

Vita

breast
cancer
care

The breast cancer magazine • Issue 33 Autumn 2017

Free

Hair, brows
and lashes
after chemotherapy

10 top tips
for living well

Lymphoedema

common questions
answered

*Genes and
family history*

EXPLAINED

**'I didn't want
anyone to know
I had cancer'**

Meet the faces of
#PinkRibbon25

Welcome to Vita

In issue 32 of Vita, we told you a bit about what Breast Cancer Care is doing to mark the 25th anniversary of the pink ribbon. As part of this year's Pink Ribbon 25 campaign, the charity is sharing the stories of people it has helped over the years. Everyone's breast cancer story is unique, and in this issue you can meet some of the faces of the campaign. Turn to page 8 to find out more. And if you feel inspired, why not share your own #PinkRibbon25 story on social media?

Lymphoedema is a long-term condition that affects some women after surgery or radiotherapy for breast cancer. If you've developed lymphoedema, you might have questions about living with the condition. There are many discussions about the topic on Breast Cancer Care's online Forum. On page 14, we address four common questions about living with lymphoedema.

Finally, we look at the complex topic of breast cancer and genes. BRCA genes – the altered version of which can increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancers – have been in the news often since actress Angelina Jolie had risk-reducing surgery in 2013. Only a small number of women with breast cancer have an altered BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, and it can be a very confusing topic. On page 18, we put some questions about breast cancer, genes and family history to a healthcare professional and someone who has an altered gene.

Gareth Fletcher

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Real lives

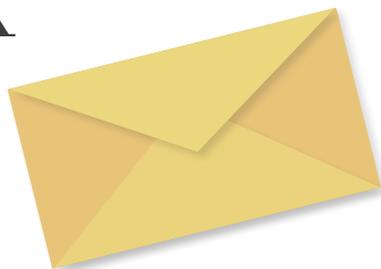
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Inbox

Your letters and emails



This issue's star letter wins a gift set worth £95 from our friends at Elemis



Star letter

Dear Vita

I love reading your magazine. I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009 and went on to have a mastectomy, radiotherapy and five years of hormone treatment. I am now 73 years young and living life to the full.

Vita has felt like a friendly hug and given me so much support and reassurance, especially reading other people's situations and how they have coped getting back to normality. In my case I tolerated it well, but when the hospital check-ups and treatment ended I felt a little lost (although I didn't let my lovely family know this). But not anymore as Vita has really helped me come to terms with everything.

I count my blessings every day and enjoy the simple things life has to offer far more. You have been like a best friend visiting, just another little treat to look forward to. Thank you Vita.

Marcelle

Dear Vita

I just wanted to say how much I appreciate your magazine. My cancer was 12 years ago now but I remain grateful for the support I received from Breast Cancer Care. I always pass on the magazine to people who have been recently diagnosed and who do not know about Breast Cancer Care. Your magazine is really helpful.

Toni

Dear Vita

I was delighted to receive the latest edition of Vita magazine and to see an article on finding the right bra after surgery. I had a mastectomy in 2014 and my mission ever since has been finding a bra that not only fits but makes me feel feminine despite the scars.

Big problem... I am a 38G cup. I have searched the specialist post-surgery companies who produce some beautiful bras – just not high enough at the front to cover the cleavage gap and in a G cup. There may be one or two in their catalogue which go up to a G cup but they are usually of a 'functional' design. I'm not young by any means but I still enjoy some frivolous femininity!

Surely I can't be the only woman sized 38G with a mastectomy?

Lynne

Vita says You are right, Lynne; you're not the only person struggling to find a beautiful bra that ticks all the boxes. You might want to have a look at the Jacqueline bra by Fantasie stocked by Figleaves. Although this is underwired there's no reason why you couldn't try it to see if it fits well with your prosthesis and is comfortable around your scar. Amplebosom is another online company that has a really good range in size 38G, some of which might fit the bill.

Get in touch with Vita

Email vita@breastcancercare.org.uk

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

It's big, it's pink and it's back

The Big Pink, Breast Cancer Care's October fundraiser, is back and bigger than ever.

Last year, 80,000 people took part in The Big Pink during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. And the money raised has helped Breast Cancer Care deliver its vital services, such as the Helpline.

Sofia, who organised a Big Pink locally, said: 'I got all the ladies from 60+ Fit Club together. We created our Big Pink dance routine, had a raffle and a live music performance! We're thrilled with the evening, everyone was so generous and supportive.'

This year, The Big Pink is happening throughout October, and it couldn't be easier to take part. Gather your friends, family and neighbours for a pink night in or host a bake sale for your hungry colleagues.

Visit breastcancercare.org.uk/pink or call **0300 100 4442** to find out more.



News and views

Survey highlights struggle when treatment ends

Over a quarter of women with breast cancer said their hospital treatment ending was harder than going through treatment itself, according to a survey by Breast Cancer Care.

Of the more than 800 people surveyed, only 10% said they felt positive and ready to move on when they were discharged from hospital. And more than half (53%) struggled with anxiety when treatment ended.

To try to reach more women at this difficult point, Breast Cancer Care has launched its new app, BECCA, which offers instant access to support and information for users for as long as they want it.

The app is available to download on iPhone and Android phones, and you can find out more at

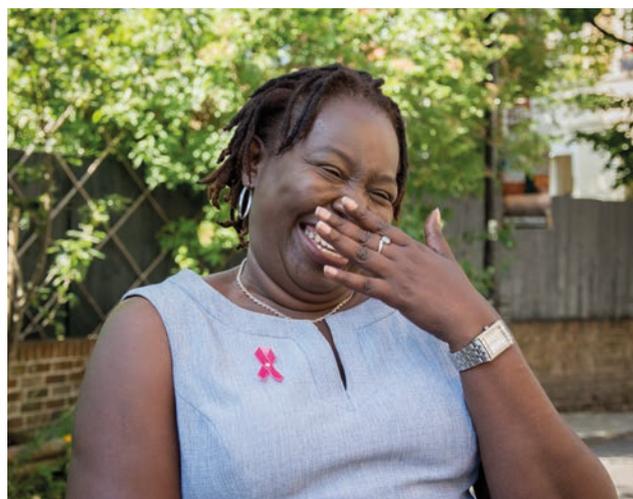
breastcancercare.org.uk/becca

Turn to page 12 for our tips on living well after treatment based on the BECCA app.



Get some pin-spiration

Breast Cancer Care has launched a limited-edition pin to mark the 25th anniversary of the pink ribbon. The soft pink velvet ribbon with a single white diamante costs £2 and has been specially designed for the occasion. To get your hands on this special pin go to breastcancercare.org.uk/ribbon25



Three cheers!

Three of Breast Cancer Care's information resources have been highly commended at the British Medical Association Patient Information Awards 2017.

The **Primary breast cancer resource pack** is full of essential information for anyone diagnosed with primary breast cancer. **How is primary breast cancer treated?** is a large-print booklet about treatments presented in a simple question and answer format.

Finally, Breast Cancer Care's new mobile app **BECCA** was also highly commended by the awards judges.



Save the date

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. And 13 October is Secondary Breast Cancer Awareness Day, when we shine a spotlight on the issues faced by people living with an incurable secondary diagnosis.

Visit breastcancercare.org.uk/secondary to find out about Breast Cancer Care's ongoing Secondary. Not second rate. campaign. And keep an eye out on Breast Cancer Care's Facebook page for a brand-new video featuring women with secondary breast cancer.



Hair, brows and lashes after chemotherapy

Rachel Rawson has some top tips and product recommendations for hair, eyebrows and lashes affected by chemotherapy.

Care for hair

For most women, hair loss is devastating. When the hair on your head grows back, it often looks and feels different, which can be a shock. The colour and texture may have changed and it may have come back curly when it was originally straight. Although it usually settles down over time, managing your hair in the interim can be a challenge.

Which shampoo?

Some shampoos are harsher on new hair than others. **My New Hair** (mynewhair.org) has some great tips on choosing a gentle product and suggests looking at ingredient lists before you buy a shampoo. Look for something that has wheat protein or vitamin E and, if you have a sensitive scalp, aloe vera or geranium. If you can, find a shampoo that contains disodium cocoamphodiacetate, which is derived from coconut oil and is a really mild cleansing agent. **Palmer's Coconut Oil Conditioning Shampoo** ticks most of the boxes.

'When hair grows back, it often looks and feels different'



Nice 'N Easy
Colour Enhancer
hair dye £3.75



Palmer's
Coconut Oil
Conditioning Shampoo

Will dye harm my hair?

Many people want to know when it's safe to colour their hair. **Cancer Hair Care** (cancerhaircare.com) recommends that as long as your hair and scalp are healthy and you have about 2cm of hair growth, it's fine to go ahead.

There are plenty of clever techniques and natural colours to use both at home and at the salon. You might want to try a semi-permanent colour so that you can see whether it suits your skin tone with short hair. Superdrug stocks a good range of affordable semi-permanent colours from **Nice 'N Easy**.

Creating lost or thinning eyebrows

There are many ways to do this. An everyday option is to draw in your eyebrows with an eyebrow pencil or powder. Getting the right colour will depend on your skin tone, eye and hair colour. You could go to a makeup counter or high-street chemist and experiment. Taking a friend for advice can be really useful.

You might want to try **Rimmel Professional Eyebrow Pencil** or **Charlotte Tilbury Brow Lift**, which has a brow pencil, brow highlighter and a brow brush.

There are lots of brow powders to try, including **Freedom Duo Eyebrow Powder** or **bareMinerals Brow Powder**. You might find that using a powder and a pencil together works for you.

Once you have your brows in place, you might want to use an eyebrow gel to keep them there. There are lots of gels on the market, both clear or coloured. If you want a waterproof option, **Browcote** may work well for you.



Freedom Duo
Eyebrow Powder
RRP £4

Creating the illusion of eyelashes

If your eyelashes have thinned, you'll need to treat them with care. A gentle eye makeup remover can help. Avoid waterproof mascaras because they're really difficult to remove and will put further strain on the lashes.

If your lashes are sparse, using a **lash primer** can help. **Clinique** has a really effective one that you can apply before your usual mascara to give the illusion of thicker, fuller lashes.

If your lashes have thinned or fallen out completely, you may want to try false lashes. They can be tricky to apply at first, especially if you've lost all your lashes, but with practice you'll become more confident.

There are some great tips on how to apply eyelash and brow products on the **Cancer Hair Care** website or **EyelineHer** blog (eyelineher.org).

Browcote Waterproof

Brow Sealer £6.99



Rimmel Professional

Eyebrow Pencil £2.99



Meet the faces of

For 25 years, the pink ribbon has been a powerful symbol for millions of people. Everyone's breast cancer story is different, and Breast Cancer Care is sharing stories to show why there's never been a greater need for our support. Here are some of the people who came together for our Pink Ribbon 25 video shoot.



Cathie

People think it would be easy to live without breasts. They think that it doesn't matter because you're still a woman, but it does matter and it is difficult. I'm sad and angry that I have to live without breasts, but I can't change it.



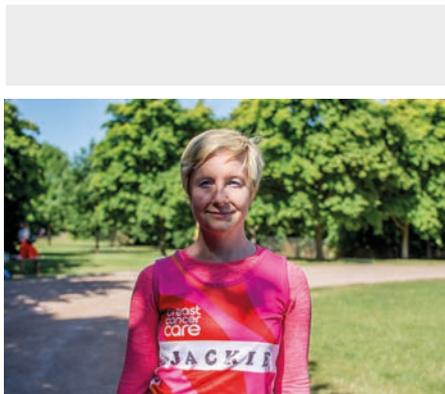
Nicky and Louis

Nicky: 'What did you think of Mummy with no hair?' Louis: 'Sad.' Nicky: 'Why were you sad?' Louis: 'Because I wanted you to be normal.'



Tony

Having breast cancer gave me a new outlook on life and since then I've taken up challenges including being a Games Maker at the 2012 Olympics. I was also on the catwalk for the Breast Cancer Care fashion show, much to the amazement of my family and friends.



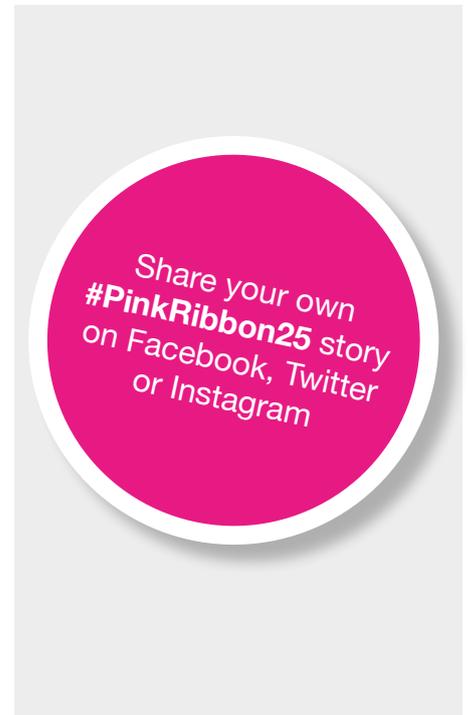
Jackie

Running became my reason to get out of bed and into the fresh air. When treatment was over and thoughts turned to wedding planning, we decided the days of having a traditional big day were behind us. That's why we pulled off a world first by getting married on the Cutty Sark at 7.30am before running the London Marathon.



Debs

I've had some really positive experiences since diagnosis and met some wonderful people. I'm going to go on and volunteer for Breast Cancer Care, and the pink ribbon to me means unity and strength.



#PinkRibbon25



Betty

I was very lucky and had a lot of support from my friends, like Mary [pictured left]. She used to turn up unannounced to make sure I was all right. We used to have a greeting: I would always ask her if she was germ free. If she was, she used to come in. And even if she wasn't she still came in!



Kreena

I didn't want anyone to know I had cancer. I'm very conscious that within Indian culture cancer is still hidden from the outside world. It's perceived as something to be ashamed of. I want to do anything I can to break the taboo. This disease doesn't choose whose door it lands at, and nobody should feel they have to hide it or that they did something wrong.



Della

I've been trying to educate people and raise awareness, especially in Nigeria and most other African countries where it's a taboo subject to talk about cancer. In the marginalised areas, black communities are still scared of talking about cancer.



Hayley

When I was diagnosed, it was a huge shock for me, my family, my friends and my colleagues, and I very quickly found that communication was my way of coping with everything. So I put out a Facebook post to raise awareness of breast cancer under the hashtag of #laidbacklumps and it had 186,000 shares and 30,000 comments of support.

Buy your
Pink Ribbon 25
pin badge at
[breastcancercare.org.uk/
ribbon25](http://breastcancercare.org.uk/ribbon25)





I'd never heard of secondary breast cancer

Carolyn Gammon talks about the confusion around her secondary breast cancer diagnosis and why having a specialist nurse has made all the difference.

Weighing a healthy 7 pounds and 5 ounces, Mira was delivered by Caesarean section on 29 April 2016. 'We decided to call her Mira because she is our little miracle,' says Carolyn, who was 42 when she and partner Gos found out they were expecting their second child.

Shortly before Mira was born, Carolyn finished chemotherapy for primary breast cancer.

Carolyn had seen her GP about a slight change to her breast, which she was told to keep an eye on. But after changes became more visible, she was referred for tests. Her breast cancer diagnosis was confirmed 10 days later. Carolyn was 16 weeks pregnant. 'It was a bit of a shock, but by then I'd already decided I had cancer.'

Not explained

Chemotherapy was followed by a mastectomy after Mira was born. But a scan showed shadows on Carolyn's liver and lungs.

'Nobody said anything about secondary breast cancer. They just said shadows,' says Carolyn.

The shadows on Carolyn's scan were confirmed as secondary breast cancer

on 23 June. But, she says, her diagnosis still wasn't explained properly.

'I had no idea what secondary breast cancer was. I didn't know that if breast cancer spread to another part of the body it was incurable. I thought if breast cancer spreads, that's bad but just means it's more difficult to get rid of.'

'I was told on a Thursday, and it wasn't until Sunday that I understood what secondary meant. It hit me like a ton of bricks.'

Carolyn's experience is far from unique. A Breast Cancer Care survey found only half of people diagnosed fully understood the explanation of secondary breast cancer they were given.

Game-changer

Despite this, Carolyn says her hospital care has been 'astounding'.

'I have instant access to a secondary breast care nurse at any time,' she says. 'I could email her at 11pm and I'd get a phone call at 9.30am the next morning. Anything I report is instantly checked out.'

Carolyn's experience isn't commonplace though. A Breast Cancer Care survey found that three-quarters

of hospitals say there's not enough specialist nursing care for people with secondary breast cancer.

Having someone to talk to and who can give her information has been 'a complete game-changer', says Carolyn. 'You can't underestimate how terrifying a diagnosis is. My secondary breast care nurse is phenomenal. I don't know how people cope without one.'

Amazing campaign

Carolyn's oncologist told her that two of the drugs she may need further down the line were currently not available on the NHS in Wales, where she and her family live. So family and friends launched a campaign to raise the money to pay for them.

The campaign took off and, since September 2016, has raised over £173,000. 'It's been crazy,' says Carolyn. 'Family, friends, colleagues, strangers ... everyone has rallied round.'

'We are fully aware that these drugs do not offer a cure, but they could provide me with extra years with my children.'

To find out about Breast Cancer Care's Secondary. Not second rate. campaign, go to breastcancercare.org.uk/secondary

Forum.

Facebook.

Friendship



The Breast Cancer Care Forum is a huge online community of people affected by breast cancer. You can talk anonymously and ask questions about almost any aspect of breast cancer. But behind all the usernames, it's also a place where many friendships form.

Finding a common thread

People use the Forum to start all kinds of groups, from local coffee mornings to larger support groups. The Forum is also a great place to connect with people having treatment at the same time.

The New Year Newbies are a group of 33 women who started chatting on a monthly chemotherapy thread on the Forum in January 2014. They shared practical tips and information during treatment, and talked about side effects, what helped them and questions to ask their treatment team.

The group became close quickly, setting up a Facebook group and messaging daily. Group member Pat Glue says the biggest benefit was having people there she could talk to at any time.

'I don't think I would have got through it without them. When you're stuck at home and other people are at work, you'd know at least one person would be online. And you say things you

wouldn't say to your friends and family because you don't want to worry them. The rest of the group completely understand where you're coming from.'

Nervous at first

The anonymous nature of the Forum can make it a less daunting way to reach out for support.

'I probably wouldn't have gone straight into a Facebook group,' Pat says. 'I didn't really use Facebook and I was very nervous about using a support group at first. I didn't want to be saying "I've got breast cancer" – I didn't even tell a lot of people. But the Forum is more anonymous, which makes it easier at first.

'You can set up an anonymous username and you don't even have to post anything. For a while I was just reading the threads. It's such a good way of getting information. Then, when I was feeling more confident, this group came up and I felt happy in it so I joined in. Suddenly I was posting every day!'

The New Year Newbies are a Facebook group who first met on the Breast Cancer Care Forum. Group member Pat Glue tells their story.

Definitely worthwhile

Over time their support group has developed into a close friendship group.

'As things moved on we talked about other things – our families and holidays. We got to the stage where we felt we knew each other. We're more like friends now.

'We're still very active three years on. We've arranged meet-ups and spa weekends. We've had ups and downs, we've lost three of our group members to breast cancer, but we're still proud to be supporting each other after over three years. Last year we even had a miracle baby born – we're all her New Year Newbie aunties.

'I would tell other people it's definitely worthwhile to join the Forum. I was just expecting a few answers to a few questions but I've got so much more.'

Find the Breast Cancer Care Forum at breastcancercare.org.uk/forum

1 Get menopausal symptoms under control

Hot flushes, night sweats, mood changes, weight gain ... Menopausal symptoms caused by breast cancer treatment can understandably affect your daily life, confidence and self-esteem. But you can do more than put up with them. It's worth speaking to your GP or specialist team about the treatments and help available. Breast Cancer Care's **Menopausal Symptoms and breast cancer** booklet has loads of tips and information to help. Order online at breastcancercare.org.uk or call **0808 800 6000**.

2 In pain? Have it assessed

If you're experiencing pain months or even years after surgery for breast cancer, you're not alone. We know from calls to our Helpline that some people have long-term pain. But options are available to help. For example, long-term pain after breast surgery is often associated with nerve damage. Simple pain relief such as paracetamol might help. But if it doesn't, your hospital team or GP can assess your pain and might prescribe an alternative treatment, such as antidepressants or anti-epileptic drugs which can also help with pain.

3 Worried about the future?

It's normal to worry about breast cancer returning after treatment, but these worries usually lessen with time. Knowing how to carry on being breast and body aware after treatment, and the symptoms you should report, can help manage your feelings of uncertainty. Breast Cancer Care's booklet **After breast cancer treatment: what now?** contains useful information for anyone who's worried about the future.

10 TIPS FOR after breast ca

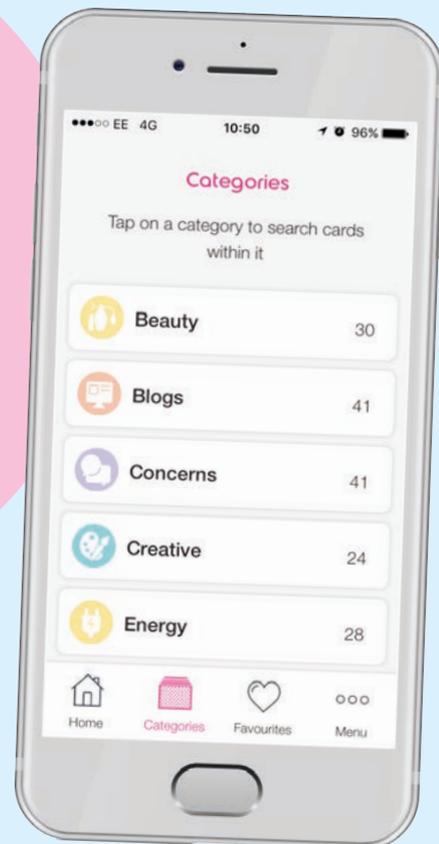
4 Need help Moving Forward?

Getting past your last hospital treatment can feel like a real achievement. But it's also common to feel isolated, low or anxious when regular hospital appointments stop. If you want support to get back to 'normal' after treatment for primary breast cancer, a **Moving Forward** course could be for you. Turn to page 25 to see what's available in your area.

5 Care for new hair

If your hair has recently regrown, there might be a salon near you that could give styling tips. It can be exciting when your hair starts to grow back after chemotherapy, but many women find that it regrows differently and are unsure how to cut and style it. My New Hair's salon directory means you can find specially trained hairdressers near you who can advise you on how to treat your new hair. Why not see if there's one near you? Go to mynewhair.org

BECCA, the Breast Cancer Care app, is available now for iPhone and Android phones.



6 Ease into exercise

Regular physical activity has a host of benefits for anyone who's had breast cancer, from reducing fatigue to helping regain a sense of control. But if you're recovering from treatment or new to exercise, it's important to start slowly and build up gradually. There are many ways to get activity into your daily routine, from going for a short walk each day to making your housework a bit more energetic. **Try the BECCA app** for simple tips on getting active.

7 Be more mindful

'Mindfulness' is a recent health buzzword. But there's evidence that being more mindful – that is, paying more attention to the present moment – can improve mental wellbeing. There are plenty of ways to get started. Try a mindfulness app like Headspace or a website like Kara, which contains a range of guided mindfulness meditations designed to support people affected by cancer. Mindfulness colouring books have been all the rage for a while, or search for 'guided meditation' videos on YouTube.



For more information about BECCA go to breastcancercare.org.uk/becca

LIVING WELL

Cancer treatment

BECCA, Breast Cancer Care's free mobile app, offers hundreds of hints and tips for anyone moving forward from breast cancer treatment.

BECCA gives you information, support and inspiration presented on easy-to-use flashcards. Inspired by the topics that have proved most popular with users of the app, we've pulled together 10 top tips for anyone moving forward after treatment.

10 Find our Forum

Knowing that other people are facing the same things as you can help you feel less isolated. Breast Cancer Care's online discussion Forum offers a safe space to talk to, share tips with and support other women affected by breast cancer. Whether you want to read other people's experiences of going through treatment or ask a question about moving forward after breast cancer, the Forum is here day and night. Visit breastcancercare.org.uk/forum

8 Keep a fatigue diary

Planning is key if you're dealing with fatigue. Keeping a fatigue diary – where you score your fatigue each day on a scale from 1 to 10, and record your activities – can help you think about patterns in your energy levels. This can make it easier to plan your activities for the times when you have more energy. Find an example of a fatigue diary at breastcancercare.org.uk/patient-resources

9 Eat well

Knowing what to eat during or after treatment can be hard. Treatments like chemotherapy can cause appetite and taste changes; some people gain weight during treatment and struggle to lose it again; and you may have read about alternative diets for people with cancer. Breast Cancer Care's **Diet and breast cancer** booklet covers everything you could want to know about diet and healthy eating during and after breast cancer treatment.

Living with Ly

Four common questions

There are lots of ongoing discussions about living with lymphoedema on Breast Cancer Care's online Forum. We address some of the questions you've been asking.

Can I go on holiday with lymphoedema?

There's no reason why you can't enjoy a holiday. But you might need to take extra care and do some forward planning.

If you've been fitted with a compression garment, wear it during your journey, along with loose, comfortable clothing. If you can, use a suitcase on wheels and keep any hand baggage light to make travelling easier.

While travelling, try to keep moving rather than sitting in one position, and do gentle arm and shoulder exercises in your seat.

If you're going somewhere hot it's important to protect your skin in the sun, so wear a high factor sunscreen (SPF 30 or above). Cotton clothing will be cooler and more comfortable in the heat. If you start to feel very hot, spray some cool water on your garments and consider keeping a spare spray in the fridge if you have access to one.

Melanie Thomas, National Clinical Lead for Lymphoedema in Wales, says: 'Remember to use mosquito repellent as you don't want to have bites that can cause cellulitis, an infection of the skin and tissue beneath the skin.' Ask your GP if you can take some antibiotics with you in case you develop an infection in the swollen area, particularly if you've had cellulitis before.

What is microsurgery for lymphoedema?

Microsurgery, sometimes called supermicrosurgery, is a relatively new type of surgery aimed at reducing swelling. This type of surgery is not suitable for everyone and it isn't widely available.

It involves joining tiny lymph and blood vessels together. This allows the lymph fluid to travel through new routes, avoiding blocked lymph vessels and reducing swelling.

It's performed by specially trained plastic surgeons who make small incisions in the skin under local anaesthetic. Microsurgery is ideally done in the early stages of lymphoedema.

Some centres in the UK offer microsurgery privately. To find out if microsurgery is an option for you, talk to your specialist team.

What is lymphoedema?

Lymphoedema is a long-term swelling of the arm, hand or breast/chest area caused by a build-up of lymph fluid in the surface tissues of the body. It can occur because of damage to the lymphatic system caused by surgery or radiotherapy to the lymph nodes under the arm and surrounding area.

I'm self-conscious about my compression sleeve and people asking questions. What can I do?

Many people worry about others, particularly strangers, commenting on their sleeve. Other people might not realise what it's for and assume it's for something temporary like a broken arm. Often they're just concerned, but this can be difficult if you don't want to discuss your lymphoedema or breast cancer.

It can help to hear from other people with lymphoedema about how they cope in social situations. There are several conversations on this topic on our online Forum ([breastcancercare.org.uk/forum](https://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/forum)), including suggestions on how you might respond to questions about your sleeve. Phrases that some Forum users have found helpful to explain their sleeve to other people include: 'I had surgery on my arm and have to wear a compression garment', 'I had surgery that left me with permanent swelling', or 'I have a problem with swelling in my arm, and this sleeve helps'.

You can find similar discussions on the Breastcancer.org online community (community.breastcancer.org) and Step Up, Speak Out (stepup-speakout.org).

Some people choose to hide their arm by wearing a one-sleeved top or a compression sleeve that matches their

lymphoedema



clothes. Others prefer to wear a brightly coloured or patterned sleeve as they feel it looks less ‘medical’. You can ask your lymphoedema specialist about different colour and fabric options.

Let’s Talk Lymphoedema – the essential guide to everything you need to know is a book by Professor Peter Mortimer and Gemma Levine. It has helpful tips about living with lymphoedema and managing issues such as those discussed here.

I’m finding it difficult coping with lymphoedema. Where can I get support?

For some people, accepting lymphoedema can be harder to come to terms with than the cancer itself. It’s important to tell your lymphoedema specialist or breast care nurse if you’re finding it difficult – they should point you towards further support.

It can help to talk to others living with lymphoedema. Our Someone Like Me service can put you in touch with someone who can offer emotional and practical support based on their

own experience. For more information, visit breastcancercare.org.uk/someonelikeme or call **0345 077 1893**.

The Lymphoedema Support Network (lymphoedema.org) is a charity offering information and support for people with lymphoedema, and runs local support groups in the UK and Ireland. They also have a comprehensive list of publications about lymphoedema.

If you’re feeling particularly low and think you might be depressed, talk to your GP – they may refer you for counselling or recommend other therapies.

Order or download a copy of Breast Cancer Care’s booklet **Living with lymphoedema** or **Reducing the risk of lymphoedema** from breastcancercare.org.uk/publications or call the Helpline on **0808 800 6000**.

Your questions answered

Breast Cancer Care's experts answer your questions about breast cancer and its treatments.



Ask us

Questions about breast cancer? Call the Helpline on **0808 800 6000**, or visit **breastcancercare.org.uk** for information, to order publications or to find out how to Ask Our Nurses by email.

What is hormone therapy?

I've been diagnosed with breast cancer and the specialist said I'll need hormone tablets after my surgery. What are these?

Hormone treatment is given to reduce the risk of breast cancer coming back or spreading. It's only prescribed if your breast cancer is oestrogen receptor positive or ER+. This means there are receptors within the cancer cells that bind to the hormone oestrogen, which can stimulate the cancer to grow.

A number of hormone therapies work in different ways to block the effect of oestrogen on cancer cells. They are given for five to ten years.

Which tablets you have depends on your individual situation and whether or not you've been through the menopause. Aromatase inhibitors (AIs) are usually given to women who have been through the menopause, while tamoxifen is mainly given to women who haven't been through the menopause.

Our **Treating primary breast cancer** booklet or individual hormone drug booklets have information about the different hormone treatments and their possible side effects.

Your breast care nurse can explain more about your particular treatment or you could ask to talk to the specialist again.

What treatment for brain mets?

I've been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer in my brain. What type of treatment might I have?

Secondary breast cancer in the brain (sometimes called brain metastases or brain mets) happens if breast cancer cells have spread from the breast to the brain. It can be treated but not cured. As treatments have improved, more people are living longer after their diagnosis.

Treatment depends on your individual situation, including how many areas of the brain are affected and if you have any symptoms.

Steroid drugs are often used initially to reduce any swelling and pressure in the brain caused by the cancer and can

quickly relieve symptoms such as headaches and feeling sick.

Radiotherapy is the most common treatment. It can be given to the whole brain or to the exact area to be treated (known as stereotactic radiosurgery or radiotherapy).

If a single area or very few areas of the brain are affected, surgery is sometimes used if these can be safely accessed by a specialist brain surgeon.

Drug treatments including hormone therapy and chemotherapy are sometimes used to treat secondary breast cancer in the brain.

You can read more information in our **Secondary breast cancer in the brain** booklet.

Help: I'm always tired

I finished chemo a few weeks ago and am permanently exhausted. When will I start to feel better?

Many people continue to feel exhausted for weeks and sometimes months after they've completed chemotherapy. It can really get you down. It's worth mentioning to your GP or specialist team as they may do some basic blood tests to check your blood counts have recovered.

Remember, it's normal to feel fatigued (extremely tired). Try not to do too much, too soon. Your body needs time to



recover so allow yourself some time to rest each day.

Some people find it helpful to keep a fatigue diary. You can read more about this at breastcancercare.org.uk/fatigue-extreme-tiredness

Relaxation techniques can help you relax properly. There are many relaxation CDs or apps that can guide you through different techniques.

Getting some regular exercise can help reduce fatigue, and drinking plenty of fluids and eating well can help improve your energy levels.

Macmillan Cancer Support publishes a booklet called *Coping with fatigue*, which you may find useful.

How can I lose weight?

I've finished treatment for breast cancer and put on a bit of weight, which I am struggling to lose. Are there any tips that might help?

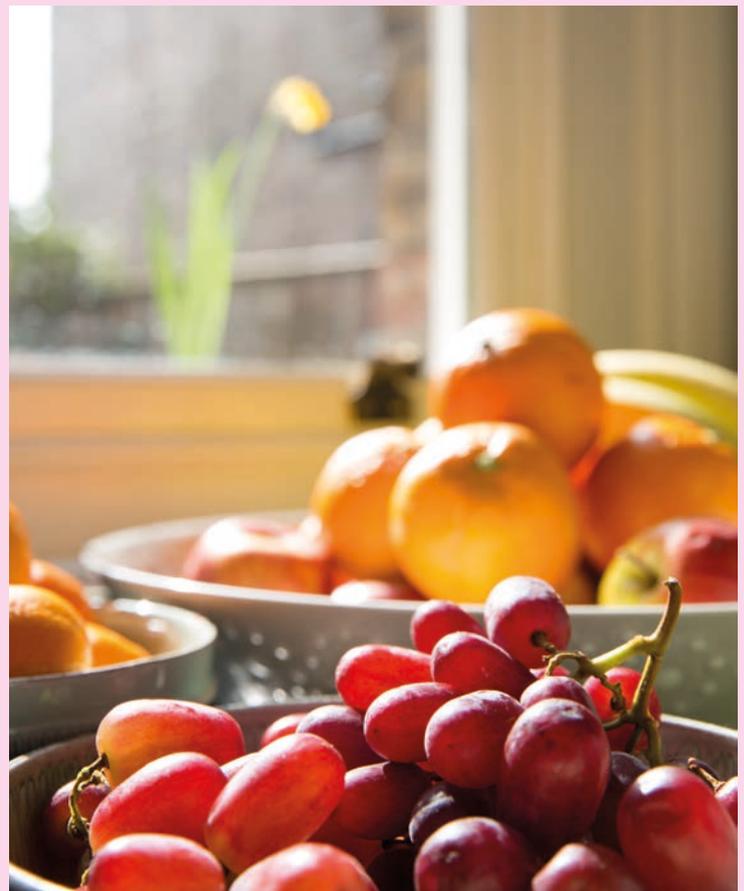
Many people tell us their weight increases during breast cancer treatment. This can be frustrating, particularly if you're finding it difficult to lose any weight you've put on.

You might find the following tips helpful:

- reduce your portion sizes
- choose wholegrain varieties of bread, rice, pasta and cereal
- eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day
- cut down on sugary drinks, biscuits, cakes and chocolate
- minimise alcohol intake
- choose lower-fat dairy products such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk and yogurts
- include beans and pulses in your diet
- choose lean cuts of meat and eat less red and processed meat (such as bacon, ham and sausages)
- choose unsaturated oils and spreads
- some people find slimming clubs help with motivation
- increasing the amount or type of physical activity you do can also help with weight loss

We have more information in our **Diet and breast cancer** booklet.

You could also speak to your GP or practice nurse and, if necessary, be referred to a dietitian.



Breast cancer, genes *and*

Breast cancer and genetics is a complex and often confusing subject. We put some questions to two people who know a lot about the topic.

The information nurse

Tracie Miles is Ask Eve Cancer Information Nurse at gynaecological cancer charity the Eve Appeal.

BRCA genes have been in the news for many years. What does having an altered BRCA gene mean?

We all have a BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene. For some of us there's an alteration (sometimes called a fault or mutation) in one of these genes. If we carry this alteration we have an increased risk, compared to the general population, of developing some cancers, including breast and ovarian cancers. In men there's an increased risk of prostate and breast cancers. With BRCA2, there may be a small increased risk of pancreatic cancer.

If you're worried that cancer might run in your family, who should you speak to?

If you're being treated for breast cancer, speak to someone in your treatment team. For example, you can talk to your breast care nurse.

If you haven't had breast cancer but are worried, talk to your GP. Your GP will ask about your family history and may refer you to a specialist clinic for assessment.

Around 5% of women with breast cancer have inherited an altered gene.

Some people will be offered genetic counselling. What happens at an appointment with a genetic counsellor?

A genetic counsellor will take your family history. Based on that information, they'll advise you about the likelihood of you carrying an altered gene, and if needed talk you through the implications of having a blood test to see if you do.

If someone is found to be a gene carrier, what are their options?

If a woman is found to carry a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, she'll receive counselling on options for managing her risk, such as breast screening, which aims to pick up breast cancer before there are any signs or symptoms.

She may want to consider risk-reducing surgery (removal of breast tissue, and ovaries and fallopian tubes, as was the case with actress Angelina Jolie). This is a very big decision and can take time to make.

She'll also be offered support in telling her relatives, and will be given introductory letters to give to relatives so they can seek genetic counselling to decide if they wish to have a blood test.

If you have an altered gene, does that mean your children have it too?

If you carry an altered gene, each of your children has a 50% chance of also carrying it.



Assessing your cancer risk

Your GP or healthcare professional should refer you for further assessment of your risk if:

- you or one close relative has had breast cancer before the age of 40
- you or one close relative has had breast cancer in both breasts
- you've had breast cancer known as triple negative (particularly if diagnosed under the age of 50)
- two or more close relatives have had breast cancer
- you have close relatives who've had breast cancer and others who've had ovarian cancer
- a male relative has had breast cancer
- you're of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry

Find out more in Breast Cancer Care's booklet **Family history, genes and breast cancer**.

family history *explained*



'I carry an altered gene'

Caroline Presho has an altered BRCA2 gene and runs online support forum BRCA Umbrella.

How did you find out about your family history?

In 2005 my paternal aunt was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Her medical professionals were very interested in her family history. My auntie was offered genetic testing and was found to carry a BRCA2 mutation.

Auntie Rene insisted we get tested. But my GP told me he didn't think I would carry a mutation and to stop worrying about it.

Auntie Rene passed away in June 2007 and my beloved dad died 10 days later. A couple of weeks after that, my mum answered a call from a consultant geneticist who revealed my dad had undergone genetic testing and had tested positive for the same mutation my auntie had.

You were invited for genetic testing. What happened?

I went with my younger sister. The consultant explained what carrying a BRCA mutation would mean. We didn't take much of it in, and gave our arms for a blood sample to be taken.

Six weeks later we were invited back. We listened to the statistics again and were asked if we wanted to know the results. We said 'Yes'. 'You have both

tested positive for a BRCA2 mutation,' came the reply.

I was 33 and my sister 29. At that time no screening or follow-up was offered until you reached 35 so we were told we'd be contacted at the correct age.

I had no information apart from a letter with details of my mutation and a lot of statistics, which scared me to death. I was offered no genetic counselling.

You opted to have risk-reducing surgery. How did you make the decision?

At 35, I was referred for screening and had a mammogram and MRI scan. The results showed shadows on both breasts. I was recalled for an ultrasound and the few days I had to wait for the appointment felt like years. Thankfully the ultrasound showed nothing sinister. But I couldn't go through this anxiety every year.

My mind was made up that the only way forward was risk-reducing surgery. So in November 2009 I had a bilateral (double) mastectomy with immediate reconstruction. I woke from the surgery feeling immense relief.

As there's no screening programme for ovarian cancer, in 2013 I opted to have both ovaries and fallopian tubes removed.

You found support through BRCA Umbrella. How did it help you?

At my most anxious point I came across the BRCA Umbrella forum. It had been set up by a woman in similar circumstances who was looking for peer support. I immediately felt understood. The women on BRCA Umbrella answered my questions and listened to my fears. I've gone on to take over BRCA Umbrella and we have nearly 3,000 members worldwide.

For information and support

- **Someone Like Me** Speak to someone who carries an altered gene. Call **0345 077 1893** or email **someonelikeme@breastcancercare.org.uk**
- **Ask Eve** Gynaecological cancer information: call **0808 8020 019** or email **nurse@eveappeal.org.uk**
- **BRCA Umbrella** Support for gene carriers: **brcaumbrella.ning.com**

Warming one-pan wonders

These two tempting autumnal dishes can both be cooked in a single pan, saving time when it comes to washing up.



Mushroom and taleggiorisotto

Serves 4

- 1 onion
- 250g chestnut mushrooms
- splash olive oil
- knob of butter
- bunch fresh thyme sprigs
- 250g risotto rice
- 750ml vegetable stock (hot)
- 100g taleggio cheese or vegetarian alternative

1. Roughly chop the onion and slice the chestnut mushrooms. Heat the oil and the butter in a non-stick medium-size saucepan over a medium heat, then fry the onion and mushrooms for 4–5 minutes until the onion has softened.
2. Remove the leaves from the thyme sprigs and add most of them to the pan. Continue cooking for a further 1 minute. Add the rice and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes.
3. Begin adding the stock, a ladleful at a time, stirring until each ladleful has been absorbed before adding the next. Continue in this way for around 15–18 minutes until all the stock has been added and the rice is cooked and creamy, with a slight bite.
4. Cut the taleggio into small cubes. Stir into the risotto, then serve scattered with extra thyme leaves (optional).

Toffee apple pan crumble

Serves 6

- 80g unsalted butter
- 80g granulated sugar
- 1 vanilla pod, split, or 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste
- 4 Bramley apples, peeled, cored and cut into even chunks
- clotted cream or ice cream to serve

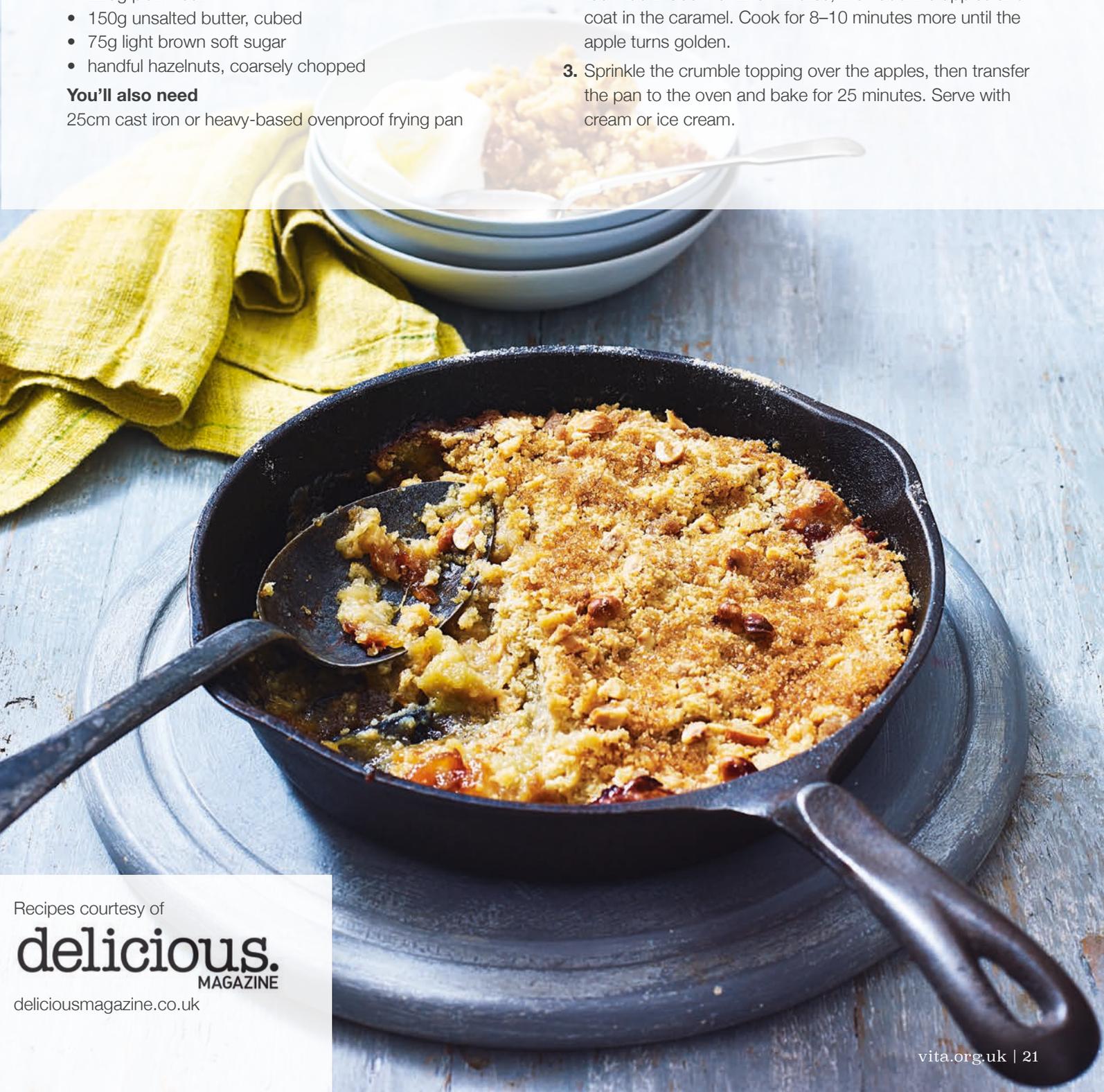
For the topping

- 225g plain flour
- 150g unsalted butter, cubed
- 75g light brown soft sugar
- handful hazelnuts, coarsely chopped

You'll also need

25cm cast iron or heavy-based ovenproof frying pan

1. Heat the oven to 190°C/170°C fan/gas 5. To make the topping, rub together the flour and 150g butter in a large bowl until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the brown sugar and hazelnuts, then set aside.
2. In the frying pan, melt the 80g butter and granulated sugar with the split vanilla pod or paste, shaking the pan to swirl the mixture together as a caramel. Try not to fiddle with it too much. Cook for 2–3 minutes, then add the apples and coat in the caramel. Cook for 8–10 minutes more until the apple turns golden.
3. Sprinkle the crumble topping over the apples, then transfer the pan to the oven and bake for 25 minutes. Serve with cream or ice cream.



Recipes courtesy of

delicious.
MAGAZINE

deliciousmagazine.co.uk

1



ELEMIS

Supporting Breast Cancer Care for the 17th year, ELEMIS is giving £25,000 and launching its **limited-edition pro-collagen marine** cream with bespoke pink packaging. Unique Mediterranean algae *Padina pavonica* is blended with Ginkgo biloba, chlorella, and rose and mimosa absolutes to moisturise the skin and visibly improve the appearance of fine lines, while encouraging a feeling of suppleness, firmness and elasticity. Available from elemis.com

2



QVC

QVC has teamed up with Kipling to create a fantastic, exclusive range including the **⁴Hope medium shoulder bag (£51)** and **²Strength set of three pouches (£27.50)**. Both are beautifully designed with the pink ribbon motif. Alternatively, why not show your support by purchasing the **³Hope, Strength and Unity 25th anniversary ribbon brooch (£22.50)**? At least 60% of the sale price from this range will go to Breast Cancer Care. Available from qvcuk.com/breastcancercare

3



4



5



Think

for Breast Cancer

This October, Breast Cancer Care's corporate partners are turning products pink in support of the charity. We've picked some of our favourites.

ASDA

There's a whole range of fantastic products available from Asda and George this October, including this George **⁵Tickled Pink Flamingo T-shirt (£8)** and **⁶Tickled Pink bobble hat (£7)**. Available in Asda stores and online while stocks last.

6



SKECHERS

Skechers is supporting Breast Cancer Care through sales of three new styles featuring the pink ribbon, including **Skechers GOWALK 4** and **YOU by Skechers**. The exclusive pink ribbon styles are all £62, with £5 from each pair going to Breast Cancer Care. Pick up your favourite style from skechers.com and Skechers stores in October while stocks last.



7

FIORELLI

As a brand with a history of inspiring the modern woman, Fiorelli encourages you to carry your confidence in the same way you carry a favourite handbag. Fiorelli will give £10 from the sale of every handbag from their Pinstripe range to Breast Cancer Care. The **Bethnal bag is £69**. The full collection is available at fiorelli.com from October.



8

pink

Awareness Month



9



10

DOROTHY PERKINS

Layer up this autumn with a **chunky jumper from Dorothy Perkins, available in pink or cream (£24)**. For cosy evenings in, there are also **joggers that merge comfort with style, in a soft grey marl with ruffle detailing (£22)**. The full collection is available in selected Dorothy Perkins stores and online, with 10% of the sale price going to Breast Cancer Care.



An unforgettable evening

Jodie Marrable spoke about her story at Carols by Candlelight 2016, Breast Cancer Care's festive fundraiser.

Jodie was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015. She was 31. Three weeks after hearing the words: 'You've got breast cancer,' Jodie had surgery and left hospital with a date to start chemotherapy.

'The enormity of what was happening hit me and I decided I needed to obtain as much information as I could. This is when I found Breast Cancer Care. Their website was packed with information and speaking to their specialist nurses I started to understand fully the journey I was on.

'I started using the Breast Cancer Care website Forum to talk to other young women who had breast cancer, which was a great comfort at what seemed like a very isolated time.'

Jodie turned to Breast Cancer Care again when she tested positive for the altered BRCA2 gene, which increases the risk of breast and ovarian cancers.

Since her breast cancer treatment, Jodie has raised nearly £10,000 for

Breast Cancer Care with an Afternoon Tea, become a volunteer and modelled in the charity's annual fashion show.

She describes Carols by Candlelight as an unforgettable evening. 'A choir, orchestra and special readings ... the perfect start to the Christmas festivities and a shared thought for those who have faced or have been lost to cancer. It's uplifting, inspiring and fun finished with mulled wine and mince pies – perfect.'

Carols by Candlelight 2017

Tuesday 12 December
St Paul's Cathedral, London

Get into the festive spirit this December with celebrity readers, choir performances and a generous helping of roast chestnuts.

Book your tickets for this sell-out event at breastcancercare.org.uk/carolslondon

Calendar of events

October

- 1
 - 1
 - 4
 - 7-15
 - 8
 - 11
 - 15
 - 26
 - 28
- Cardiff Half Marathon
 - Great Scottish Run
 - Women V Cancer
 - Cycle Brazil
 - Trek Great Wall of China
 - Royal Parks Foundation
 - Half Marathon
 - Renaissance
 - Photography Awards ceremony
 - Manchester
 - Half Marathon
 - The Show Scotland
 - Trick or Treat Run

December

- 11
 - 12
- Carols by Candlelight, Sheffield
 - Carols by Candlelight, St Paul's Cathedral

Find out more about these events at breastcancercare.org.uk/get-involved

Support in your area

Moving Forward

Struggling to adjust after treatment for breast cancer? Moving Forward courses provide information, support and professional guidance on how to cope with life after treatment.

Beth Hooper was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2015, and attended a Moving Forward course in Llantrisant in October 2016. 'I finished hospital-based treatment for breast cancer in September 2016 and was feeling a little lost,' says Beth. 'The routine of treatment had ended and I didn't feel I could move on and didn't know how to "get back to normal", as most people expected. 'A Moving Forward course came at the perfect time



for me. I found it really beneficial to get support and information on relevant topics in relaxed group sessions with expert speakers, and to meet and chat to

others going through the same experiences as me. 'It really did help me to move forward with life after treatment and understand a new normal.'

Moving Forward

These short courses take place throughout the UK to empower people to live better with and beyond breast cancer.

England

- Barnsley • Basingstoke • Birmingham
- Bournemouth • Brighton • Chesterfield
- Chichester • Doncaster/Worksop
- Enfield • Essex • Huddersfield • Kent
- Leicester • 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 • Tayside

Wales

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

Moving Forward Lingerie Evening

- Swansea 11 October • Llandudno 12 October • Cardiff 18 October

Living with Secondary Breast Cancer

- Bristol • Cardiff • Cornwall • Coventry
- Derby • Dorset • Edinburgh
- Forth Valley • Glan Clwyd • Glasgow
- Hambleton & Richmondshire
- Highlands (video conference available in Skye, Fort William and Caithness)
- Lanarkshire • Leeds • Liverpool
- Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells
- Manchester • Milton Keynes
- North Lincolnshire • North London/ Hertfordshire • Oxford • Romford
- Salisbury • Sheffield • South East Midlands (Leicester) • Staffordshire
- Sutton South London • Taunton • York/Harrogate

Younger Women Together

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

- Cardiff • Manchester • London
- Bristol • Edinburgh



Find the right support for you

Call **0345 077 1893**

Visit **breastcancercare.org.uk**

Email **services@breastcancercare.org.uk**

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**

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vita@breastcancercare.org.uk



Banbury Postiche Est.1931 is an NHS approved supplier that 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**.



Medasun supplies Marena Recovery designed in collaboration with medical professionals to apply science where you need it and promote healing in comfort. We add the right details for every procedure and offer the perfect recovery garment for each stage of healing. Visit **medasun.com**, call **01236 739668**, email **customer.services@tpshealthcare.com**



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**



Pebble UK supply armsleeves, gloves and gauntlets for the treatment of lymphoedema. With over 100 designs to choose from, these beautiful garments are made from seam-free, breathable, moisture wick fabric containing aloe vera for skin-friendly softness, and a fine knit construction for a lightweight feel. Call **0800 433 4757** or visit **pebbleuk.com**



SILIMA.co.uk Home to the highest-quality and most realistic post-surgery breast forms available, plus a range of stylish and supportive bras from £18 each. Silima is a trusted supplier to the NHS with 40+ years' experience in mastectomy care. 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**.



THEYA Healthcare's revolutionary post breast surgery range feels like a hug in a bra. Designed with you, for you, the super soft, bamboo mix fabric is naturally antibacterial and is 59% more absorbent than cotton, keeping you both cooler and drier. It has no wires, seams or tags so won't irritate wounds or sensitive skin. Visit theyahealthcare.com or call **+353 1716 3560**.



Womanzone ABC To see our latest ranges of swimwear, lingerie and prostheses 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.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT



Get into the festive spirit and join us at our Carols by Candlelight concert and supper on Tuesday 12 December. This year, it's more special than ever as it's being held at the magnificent St Paul's Cathedral. With Christmas carols, choir performances and celebrity readers, it's the perfect way to celebrate the festive season.

Buy your tickets early to avoid missing out.
breastcancercare.org.uk/carolslondon

Vita

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- Email vita@breastcancercare.org.uk
- Visit vita.org.uk
- Fill in this form and send it to the address below

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