

Living with secondary breast cancer topics

A diagnosis of secondary breast cancer can mean adjusting to difficult changes in your life. Our Living with Secondary Breast Cancer meet-ups have been designed to give you the chance to meet and share experiences with other people living with a secondary diagnosis and get the information and support you need. Regular guest speakers cover a range of topics.

Benefits and Financial Assistance

Understanding your entitlement to benefits and the process for claiming them can be complex and confusing. In this session an expert will talk you through the most relevant benefits and the eligibility criteria and give you plenty of opportunity to ask questions. You'll also be told how you can access support to help you make any relevant claims.

Cancer Related Fatigue

Fatigue is a common side effect of secondary breast cancer and its treatments – this session will help you to understand what causes it, how it affects you and what you can do to help manage its impact on your life. By the end of the session you should be better able to explain your fatigue to those around you so that they can better understand and support you.

Clinical Trials

Whether you've taken part in a trial or not you might have questions about how trials work and what they aim to achieve, the benefits and drawbacks of taking part and how it's decided whether patients are eligible. This session will help you to understand the process and give you the opportunity to ask any questions you have.

Hair and Scalp Care

Hair loss can be a distressing and very visible side-effect of some cancer treatments and as someone with secondary breast cancer you may even be losing your hair for the second or third time. This session will help you to understand how your treatment affects your hair and scalp and how you can best look after them during and after hair loss. You'll also learn about different options available to you from wigs to headscarves and hats and find out where you can access more support (eg a local HeadStrong service).

Information Day

Once a year in each location we run a full day event which provides an update on available treatments, information on fatigue or the benefits of physical activity, details of additional support and the chance to participate in a relaxation session.

Look Good Feel Better

Run by volunteers from the charity 'Look Good Feel Better', this masterclass will be an enjoyable opportunity to try out different make-up techniques to help combat the visible side-effects of your treatment. You'll learn about the benefits of a good skin-care regime and be find out how to choose suitable products. You'll use your own make-up during the session.

Lymphoedema

This session will give you an opportunity ask your questions about lymphoedema, whether you are already living with it or wanting to minimise your risk. An expert will explain what causes lymphoedema and signs and symptoms to look out for as well as how the condition can be managed. You'll also find out about other support available locally.

Pain Management

Far too many people with secondary breast cancer live with ongoing pain. This session will help you to understand what causes pain, the different ways it can be managed and who can help you with this. We'll address the myths that exist around pain relief medications and there will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions. We'll also explore other strategies which can help such as relaxation and make sure you know where to go for further help and support.

Palliative & Supportive Care

Evidence shows that people benefit from having access to palliative and supportive care as early as possible after a diagnosis of secondary breast cancer. At the same time we know that these can be frightening words to hear and that services are widely misunderstood. This session will explain the aims of palliative and supportive care and how it can help to meet your physical, psychological, spiritual and social needs alongside your medical care, from diagnosis onwards. You'll also find out about the support that is available for those closest to you. There will be plenty of time to talk about your fears or concerns in a relaxed and supportive environment.

Physical Activity

When you have secondary breast cancer there can be real benefits to staying active, for example in helping manage some side effects. However it can be difficult to know what kind of exercise or activity you can still do safely and managing energy levels can be a challenge. This session will explore all these issues, give you practical tips about exercising safely and provide an opportunity to try out different exercises.

Side Effects

Many treatments for secondary breast cancer have side-effects which can affect your daily life to varying degrees. In this session you'll have access to an expert (usually a Clinical Nurse Specialist) who can explain why side-effects occur and suggest different ways in which they may be managed. It's an interactive session, led by your questions, and aims to provide you with information and tips to help you manage side-effects and knowledge about local support services which may be able to help you.

If you would like to find out more about Living with Secondary Breast Cancer please contact us on secondaryservices@breastcancercare.org.uk or 0345 077 1893.