

“Hope”ful TIPS from Breast Cancer Survivors

- “What was most helpful to me was to have a family member give out information to others about my progress. I was so tired and didn’t have the energy to check in with everyone.”
- “E-mail trees” can also be very helpful to coordinate information such as meals, rides and children’s activities.
- If you have children, ask friends or family to take them to their events as needed. Make a list of contact names and numbers too!
- Make a list of jobs or chores that others could help you with during your treatment and recovery. Then as people phone asking what they can do to help, you or a family member can refer to your list!
- When you go in for surgery, take clothing that will be easy to get in and out of, such as button down fronts, loose sleeves and soft undershirts or oversize sports bras.
- Use a pillow under your arm while in bed, while watching tv, in the car or anytime. “Pillows are your best friend.” You may even want to take your own pillow to the hospital!
- Find out the “dos” and “don’ts” about caring for your arm after surgery. This may lessen your chance of getting lymphedema.
- If you are having a mastectomy, you may want to inquire about customized breast prostheses before surgery. The Canadian Cancer Society provides a temporary breast prosthesis (soft fiber-filled form). Call 204-774-7483 or toll-free 1-888-939-3333.

For information on custom, temporary or permanent prostheses or the Manitoba Breast Prosthesis Program call Breast Cancer Centre of Hope at 204-787-2970 or Toll-Free 1-866-561-1026 ext. 72970.

- If you are having Breast Reconstruction, you should attend a reconstruction information session at Breast & Gyne Cancer Centre of Hope before you meet with the plastic surgeon.
- Don't get yourself talked into something that you are not up to or are not ready to do.
- "I found it so helpful to join the breast cancer support group. The group was welcoming and friendly and completely confidential. There is no pressure to talk if you don't want to. I could say anything and they understood."
- To Caregivers: Remember, you will need support as well. Take the time to take care of yourself!
- When people are offering to bring over meals, let them know what your family enjoys. Remember to alert them to food allergies as needed.
- "It would have been helpful for us to have had an extra person available at discharge from the hospital to take home flowers and personal belongings."
- Depending on the kind of surgery you are having, make sure your home is set up to suit you – like being close to the washroom if possible and not having to reach for things in high cupboards.
- "I found it helpful to speak to the Breast Cancer Patient & Family Educator at Breast & Gyne Cancer Centre of Hope. She took time and explained my pathology, surgery and treatments in a way that was easy to understand."

**“Slow down. Accept help. Rest. Recover. Pamper yourself.
This is the time to look after yourself.”**

Tips provided by Peer Support Volunteers from CCMB Breast Cancer Centre of Hope Phone 204-787-2970 or toll free 1-866-561-1026 ext. 72970.