading about specific diets – particularly ones that avoid dairy foods – for people who've been diagnosed with breast cancer. Should I be following one?**

**A** It's common and understandable to want to do as much as possible to be healthy when you've been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Many people find changing their lifestyle helps them regain a sense of control, whether it's changing how physically active they are or what they eat.

A lot of information on diet and breast cancer is conflicting, and it can be confusing and frustrating to read so many different ideas about what's best. Eating healthily can make a difference to energy levels and general wellbeing. You can read more about this in our **Diet and breast cancer** booklet.

Some people choose to adopt particular or 'alternative' diets to try to reduce the risk of the cancer coming back (recurrence). While there's no conclusive evidence that any specific diet can reduce the risk of recurrence, evidence shows that being a healthy weight (neither overweight nor underweight), doing some physical activity and eating a healthy balanced diet may help reduce the risk of cancer coming back.

Alternative diets often promote eating more of or avoiding certain foods. Because of this, they can sometimes lead to you lacking nutrients you need.

Some people adopt a dairy-free diet after a diagnosis of breast cancer, but there's no evidence that this reduces the risk of recurrence. Following a dairy-free diet is a personal choice, but it can lead to a drop in the levels of calcium in the body.

Calcium is important for bone health. Bone strength naturally decreases as we get older and some hormone therapies used to treat breast cancer can also reduce bone strength. Therefore, it's important to include calcium in your diet to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and possible fractures. You can read more about food and drink for healthy bones in our booklet **Osteoporosis and breast cancer treatment**.

If you're thinking about changing your diet or want more information, you may find it helpful to talk to your specialist team or a dietitian.

**Q I've been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer in my bones and have been told that, although it can be treated, it can't be cured. I'm finding it difficult to tell my family and friends. Do you have any suggestions?**

**A** Being diagnosed with secondary breast cancer (when cancer has spread from the breast to another part of the body) can be overwhelming for both you and those around you.

Telling anyone about your diagnosis is never easy, but can be more difficult when you need to tell people closest to you. The fact that your cancer can be treated but not cured is always difficult to explain to others.

There's no best way to start a conversation. People often arrange to speak with family or friends face to face, but this may not always be possible. Many people find it easier to start at the beginning: when they found a symptom or had a scan, how they were diagnosed and, importantly, that there's a plan for treatment.

Some people choose to tell a small number of people closest to them and ask for their help to tell others. This can avoid having to repeat the same information many times.

Talking openly and honestly can be very difficult at first but often gets easier



# answered

breast cancer and its treatment.

**Q My oncologist has just told me I can stop taking my hormone therapy. I've been waiting for this day for years and thought I would feel happy. But I feel really anxious. Is this normal?**

as the shock begins to subside. You and the people closest to you might find it helpful to read our **Secondary breast cancer in the bone** booklet. This can help everyone begin to understand your diagnosis and the treatment you'll be having. People may also want to know how breast cancer in the bone is affecting you so they can know what support to offer.

We often instinctively want to protect people closest to us. However, whoever you choose to tell, people will benefit from your honesty. Knowing the facts about your circumstances, as well as how you're feeling, can help others be honest with you and give you the support you need.

Breast Cancer Care has a number of different services for people with secondary breast cancer. **Living with Secondary Breast Cancer** monthly meet-ups, weekly online **Live Chat** and the online **Forum** offer the opportunity to talk with others and share experience and support. The **Helpline** and **Ask Our Nurses** email service are also here to provide support and information to you and people around you.

**A** It's not uncommon for women to feel anxious and worried when they come to the end of their hormone therapy. They often describe feeling vulnerable and, like you, worry they are losing their safety net. On one level you feel you should be happy because your treatment is finishing. But on another level it can feel as if nothing is being done to reduce the risk of your cancer coming back, and the fear of recurrence can sometimes be overwhelming.

You may find it reassuring to know that research has shown women continue to benefit from hormone therapy even after stopping treatment. This is called the carryover effect.

It's also important to remember that if you have any new symptoms or concerns, you can be referred back to the breast clinic for an assessment. You should have been told who to contact in this case, whether it's your breast care nurse, breast clinic or GP.

Breast Cancer Care's **Helpline** staff can answer any questions you have about coming to the end of your treatment, and you may find it helpful to share experiences with other women on our online **Forum**.

With time you're likely to begin to feel less anxious. But if these feelings continue and are interfering with your enjoyment of life, talk to your GP. They may refer you for counselling or other talking therapies to help you move forward.

## Ask us

If you have a question about breast cancer, call Breast Cancer Care free on **0808 800 6000**. You can also Ask Our Nurses by email: go to **[breastcancercare.org.uk/aon](mailto:breastcancercare.org.uk/aon)** To order or download Breast Cancer Care's publications, call the number above or visit **[breastcancercare.org.uk/publications](http://breastcancercare.org.uk/publications)**



# Nine to five: *talking*

Whether you're recently diagnosed, going through treatment or thinking about returning to work after time off, talking about breast cancer at work can be difficult.

**T**he thought of discussing your cancer with your boss or colleagues might cause all sorts of worries, from how people will react to fears that you'll be discriminated against.

However, there are advantages to communicating with your employer, not least because they have certain legal obligations to help you.

## Adjustments

By law, you don't have to tell anyone at work about your cancer.

However, your employer is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to help you. A reasonable adjustment might be agreeing a more flexible way of working, giving you breaks more often if you're struggling with fatigue, or making some changes to your job description.

You might want to talk to your line manager about what adjustments you think would help. Some people want to carry on working as normal. But if this isn't possible, tell your employer so they can arrange for adjustments to be made.

While you're not legally obliged to tell your employer about your cancer, if you don't and it affects your ability to do your job, this could cause problems.

## What the law says

Some people worry their employer will find a way to make them redundant or even fire them once they find out about their cancer.

However, anyone with cancer is protected against discrimination by the Equality Act 2010 (or Disability Discrimination Act 1995 if you live

in Northern Ireland). This states that employers should make reasonable adjustments to remove any 'substantial disadvantages' to employees.

This protection against discrimination doesn't end when treatment finishes – you're also covered when you've finished your treatment or when you move to a new employer.

A prospective employer cannot ask questions about your health during the recruitment process. They can ask about your health once they've offered you a job, but if they then withdraw the offer it has to be for non-discriminatory reasons.

## Who to talk to

You can talk to your line manager about your role and how you'll manage it, any time off you'll need, and any changes or adjustments you might make to your role. If you don't feel comfortable speaking to your manager on your own, you can ask to bring someone with you – such as a colleague or friend.

You might want to talk to an HR representative too. You can ask them about organisational policies, such as absence from work and sick pay. You can also ask if they offer an Employee Assistance Programme, which can provide emotional support as well as advice on legal and financial matters.

An occupational health adviser – if you have one – can give independent workplace health advice. For example, they might recommend some adjustments to your role to help you return to work.

## Colleagues

Talking to colleagues about your cancer can be hard. You might prefer not to tell anyone about it, and for some people that can be a way of coping. But sometimes the physical effects of cancer, such as hair loss or the need to take time off for treatment, might make it impossible not to tell others. And if colleagues have to cover work while you're not there, then it's useful for them to know why.

People often worry about how colleagues will react to them, whether they might be uncomfortable or become withdrawn.

If this does happen, it may simply be because they don't know what to say. Bringing up the subject might help them feel more at ease, and talking to colleagues can also help them see how they can support you.

Don't feel under pressure to explain anything about your cancer if you don't feel comfortable. You could talk to your manager about what you'll tell other people and who you'll tell.

## Returning to work

Going back to work can be a positive step and can help some people move forward by regaining a sense of normality.

If you're planning to return to work after treatment, it's a good idea to contact your manager or HR department early to discuss how you'll do this. A phased return, where you return to work gradually in stages, can help you adjust to your normal working pattern. Try to

# to your employer

make sure your plan is flexible and can be reviewed if anything changes. Letting your manager know how your ability to work might be affected can allow them to support you better.

It's up to you how much information you share with the people involved in your return to work. And you have the right for anything you do discuss to be kept private and only shared with other people with your permission.

Once you're back at work, you might want to have regular catch-ups with your manager to talk about how you're coping. It can help to update them with any changes, such as any side effects you're experiencing, which might mean your work needs to be adjusted.

## For more information

- Macmillan Cancer Support ([macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)) has a range of booklets and online information on work and cancer, including a booklet called Questions to ask about work and cancer.
- Citizens Advice ([citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)) and GOV.UK are good places to find information about your rights at work and sick pay.



# King prawn and herb-and-almond pesto pasta

**Serves 4. Hands-on time 30 min**

- 400g dried tagliatelle
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 large red chilli, sliced
- 16 large raw sustainable king prawns (peeled, deveined and butterflied with tails left intact; see box below)
- 50ml dry white wine
- juice ½ lemon
- a few handfuls rocket

## For the pesto

- 1 bunch fresh basil, a few leaves reserved to garnish
- ½ bunch fresh tarragon, plus extra to garnish
- ½ bunch fresh dill, plus extra to garnish
- 4 handfuls rocket
- 80g parmesan, grated
- 50g blanched almonds
- finely grated zest 1 lemon and juice ½, plus extra to taste/garnish
- 80–100ml extra-virgin olive oil

1. Put the pesto ingredients (except the olive oil) in a food processor and pulse to combine. With the motor running, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until the mixture forms a chunky paste. Taste and season – it should be fresh, herby and quite light, not wet or oily. Add more lemon juice if required, then transfer the pesto to a bowl and set aside.
2. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, then add the pasta and cook until it still has some bite.
3. When the pasta has been cooking for a few minutes, heat the 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large, wide frying pan over a medium-low heat. Add the garlic and chilli and gently fry for 2–3 minutes without browning. Increase the heat to medium-high, then add the prawns in a single layer. Pour over the wine and cook for 1–2 minutes until the underside of the prawns turns pink. Turn the prawns over with tongs, then squeeze over some lemon juice. Continue to cook until the prawns are pink all over.
4. As soon as the pasta is cooked al dente (still with some bite), remove it from the pan with tongs and add it straight to the pan with the prawns. There's no need to drain the pasta – a splash or two of the cooking water will help to loosen the consistency of the sauce. Keep the pan of water to hand while you finish the dish. Add two-thirds of the pesto and toss well to combine. With the pan still on the heat, toss through a few handfuls of rocket.
5. Add a little of the pasta cooking water or extra-virgin olive oil to the pan and toss – the pasta shouldn't be dry. Taste and season well with lemon juice, salt and pepper. To serve, divide among four plates and garnish with extra lemon zest and fresh herbs.



## *i*

### To butterfly and devein prawns

Run a small sharp knife along the back curve of each prawn, cutting about one third of the way through the flesh. Pull out and discard the black, thread-like intestinal tract with the tip of the knife. Keep the tails on for a pretty end result.

# Delicious spring recipes



## *Roast Jersey Royal, spring herb, hazelnut and bacon salad with lemon brown butter dressing*

Toasted hazelnuts and fresh radishes add extra crunch to this salad of spring herbs, bacon and roast Jersey Royals. You could use chunks of roast chicken or fried king prawns instead of bacon.

**Serves 4-6. Hands-on time 20 minutes, oven time 60 minutes**

- 1kg jersey royals or other waxy new potatoes, scrubbed, halved if large
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 200g (around 9 or 10 rashers) British free-range streaky bacon, chopped into thirds
- 75g blanched hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- 100g watercress
- small bunch each fresh basil, mint (leaves picked) and chives (snipped in half)
- 150g radishes, quartered

### **For the dressing**

- 75g unsalted butter
- large splash extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- juice ½–1 lemon

1. Heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. Toss the potatoes in the olive oil and spread over the base of a large roasting tin so they aren't crowded. Season well with salt and pepper, then roast for 30 minutes. Scatter the bacon over the top, then roast for another 20 minutes. Scatter over the hazelnuts and return to the oven for another 5–8 minutes. The potatoes should be shrivelled on the outside and fluffy in the centre, the bacon crisp and the hazelnuts golden. Leave in the oven, heat off, to keep warm.
2. Meanwhile, put the watercress, herbs and radishes in a large bowl.
3. For the dressing, heat a small, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat, then gently melt the butter with some sea salt. Turn up the heat to bring the butter to a bubble, then cook until it turns golden brown and smells nutty. Remove from the heat, then add the oil, garlic and the juice of ½ lemon – it will sizzle. Cool slightly, then taste – add the remaining lemon juice if it needs to be sharper.
4. Working quickly, tip the potato mixture into the salad bowl, then drizzle over the hot butter dressing (if you'd like a less pungent dressing, strain the butter to remove the garlic first). Toss well, taste one of the leaves and season if necessary. Serve immediately

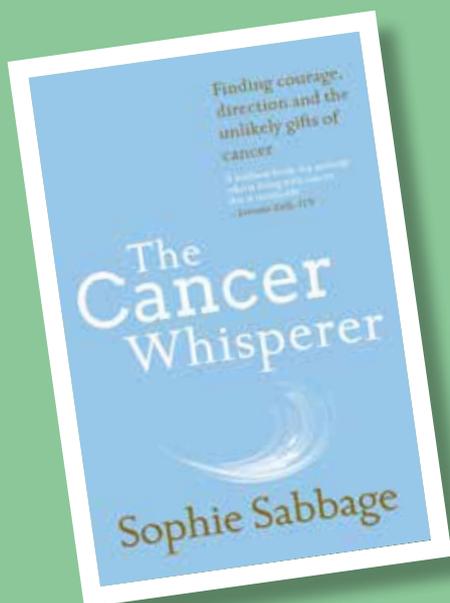
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MAGAZINE

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# Books etc.

Our nurses review two recent additions to the bookshelves for people affected by cancer.



## **The Cancer Whisperer by Sophie Sabbage**

Reviewed by Eve Smith, Breast Care Nurse

Sophie Sabbage started writing this book 10 months after she was diagnosed with incurable lung cancer that had spread to her brain and bones. She describes it as part memoir, part self-help book, in which she shares practical tips and information about her research, treatment choices, diet and the resources that made the biggest difference for her.

She's very clear that this is an account of what has worked – and is still working – for her two years after her diagnosis. She describes how she cured her fear of cancer and how she still deals with grief, anger and denial.

It's a beautifully written and informative book. She doesn't ignore the harsh realities of cancer or the fact that she's likely to die from this disease. She worked in partnership with her oncologists and therapists to find a treatment pathway that was right for her, and describes how she combined conventional medical treatments with alternative and complementary medicine.

I cannot say that I agree with everything she writes, but many of the practical aspects she outlines may help cancer patients engage more fully with their treatment decisions as well as come to terms with their situation.

There are few resources available for people with secondary cancer. This book would be useful for patients and for healthcare professionals alike.

## **One Step at a Time: getting through chemotherapy with breast cancer, compiled by Alison Bailey**

Reviewed by Carolyn Rogers, Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist

This book was compiled after the author met a patient going through chemotherapy while doing her nurse training. The patient suggested that despite all the information provided by healthcare professionals, a book based on patients' experiences would be helpful to people with breast cancer.

Each chapter has a brief introduction by the author – a breast care nurse with many years' experience – to topics including diagnosis, chemotherapy, side effects and support. There are also tips within the text based on the author's wide knowledge of breast cancer. But the book mainly comprises quotes from patients about their own experiences. These encompass a range of feelings and ways of coping while having chemotherapy, including tips on managing side effects of particular drugs. Emotional and practical support are also described, as well as the role of breast cancer charities.

This book is useful to dip in and out of alongside the written and verbal information given by the treatment team.

We know from people who use Breast Cancer Care's Helpline and face-to-face services that it can be really valuable for patients to hear from people who have gone through a similar experience.

# Join Christine

## for an afternoon tea

**Y**ou may have heard of our summer fundraiser, Strawberry Tea.

It's all about getting together for a fun afternoon tea with strawberries and games to raise money for people affected by breast cancer.

Christine from Doncaster held her Strawberry Tea with family, friends and neighbours raising a fantastic £218 for Breast Cancer Care.

'This was a personal thank you for the Someone Like Me support I received,' says Christine. 'During my chemo and radiotherapy treatments I could laugh, cry, vent and

listen – just knowing I was not alone and that my emotions were normal kept me positive. Now I'm looking forward to celebrating many more summer get-togethers!'

Someone Like Me is a free Breast Cancer Care service that matches you by phone or email with a trained volunteer who's been through a similar experience to you.

In May we'll be launching a new and exciting Strawberry Tea. We look forward to telling you more about it very soon!

To register your interest in receiving a free tea fundraising pack, just email [fundraising@breastcancercare.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@breastcancercare.org.uk)



Christine (fourth from the right) and her family enjoying tea and cakes



**Ten years. Ten walks.**  
Tens of thousands raised

This year will be a milestone for Paul Stone, who is taking on his 10th Pink Ribbonwalk for Breast Cancer Care.

Ten years ago I was hit by three tragic blows. My sister Vicky and sister-in-law Carole were both fighting breast cancer and then I lost my close friend Barbara. Around that time, I heard an advert on local radio for the Pink Ribbonwalks. It seemed strange that I should hear it, almost as though someone had chosen me to participate. From then on I have walked the Pink Ribbonwalk each year since 2008. First it was only my dad and me – at 81 he was the oldest walker on the day

– taking on the 10 mile route. Then over the years I've always entered a team involving family and friends, including my sister and sister-in-law and often in fancy dress like tutus and pink shower hats. We've even had team members come across from Australia to join us! Over the past nine years we've raised over £40,000 for Breast Cancer Care. These events are so special and this summer I'll be taking part in my 10th consecutive walk at Blenheim Palace.

Join Paul and thousands of others this year for a 5, 10 or 20 mile challenge.

- Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire** – 20 May
- Bakewell, Peak District** – 3 June
- Glasgow at Night** – 17 June
- London at Night** – 1 July

Sign up at [breastcancercare.org.uk/ribbonwalk](http://breastcancercare.org.uk/ribbonwalk)



**Events calendar**

**April**

- 9 : Brighton Marathon
- 9 : BM10k
- 9 : Paris Marathon
- 23 : Virgin Money London Marathon
- 29 : Tough Mudder, London West

**May**

- 6-7 : Tough Mudder, London West
- 8 : Pink Plates
- 13 : Tough Mudder Half, Midlands
- 20 : Pink Ribbonwalk, Blenheim Palace
- 20-21 : Tough Mudder, Midlands
- 21 : Stirling Scottish Marathon
- 27 : Women v Cancer Ride the Night
- 27/28 : Edinburgh Marathon Festival
- 27/28 : London to Brighton Ultra Challenge
- 29 : Vitality London 10,000

**June**

- 2-4 : Cornish Coast to Coast
- 3 : Pink Ribbonwalk, Bakewell
- 4 : Great Women's Run
- 10 : Nightrider, London
- 11 : Pink Ribbon Tour 25
- 17 : Pink Ribbonwalk, Glasgow at Night
- 17-18 : Tough Mudder, Scotland

**July**

- 1 : Pink Ribbonwalk, London at Night

[breastcancercare.org.uk/get-involved](http://breastcancercare.org.uk/get-involved)

# Support in your area

## Information Points

Breast Cancer Care's Information Points are filled with a selection of top titles from our range of patient information. We know that you can feel overwhelmed after appointments and that it can be difficult to remember all the information you're given. That's why we're working with over 100 hospitals UK-wide to provide free, easily accessible resources and publications that offer vital support and information to people affected by breast cancer. A Breast Cancer Care volunteer is responsible for stocking and maintaining each Information Point. They regularly replenish the publications and ensure the rack is tidy and in good condition.

Information Point volunteer Sheila Ralph says: 'I wish



there had been an Information Point that I could have accessed when I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I love my role looking after the Information Point, helping patients who would not "go looking" for information to have access to accurate and valid information when they need it most.'

If you're interested in volunteering to look after an Information Point, call us free on **0345 077 1893**.

### Moving Forward

Struggling to get back to 'normal' after breast cancer treatment? Moving Forward courses take place throughout the UK.

#### England

- Barnsley • Basingstoke • Birmingham
- Bournemouth • Brighton • Chichester
- Doncaster/Worksop • Enfield • Essex
- Huddersfield • Kent • Liverpool
- London • North Lincolnshire
- North Tees • Nottingham
- Greater Manchester • Oxford • Poole
- Sheffield • South Tees
- Southampton • Warwick • Winchester
- Worthing • York

#### Scotland

- Edinburgh and the Lothians • Fife
- Forth Valley • Greater Glasgow and Clyde • Lanarkshire • Livingston
- Tayside

#### Wales

- Aberystwyth • Bangor • Bridgend
- Cardiff • Haverfordwest • Llanelli
- Llantrisant • Merthyr Tydfil
- Neath Port Talbot • Newport • Rhyl
- Swansea • Wrexham

### Living with Secondary Breast Cancer

Regular meet-ups for people living with secondary breast cancer, with expert guest speakers.

- Bristol • Cardiff • Cornwall • Coventry
- Derby • Dorset • Edinburgh
- Forth Valley • Glan Clwyd (Rhyl)
- Glasgow • Halifax/Huddersfield
- Highlands (Inverness with video conference available in Skye, Fort William and Caithness) • Lanarkshire
- Liverpool • Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells • Manchester • Milton Keynes
- North Lincolnshire • North London/Hertfordshire • Oxford • Romford
- Salisbury • Sheffield • Sutton South London • York/Harrogate

### Younger Women Together

Two days of support for women aged up to 45 with primary breast cancer.

- Bristol • Cardiff • Edinburgh • Leeds
- London • Manchester

### Younger Women with Secondaries Together

Two days of support for women aged up to 45 with secondary breast cancer.

- Manchester 12–13 May 2017

**Find the right support for you**

Call **0345 077 1893**

Visit **breastcancercare.org.uk**

Email **services@breastcancercare.co.uk**



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**Anita Care** Offering post-surgical ladies innovative and discreet breast forms alongside specially designed, beautiful lingerie and swimwear, which allows wearers to feel comfortable and confident in all areas of their life, without compromising on colour, style and luxury. For all enquiries please call **01908 524 048** or visit **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 **wigsuk.com** or call **01295 757 408**.

**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 **bettyandbelle.co.uk** or call in at 35 Oxford Rd, Cheshire WA14 2ED; **01619 291 472**.

**Cool and Beautiful Nightwear** Cool, feminine, 100% cotton mastectomy nightdresses. They are discreetly pocketed to hold a soft prosthesis and with plenty of fabric in the skirt to allow for extra comfort. Designed as a result of personal experience and made in the UK. Larger sizes now available. Available from **coolandbeautiful.com** or telephone **01568 750 011** for more information.

**Medasun Ltd.** supplies Marena bras to the 2017 NHS supply chain. Marena Bras, manufactured under ISO 9000 standards from power-stretch Comfortweave® material. Easy to measure, breathable, anti-microbial, soft and comfortable, patients can buy a bra designed for their procedure direct from **medasun.com**. Discount code NHS1

**Nicola Jane** Experts in post-surgery fashion since 1984. Our NEW collection for 2017 features beautiful bras and stunning swimwear that will help restore your confidence after surgery. All with fitted pockets to hold your prosthesis securely. Free returns and shops throughout the UK. Call **03452 657 595** or visit **nicolajane.com**

To advertise here

please email us at

**vita@breastcancercare.org.uk**

**SILIMA.co.uk** – post-surgery bras & breast forms. Home to the highest quality and most realistic post-surgery breast forms available on the market, plus a range of stylish and supportive lingerie, Silima is a trusted supplier to the NHS with 40+ years' experience in mastectomy care. Visit **silima.co.uk** and check out our range of everyday bras from £18 each (Victoria & Natalia), treat yourself to our French designed bras (Flora & Lola), or our bestselling everyday Diana bra. Look no further for fashion and femininity all at great prices! Visit **silima.co.uk** or call **01295 220 524** to request a catalogue.

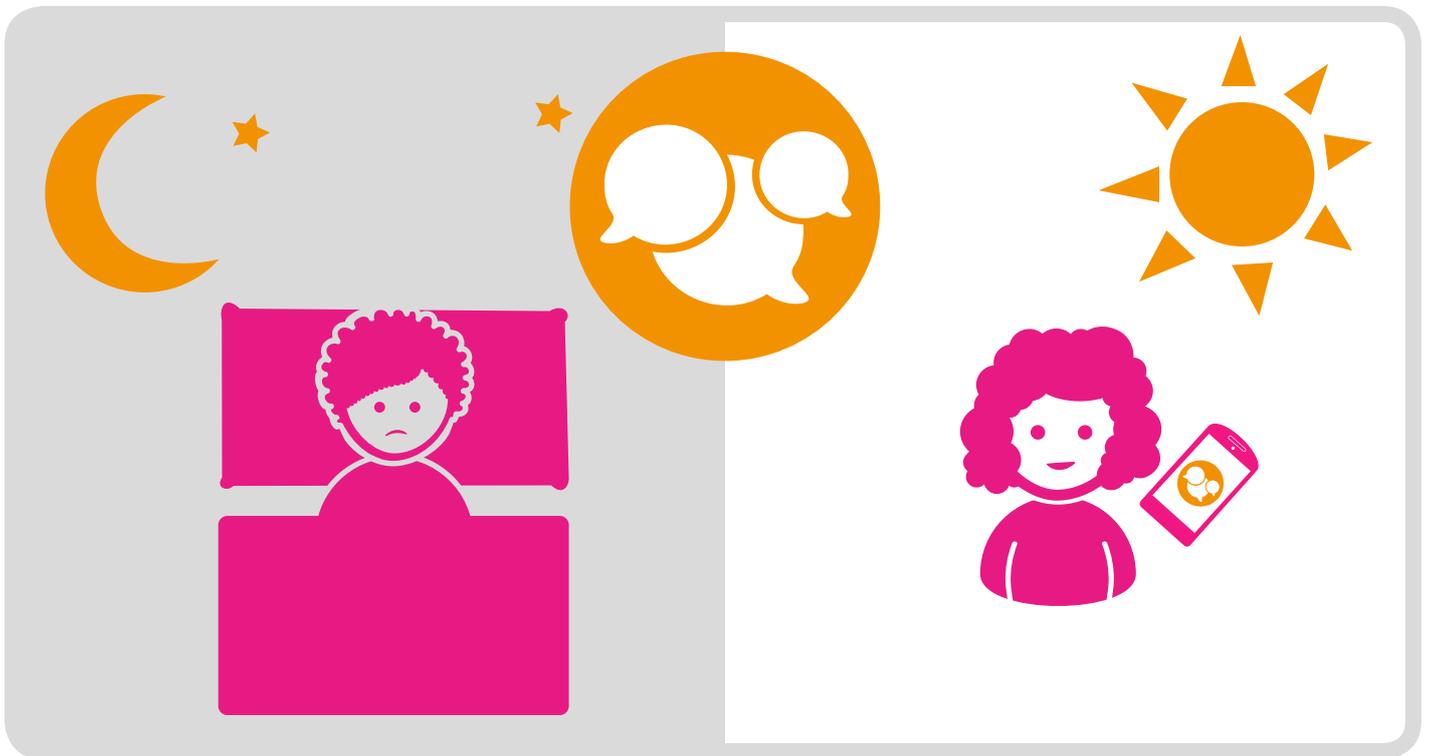
**Suburban Turban** offers stylish, fashionable headwear and accessories for women experiencing hair loss. The collection offers styles for all occasions – from beautifully simple, super-soft jersey hats to chic berets and sparkling cocktail hats. We also offer a range of natural skincare products, chosen for their gentle, soothing benefits. To shop the range go to **suburbanturban.com** or call **01306 640 123**.

**Womanzone ABC** To see our latest ranges of swimwear, lingerie and prosthesis or to order an up-to-date brochure visit our website **woman-zone.co.uk** or call us on **01925 220 932**. With over 50 years' experience we can offer an unrivalled service of care and advice, including free fitting, made to measure swimwear and pocketing services.

Breast Cancer Care does not endorse any product advertised on these pages. Speak to your specialist team before buying compression garments for lymphoedema.

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cancer  
care



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Support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year





# breast cancer care

**PINK RIBBONWALK**



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when you sign up  
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**ONE DAY. ONE CAUSE.**  
Walk together for people with breast cancer

Take on a 5, 10 or 20 mile Pink Ribbonwalk and help us be there for thousands of people affected by breast cancer.

**SIGN UP TODAY**

[breastcancercare.org.uk/ribbonwalk](http://breastcancercare.org.uk/ribbonwalk)

**Walk at a location near you**

Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire • Bakewell, Peak District • Glasgow at Night • London at Night  
**NEW FOR 2017.** Find out about organising your own Pink Ribbonwalk.

# Vita

**Four ways to subscribe to Vita magazine**

- Call **0345 092 0808**
- Email [vita@breastcancercare.org.uk](mailto:vita@breastcancercare.org.uk)
- Visit [vita.org.uk](http://vita.org.uk)
- Fill in this form and send it to the address below

If you already receive Vita by post, you'll automatically be sent each issue. You don't need to send us this form or contact us again.

I'd like to receive Vita magazine four times a year

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