



# **Tips and Suggestions for Breast Cancer Survivors**

from

**Elisa Guida**

**StringsforaCURE® Founder and Breast Cancer Survivor**

# Tips and Suggestions for Breast Cancer Survivors

From Elisa Guida, StringsforaCURE®

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# Tips and Suggestions for Breast Cancer Survivors

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As a two-time breast cancer survivor myself, I received many tips from others and also developed many of my own. I have compiled all of these tips, suggestions and other information so that they are available for you as you navigate your journey from diagnosis and treatment of your breast cancer to survivorship!

As it states in the title, these are just tips and suggestions. You are empowered to make decisions about your own health and well-being and these decisions should be based on knowledge, rather than fear! There are a lot of helpful and supportive services that are available to you, but keep in mind that every diagnosis is unique and should be dealt with that way. What works for one person may not work for another.

This tip sheet is divided into the following sections:

- My Personal Experience with Breast Cancer
- My Personal Tips to You
- Available Services
- Recommended Books
- Recommended Websites

If you discover any other information or have recommendations that you feel would be helpful to others, please contact me. I would love to hear from you!

## MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH BREAST CANCER

I am a two time breast cancer survivor! My first diagnosis of breast cancer came in 1995 at the age of 40 and it returned 10 years later. No lump was detected either time, which highlights the importance of regular mammograms.

My first encounter in 1995 involved a lumpectomy, lymph node removal, and 6 ½ weeks of radiation, which rendered my arm numb for 9 ½ years. The second time around, which involved a mastectomy, was actually much easier. I was much better prepared the second time around because of the research I did prior to meeting with my surgeon. I also participated in a healing service. My surgery was on a Monday, I came home on a Tuesday, was out grocery shopping on Friday, without any bruising or pain.

After doing my research and consulting with a plastic surgeon regarding reconstruction and the complications that could arise from reconstructing a radiated breast area, I chose not to have it; I knew it wasn't for me. The second time around, I just wanted things over as quickly as possible so that I could move on with my life. It has been several years now since my recurrence and I have not looked back at any of my decisions! I chose to move forward with my life and everything that I love – music, jewelry, and gardening. And that's why I created **StringsforaCURE** – to help others!

## MY PERSONAL TIPS TO YOU

Below is a list of things that I have learned since my initial diagnosis that I would like to share with you. Some are philosophical (you get that way with a diagnosis of cancer!) while others are practical. As I said above, every diagnosis is unique and should be treated as such. Do your research and learn from others so that you can make informed decisions based on knowledge and not fear. These are YOUR decisions! Once you have your plan of action in place, you will feel a lot better. Now is the time to put

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you first. You will need your strength during this time. You will be very surprised how strong you really are!

- Do not put things off and do not take things for granted!
- When you are diagnosed it's very important to take the time to put yourself first. It's a long journey and it's best to have a positive outlook. This is the time to lean on family, friends and other survivors.
- Surround yourself with the things you love. I had my family, friends, and lots of prayers, jewelry, my garden and my beloved Phillies - all of which helped me through my journey and still do today.
- Do your research. Learn about your diagnosis and its various treatments so that you become empowered to make your own decisions about your care.
- Consider complementary therapies to assist with side effects of the medical therapies. Examples include yoga, meditation, guided imagery, massage, acupuncture, etc. See the National Cancer Institute's Office of Cancer Complementary and Alternative Medicine (OCCAM) website below for more information.
- Learn about nutrition and its link to cancer. See the list of books below and the book on nutrition, **Beating Cancer With Nutrition**
- Keep a journal. Document all of your appointments.
- Obtain copies of all the results from all of your tests so that you have your own records. Ensure that all records are dated.
- Get a second opinion, if possible. In some cases, there are different treatments for the specific types of cancer.
- In the event of a recurrence, you may be eligible for a clinical trial that is offered at other cancer treatment centers in nearby cities.
- Call your insurance company. You may be able to obtain information, CDs, and/or videos on topics such as choosing the type of surgery, breast reconstruction, hormone therapy, and chemotherapy. For example, Blue Cross has a Blue's on Call Health coach at 1-888-BLUE-428.
- If you have a mastectomy and opt out of breast reconstruction, you may want to consider a breast prosthesis. Go to the prosthesis provider prior to surgery, so that you can see it, feel it, and decide if it's for you or not.
- If you do have a mastectomy, consider requesting that the surgeon put the drain in the front, underneath and to the side of the mastectomy. This allows you to lie down more comfortably than if the drain is on the back or side.
- Consider getting a home health care nurse for at least a week after surgery to assist with changing the drain and checking on your progress post-operatively. This is often covered by health insurance.
- If you require chemotherapy or radiation therapy afterwards, there are many programs and services to help with wigs, scarves and turbans. If your friends wish to help or you want to help another breast cancer patient, consider a scarf and hat party. The hats and scarves provide some color and glamour during chemo and radiation treatments.
- Above all, eat healthy, stay rested, and depend on your friends and family to help. They want to help and this is the time to let them!

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## AVAILABLE SERVICES

### American Cancer Society's Reach to Recovery.

Talking with a specially trained Reach to Recovery volunteer at this time can give a measure of comfort and an opportunity for emotional grounding and informed decision-making. Volunteers are breast cancer survivors who give patients and family members an opportunity to express feelings, talk about fears and concerns, and ask questions of someone who is knowledgeable and level-headed. Most importantly, Reach to Recovery volunteers offer understanding, support, and hope because they themselves have survived breast cancer and gone on to live normal, productive lives.

Through face-to-face visits or by phone, Reach to Recovery volunteers give support for:

- People recently diagnosed with breast cancer
- People facing a possible diagnosis of breast cancer
- Those interested in or who have undergone a lumpectomy or mastectomy
- Those considering breast reconstruction
- Those who have lymphedema
- Those who are undergoing or who have completed treatment such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy
- People facing breast cancer recurrence or metastasis (the spread of cancer to another part of the body)

In the Erie area, call (814) 866-5174. If you are not in the Erie area, contact your local ACS or call 800-227-2345.

### American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery

Every day thousands of cancer patients need a ride to treatment, but some may not have a way to get there. The American Cancer Society Road to Recovery program provides transportation to and from treatment for people who have cancer who do not have a ride or are unable to drive themselves. Volunteer drivers donate their time and the use of their cars so that patients can receive the life-saving treatments they need.

In the Erie area, call (814) 866-5174. If you are not in the Erie area, contact your local ACS or call 800-227-2345.

### Physical Therapy

Talk to your health care provider about specialized oncology physical therapy during cancer treatments and before and after surgery.

Keystone Rehabilitation Services offers:

- **Oncology Exercise Programs:** Physical therapists with special training on developing exercise programs for patients going through all phases of cancer treatment. Programs can be designed to fight chemo-induced fatigue, restore strength, or improve cardiovascular fitness.
- **Breast Cancer Pre-op/Post-op Program:** this is a program designed to obtain baseline measurements for patients before they undergo surgery. The patient will receive education on their surgical procedure, they will be given a basic exercise program, and they will receive education on the risk factors for Lymphedema and keys for prevention.

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We follow up with the patients at 3 month and 6 month intervals in order to monitor any restrictions that may limit their return to their previous level of activity.

- **Lymphedema treatment:** We have two certified Lymphedema therapists that are able to provide treatment to patients with upper extremity or lower extremity swelling.

Contact Information: 814-860-7816

UPMC Centers for Rehab Services offers:

- Lymphedema Therapy:

Treatment for Lymphedema is available. Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is very effective and consists of:

- Manual Lymph Drainage (MDL): includes a gentle massage that reroutes excess fluid to healthy lymph vessels. It removes excess water, protein, and wastes via the lymphatic system back to the bloodstream.
- Compression bandaging: includes low-stretch bandages that are applied to increase tissue pressures, causing the muscles to pump fluid better, decreasing the size and improving the shape of the limb. Patients are also fitted with a compression garment (sleeve or stocking) to help support the skin and prevent fluid from pooling again.
- Exercise: prevents tightness in muscles and joints and improves lymph and blood flow. Patients are taught exercises to improve range of motion, strength, and posture.
- Education: is the final step to help patients learn proper skin care and tips for preventing lymphedema from developing again.

Contact Information: 814-877-6303

### Complementary Therapy

You may want to consider complementary and alternative medicines (CAM), also known as Integrative Medicines, which are healing practices that complement mainstream medicine, based on the holistic treatment of the disease. There are many different types of therapeutic disciplines, including but not limited to the following:

- Acupuncture/acupressure
- Aromatherapy
- Biofeedback
- Diet/Nutritional therapy
- Massage therapy
- Meditation
- Reiki
- Tai Chi
- Yoga

It is extremely important to become well informed regarding alternative treatments. Many nutritional supplements used in CAM can interact negatively with chemotherapy and radiation. However, stress reduction therapies, such as meditation, massage, and yoga can be safe and beneficial for cancer patients. More information about Complementary and Alternative

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Medicine is available at the NCI's Office of Cancer Complementary and Alternative Medicine (OCCAM) website: <http://cam.cancer.gov/>.

It is recommended you talk to your health care provider before beginning any complementary therapy.

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

#### **Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book** by Susan M. Love, and M.D., Karen Lindsey

*Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book* has long been the bible for the newly diagnosed. It also becomes a guide for those at risk of getting breast cancer, survivors interested in the consequences of their treatment, and anyone who wants to understand the new research about how the local environment influences the manifestations and treatments of many different kinds of breast cancer. Major advances being made in genetic research today mean that prevention and treatment can work not only to get rid of mutated cells (through chemo or surgery), but also to change the environment around the cells (through hormone therapy, exercise, and stress reduction). Among other promising developments discussed are advances in imaging, recognition of breast density as a risk factor, and a section focused on "personalized medicine" to help determine what kind of cancer you have and how best to treat it.

#### **Crazy Sexy Cancer Tips** by Kris Carr and Foreword by Sheryl Crow

Very inspirational! Kris is surviving with stage 4 liver cancer. Actress and photographer Kris Carr thought she had a hangover, but a Jivamukti yoga class didn't provide its usual kick-ass cure. A visit to her doctor confirmed her "liver looked like Swiss cheese," covered with cancerous tumors. She entered trench warfare (wearing cowboy boots into the MRI machine, no less), vowing, "Cancer needed a makeover and I was just the gal to do it!" She began writing and filming her journey, documenting her interactions with friends, doctors, alternative "quacks," blind dates, and other women with cancer—sadly a growing group. These include hip, young women such as illustrator-author Marisa Acocella Marchetto (*Cancer Vixen*), *Glamour* writer-editor Erin Zammatt (*My So-Called Normal Life*), MTV personality Diem Brown (*Real World/Road Rules Challenge*), model Sharon Blynn (founder, Bald Is Beautiful), and music manager Jackie Farry, among others.

#### **Beating Cancer With Nutrition** by Patrick Quillin, PHD, RD, CNS with Noreen Quillin

This book offers up-to-date information about the human body's own "host defense mechanisms" in the war on cancer, providing a multidisciplinary approach to treatment based on scientific studies and clinical experience. Quillin, a medical professional who has published extensively, has conducted nutrition studies with hundreds of patients in formal clinical settings. He discusses conventional therapies (chemotherapy, surgery), alternative therapies (macrobiotics, herbal and vitamin therapies), and related factors (psychosocial health, drugs, tobacco, immune dysfunctions). Appendixes list treatment referral agencies, mail-order nutrition products, suggested readings, nutritionally oriented doctors in the United States and Canada, and recipes using foods known to slow tumor growth. Written in an easy-to-read style, this work is informative, but some sections seem misplaced or redundant, and charts and graphs occasionally lack an identified source and are difficult to read. Still, this useful guide to

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authoritative alternatives in cancer treatment would be appreciated in public library or consumer health collections.

When I read this book, I found out that SUGAR fuels the cancer cells!

### **Love, Medicine & Miracles: Lessons Learned about Self-healing from a Surgeon's Experience with Exceptional Patient** by Bernie S. Siegel, M.D.

Siegel, a New Haven surgeon, believes that the power of healing stems from the human mind and will, that his scalpel only buys time against cancer, and that self-love and determination are more important than choice of therapy. His philosophy has caused radical changes in his practice. Siegel recounts many arresting anecdotes: joyous stories of patients who survived against all odds, sad chronicles of those who seemingly gave up and assented to their own deaths. The author's credentials make this one of the more plausible books on the mind-body connection.

### **Knockout: Interviews with Doctors Who Are Curing Cancer—And How to Prevent Getting It in the First Place** by Suzanne Somers

In *Knockout*, Suzanne Somers interviews doctors who are successfully using the most innovative cancer treatments—treatments that build up the body rather than tear it down. Somers herself has stared cancer in the face, and a decade later she has conquered her fear and has emerged confident with the path she's chosen. She shares her personal choices and outlines an array of options from doctors across the country.

### **The Silver Lining: A Supportive and Insightful Guide to Breast Cancer** by Hollye Jacobs

As a healthy, happy thirty-nine-year-old mother with no family history of breast cancer, being diagnosed with the disease rocked Hollye Jacobs's world. Having worked as a nurse, social worker, and child development specialist for fifteen years, she suddenly found herself in the position of moving into the hospital bed. She was trained as a clinician to heal. In her role as patient, the healing process became personal. Exquisitely illustrated with full-color photographs by Hollye's close friend, award-winning photographer Elizabeth Messina, *The Silver Lining* is both Hollye's memoir and a practical, supportive resource for anyone whose life has been touched by breast cancer. The Silver Lining of Hollye's illness is that she can now use the knowledge gleaned from her experience to try to make it better for those who have to follow her down this difficult path. This is why she is sharing her story. At once comforting and instructive, realistic and inspiring, *The Silver Lining* is a visually beautiful, poignant must-read for everyone who has been touched by cancer.

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## RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

### BREASTCANCER.ORG

<http://www.breastcancer.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/breastcancerorg>

Breastcancer.org is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing the most reliable, complete, and up-to-date information about breast cancer. Our mission is to help women and their loved ones make sense of the complex medical and personal information about breast cancer, so they can make the best decisions for their lives.

You will find information about symptoms and diagnosis, treatment and side effects, day-to-day matters, such as nutrition, exercise and intimacy, lowering your risks of cancer, discussion boards and blogs and much, much more.

Marisa Weiss, M.D. is the founder, president, and guiding force behind Breastcancer.org, the world's most utilized online resource for medical and personal expert information on breast health and breast cancer — reaching 27 million people globally over the past 10 years.

### Living Beyond Breast Cancer

<http://www.lbbc.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/livingbeyondbreastcancer>

Living Beyond Breast Cancer (LBBC) is dedicated to assisting you, whether you are newly diagnosed, in treatment, recently completed treatment, are years beyond or are living with metastatic breast cancer. We are also here for your family members, caregivers, friends and healthcare providers to provide breast cancer information and support.

As a national education and support organization, our goal is to improve your quality of life and help you take an active role in your ongoing recovery or management of the disease, regardless of educational background, social support or financial means.

Living Beyond Breast Cancer offers programs and services to women affected by breast cancer, caregivers and healthcare providers including:

- toll-free Survivors' Helpline staffed by trained volunteers at (888) 753-LBBC (5222)
- national conferences
- free teleconferences
- community programs
- newsletters and publications
- recordings and transcripts
- small grants to help improve quality of life
- workshops and trainings for healthcare professionals.

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### Kris Carr – Home of Crazy Sexy Wellness Revolution

<http://krisscarr.com>

<http://my.crazysexylife.com>

<http://youtube.com/user/KrisCarrTV>

[http://twitter.com/Kris\\_Carr](http://twitter.com/Kris_Carr)

<http://amzn.to/esn3a7>

<http://www.facebook.com/KrisCarr.FanPage>

Kris Carr is a multi-week New York Times best-selling author, speaker, and health advocate and she was diagnosed with Stage 4 Cancer in 2003. She is the subject and director of the documentary, Crazy Sexy Cancer, which aired on TLC and The Oprah Winfrey Network. Kris is also the author of award-winning Crazy Sexy Cancer book series. Her latest books, Crazy Sexy Diet and Crazy Sexy Kitchen, will change the way you live, love and eat! Kris regularly lectures at hospitals, wellness centers, corporations, such as Whole Foods, and Harvard University, and is a contributing Editor for Natural Health Magazine. Some media appearances include: The New York Times, Scientific American, Glamour, Vanity Fair, Good Morning America, Today, The Early Show, CBS Evening News, Access Hollywood, The Doctors, The Gayle King Show, Super Soul Sunday and The Oprah Winfrey Show. As an irreverent foot soldier in the fight against disease, Kris inspires countless people to take charge of their health and happiness by adopting a plant-passionate diet, improving lifestyle practices, and learning to live and love like you really mean it. Her motto: Make juice, not war!

### Linked by Pink – Increasing Awareness of Young Breast Cancer

<http://linkedbypink.org/>

[www.myspace.com/linkedbypink](http://www.myspace.com/linkedbypink)

<http://www.facebook.com/LinkedByPink?fref=ts>

Linked By Pink is a Non-Profit Organization consisting of Erie and surrounding area women diagnosed with breast cancer. We all understand a diagnosis, as we all have been through one before the age of 45. We understand the roller coaster of emotions, the fears, and the frustrations. We also have found a comfort in one another because we understand better than anyone what we each are feeling and thinking. We have also found humor in the face of this demon, we call breast cancer. It cannot stop us from laughing, loving, and living life to the fullest. A breast cancer diagnosis is a very physical, emotional, and spiritual journey, but you need to know you are not alone. We are here for you; to listen, to connect you to resources, to make you feel that you are in a place where you feel you belong, and to help make you laugh. Laughter is a key role in healing!

We hold monthly support meetings for those diagnosed in the Erie, PA area, as well as host various fundraisers throughout the year. The funds we raise are kept in the local Erie area. We have been a financial resource for those diagnosed. We have a scholarship for children who have had a parent that has been diagnosed and a grant for women who are in need of medical assistance. We have also been able to donate directly to other organizations in the area such as the Regional Cancer Center, The John Kanzius Foundation, The American Cancer Society and the Susan G. Komen Foundation, based in Pittsburgh, PA.

Contact by e-mail: [info@linkedbypink.org](mailto:info@linkedbypink.org).

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### ShareCare

<http://www.sharecare.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/SharecareNow>

Sharecare is a health and wellness social media platform that connects people with top-ranking experts ranging from doctors and specialists to hospitals, healthcare companies and health-conscious consumers. The power behind the site's unique Q&A format is its collective wisdom, providing health-seeking consumers with answers reflecting multiple expert perspectives—greatly simplifying the search for quality information. Created by Jeff Arnold and Dr. Mehmet Oz in partnership with Harpo Studios, Sony Pictures Television and Discovery Communications, Sharecare allows people to ask, learn and act upon questions of health and wellness, creating an active community where knowledge is shared and put into practice -- simply said, *sharing care*. Launched in 2010, Sharecare is based in Atlanta, Georgia.

### army of women LOVE/AVON – Going Beyond a Cure

<http://www.armyofwomen.org>

The Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation's Love/Avon Army of Women is made possible thanks to a grant from the Avon Foundation for women. Our revolutionary initiative has two key goals:

- To recruit one million healthy women of every age and ethnicity, including breast cancer survivors and women at high-risk for the disease, to partner with breast cancer researchers and directly participate in the research that will eradicate breast cancer once and for all.
- To challenge the scientific community to expand its current focus to include breast cancer prevention research conducted on healthy women.

Join us in this movement that will take us beyond a cure by creating new opportunities to study what causes breast cancer—and how to prevent it.

### Act with Love – Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation

<http://dslrf.org/actwithlove/>

<https://www.facebook.com/dslrf?ref=ts>

The Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit breast cancer organization, working to eradicate breast cancer and improve the quality of women's health through innovative research, education, and advocacy. The Foundation works to identify the barriers to research and to then create new solutions. The Army of Women is one of the many programs of the Foundation.

The Avon Foundation for Women, a 501(c)(3) public charity, has raised and awarded more than \$525 million worldwide for access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer. Support is also being provided by Avon Products, Inc., the largest corporate supporter of the breast cancer cause, which will work through its US Avon Sales Representatives to recruit women coast-to-coast.

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## PA Breast Cancer Coalition

[www.pabreastcancer.org](http://www.pabreastcancer.org) 1-800-377-8828.

The PBCC is a statewide organization based in Lebanon, Lebanon County, with a board of directors, a staff of eight and a network of volunteers across the state. The PBCC exists to help the 12,000 women in Pennsylvania who will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, to support the families of the 2,200 women who will lose that battle and to serve as a resource for the hundreds of thousands more women currently living with the disease.

We accomplish this through statewide educational programming, legislative advocacy and breast cancer research grants.

## Caring Bridge

<http://www.caringbridge.org/>

An online space where you can connect, share news, and receive support. It's your very own health social network, coming together on your personalized website. And thanks to those who donate, we are available 24/7 to anyone, anywhere, at no cost. We offer:

- CaringBridge Sites - Our personal, protected sites make it easy to stay connected during any type of health event. Family and friends can visit the site to stay informed and leave supportive messages.
- SupportPlanner - Our Support Planner is a calendar that helps family and friends coordinate care and organize helpful tasks, like bringing a meal, offering rides, taking care of pets and other needs.

It takes just minutes to start a site, set up a Support Planner or join someone's community. Our protected online spaces have multiple privacy settings. Your personal data is protected and not sold. You won't see any advertising. This is all about you and your health social network.

## The Doctors

<http://thedoctorstv.com/>

The Doctors is an Emmy Award-winning show that includes several well-known physicians: ER physician Dr. Travis Stork, OB/GYN Lisa Masterson, plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr. Drew Ordon, and pediatrician Dr. Jim Sears. This groundbreaking show, launched in 2008, does for health care what Dr. Phil has done for psychology – provides frank discussions in a fascinating, off-the-cuff manner. Expect these experts to weigh in on compelling guest issues and dispense valuable information about health topics du jour.

You can search and browse the website for topics of interest, watch previous and recent shows, read the blogs or ask a question on-line that the doctors will respond to.

## Erie County Health Department's Resources for Patients and Families Living with Cancer

<http://ecdh.org/public-health-news.php/Resources-for-Patients-and-Families-Living-with-Cancer/40/2150/319/4689>

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(To view the resource guide, click on the link that says: You can view the Cancer Resource Guide by clicking [here](#).)

The Erie County Cancer Control Task Force was created in March 2012 and is comprised of a group of cancer prevention and control professionals in Erie County. We are currently developing strategies to help decrease cancer prevalence rates in our community.

Through collaboration, we found there is a high need for a community cancer resource guide; we are pleased to present this guide for you. This guide is intended to be a living document, used by organizations, worksites, healthcare providers, and patients and will be continually updated by the task force.

If you would like to join the taskforce or would like more information please contact Joy Henry at the Erie County Department of Health at [jhenry@eriecountygov.org](mailto:jhenry@eriecountygov.org) or 814-451-6786.

NOTE: The Erie County Health Department Resource Guide is also available directly on the **StringsforaCURE** website under “*Services*” and “*Cancer Resource Guide*.”

### **CancerCare**

<http://www.cancercares.org/> 1-800-813-HOPE(4673)

Cancer Care is a non-profit organization that provides financial assistance, emotional support and resources to cancer patients and their families/caregivers residing throughout the United States.

### **The Pink Fund**

[www.thepinkfund.org](http://www.thepinkfund.org) or 1-248-505-5222

The Pink Fund provides short term financial aid to working individuals diagnosed with breast cancer, and in active treatment, who have lost their job, or taken a medical leave as a result of their diagnosis and treatment and are not collecting a pay check. (Individuals who are working part-time or receiving disability from their place of employment may qualify for support.)

### **Tigerlily Foundation**

[info@tigerlilyfoundation.org](mailto:info@tigerlilyfoundation.org) or 1-888-580-6253

Tigerlily Foundation provides services to women aged 15-40 with breast cancer. Services include financial and support – financial assistance is for medical and treatment, utilities and I’m not sure what else. They have several programs such as buddy programs, etc. depending on the availability in the area.

### **Breast Friends**

<http://www.breastfriends.org/> or 888-386-8048

Breast Friends provides referrals to support and other resources.

### **Triple Step Toward the Cure**

[www.triplesteptowardthecure.org](http://www.triplesteptowardthecure.org) or (424) 258-0313

Triple Step Toward the Cure provides emotional and financial support to women with triple negative breast cancer.

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### Young Sister's Initiative

<http://sistersnetworkchicagochapter.org>

A Guide to a Better You (YSI)! online program. The YSI Program was designed to give African American young breast cancer survivors (YBCS) easy-to-read, culturally appropriate information and resources about types of breast cancer, treatment, genetic testing for breast cancer, coping with emotions, and sexual and reproductive health.

### The Breast Cancer Charities

[www.thebreastcancercharities.org/help-now-fund](http://www.thebreastcancercharities.org/help-now-fund)

The Breast Cancer Charities provides a one-time grant – application can be downloaded – check the website for when they can be submitted.

### My Hope Chest

<http://www.myhopechest.org/> or 1-727-642-4243

My Hope Chest is a non-profit organization focusing on the need of breast reconstruction for uninsured and underprivileged women. They provided funding for breast reconstruction surgery after mastectomy to women who have survived breast cancer but are lacking insurance or the financial means to gain their desired reconstruction. There is a waiting list for assistance.

### Celgene Patient Support

<http://www.celgenepatientsupport.com/> or 800-931-8691

Celgene Support is a free service that helps patients and healthcare professionals navigate the challenges of reimbursement, providing information about co-pay assistance, and answering questions about obtaining Celgene products.

### Crickett's Answer for Cancer

[CrickettsAnswer@comcast.net](mailto:CrickettsAnswer@comcast.net)

Crickett's Answer for Cancer provides wigs, mastectomy and lymphedema products, massage, facial and other pampering services as a way to help women feel feminine despite losing their hair or breasts. Application online.

### Cleaning for a Reason

[www.cleaningforareason.org](http://www.cleaningforareason.org)

Cleaning for a Reason provides free house cleaning one time per month for 4 months while she is undergoing chemotherapy – she has to sign up and her doctor has to fax a note confirming treatment.

### American Cancer Society

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or 1-800-227-2345

American Cancer Society provides information on their **free wig clinic and Look Good-Feel Better program** at their local chapter nearest your area.

### Lolly's Locks

<https://lollyslocks.org/>

Lolly's Locks provides free wigs – go to their website and fill out the application.

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### **Breast Renew**

<http://www.breastrenew.com/> or 440-226-0069

Breast Renew was created to provide Breast Cancer Survivors with a natural and realistic looking post mastectomy nipple and areola tattoo following mastectomy and breast reconstruction surgery. The tattoo is done in a professional tattoo studio with a private and relaxed environment.

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### INFORMATION FOR HATS, SCARVES AND HEADWEAR

**Heavenly Hats Foundation** at [www.heavenlyhats.com](http://www.heavenlyhats.com)

**Hat Box Foundation** at [www.hatboxfoundation.org](http://www.hatboxfoundation.org)

**ChemoSavvy Headwear for Hardtimes** at [www.chemosavvy.com](http://www.chemosavvy.com) or 888-599-3560 – (if you want to deal with them, please speak to Mike and tell him you were referred by Cindy at **CancerCare** – they have a small amount of wigs that they are able to donate to those in need)

**Good Wishes Scarves** at [www.GoodWishesScarves.org](http://www.GoodWishesScarves.org), 888-778-5998) or ([info@GoodWishesScarves.org](mailto:info@GoodWishesScarves.org)- choose 3 fabrics and they will send you one that is available – they have a small selection for men.

**Where There's a Need, Inc.** at 1-866-803-6095 or [www.wheretheresaneed.org](http://www.wheretheresaneed.org) (headwear with hair) – they need a confirmation from your social worker that you are in financial need of a wig

**The Beau Beau** at 941-362-0250 or [www.4women.com](http://www.4women.com) – may be able to provide free scarfs (depending on availability) – they are not non-profit.

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## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

We know by now that living a healthy lifestyle by eating nutritious food, exercising and kicking destructive habits like smoking can all be factors in preventing cancer. Additionally, there are many things we can be doing to better detect the various forms of this illness sooner, without relying on infrequent doctor's office visits. With this in mind, here is a list of resources detailing how to identify symptoms that should encourage us to immediately visit a physician for further testing.

Provided by: Patricia Sarmiento | <http://publichealthcorps.org/>

### Signs and Symptoms of Cancer

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancerbasics/signs-and-symptoms-of-cancer>

The signs and symptoms of cancer are dependent upon where the cancer is, how big it is, and how much it affects the organs or tissues. Learn more about what bodily changes shouldn't be ignored.

### Alcohol and Increased Breast Cancer Risk Factors

<https://www.lakeviewhealth.com/alcohol-increase-breast-cancer-risk-factors-infographic.php>

Learn why even moderate drinking can increase a woman's risk of breast cancer.

### Skin Cancer Early Detection

<http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/early-detection>

This resource from the Skin Cancer Foundation provides information on how to identify symptoms of trouble, and a printable sheet for recording changes in moles or birthmarks with each self-check.

### Oral Cancer Self-Examination

<http://hlhc.ca/services/dental-hygiene/>

Your dentist or orthodontist should be screening you for abnormal cells at least once a year, but you can help keep an eye on your oral health using this printable guide.

### 5 Ways Service Dogs Help People with Cancer

<https://www.rover.com/blog/cancer-service-dogs/>

In hospitals and homes all over the world, therapy and service dogs are called on to provide companionship and assistance to people facing cancer. Learn how dogs can help cancer patients cope through diagnosis, treatment, and beyond.

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### **Foods to Avoid During Cancer Treatment**

<http://www.cancer.net/blog/2014-04/foods-avoid-during-cancer-treatment>

The results of developing a foodborne illness can be serious. Learn what foods to avoid to steer clear of this danger.

### **Chemotherapy and Swimming**

<http://blog.intheswim.com/health-you-chemotherapy-and-swimming/>

Learn how infections, chemotherapy and swimming relate in this informative guide.

### **The Things I Wish I were Told When I was Diagnosed with Cancer**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-tomczek/cancer-advice\\_b\\_1628266.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-tomczek/cancer-advice_b_1628266.html)

### **10 Ways to Help a Friend with Cancer**

<https://www.care.com/a/10-ways-to-help-a-friend-with-cancer-1205140129>

### **5 Ways Service Dogs Help People with Cancer**

<https://www.rover.com/blog/cancer-service-dogs/>

### **Talking with Children About a Loved One's Cancer**

<http://www.med.umich.edu/cancer/files/talking-w-kids-about-a-loved-ones-cancer-information-guide.pdf>

### **Thriving as a Caregiver: Tools for Coping When a Loved One Has Cancer**

<http://www.empowher.com/caregiving/content/thriving-caregiver-tools-coping-when-loved-one-has-cancer>

### **The Guide to Top Cancer Fighting Foods**

<https://draxe.com/cancer-fighting-foods/>

### **Navigating Cancer Care: How Cancer is Treated**

<http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated>

### **A to Z List of Cancer Drugs**

<http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/drugs>

### **The Guide to Safe Pain Management: Addiction Prevention for Cancer Patients**

<http://www.drugrehab.org/addiction-prevention-for-cancer-patients/>

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