

Intimacy and Sexuality after Breast Cancer

Being diagnosed with breast cancer can be a scary and stressful time. It can change your life and your body. We are here for you. We want to help you.

The symptoms you may be having can lead to changes in intimacy and sexuality. These may include:

- Feeling tired
- Nausea
- Pain
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Swelling
- Vaginal dryness

These changes depend on your treatment, which may last up to a year. You may need more medicine to lower the risk of cancer coming back.

Aside from what you may already be experiencing, treatments and medicines have side effects.

- You may have changes in sexual interest.
- You may find it hard to get aroused and have an orgasm.
- You may have pain with sex.
- Some women worry how their body looks after treatment.

Carbone Cancer Center Resources

Lori Seaborne, MPAS, PA-C is a physician assistant. She works in the UW Health Breast Center Survivorship Program

at UW Hospital. She completed sexual health training through the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan. She is certified as a sexuality counselor through the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT). She can talk with you about your sexual concerns after breast cancer. She can answer questions. She will help you find the right resources and the best care. Call **(608) 266-6400** to make an appointment.

Women's Integrative Sexual Health (WISH) Program at the Carbone Cancer Center at UW Hospital. This offers a personal approach. You may have a physical exam as part of your care. Lori Seaborne, MPAS, PA-C and Joanne Rash, PA-C (a PA in Gynecologic Oncology) work with your oncologist. They also work with your pelvic floor physical therapists and sex therapists. They use resources on hand to address your concerns. Contact Lori or your oncologist if you are interested.

There are other resources in the library at the Breast Center. They are at both the UW Hospital and the 1 South Park locations. They have free brochures and books you can check out. You may also find books at a public library.

Brochures

- *Intimacy and Sexuality* from Living Beyond Breast Cancer
- *Sexuality for the Woman with Cancer* from the American Cancer Society

Books

- *Intimacy After Cancer: A Woman's Guide* by Sally Kydd and Dana Rowett
- *No Less A Woman: Femininity, Sexuality, and Breast Cancer* by Deborah Hobler Kahane, MSW
- *Woman, Cancer, Sex* by Anne Katz, RN, PhD

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 11/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7759