



Breast Cancer Support Group Sussex

Dates For Your Diary

Hi Ladies

We are already into May how time flies! Our next group meeting is on Monday 20th May at 6.15 to 8.15. Kelly our Aromatherapist will be available for treatment, also Jutta our Reiki lady will be present.

Blakers Park where we hold our pink tombola stall and raise funds for the group is on Saturday June 15th. I will be needing help on the day as Pat is unable to assist all day as she is not feeling well and her energy levels are low. Please can you let me know by text to 07985115381 if you can give some time on the day. - just one or two hours would be great.

So good to have Geof on board as a Trustee !!! I hope you all received Geof's newsletter. On Sunday 5th of May, Geof had a family blessing of Joyce's headstone to which I was kindly invited. I found the service to be very moving. It's now one year since Joyce's passing which has gone so quickly. We have such fond memories of Joyce and we all miss her. Our thoughts remain with Geof and the family.

I have been having a very busy time myself, as I have been helping my daughter, her husband and my two grandchildren move home, from a flat to a house. They now have a garden which they can play in, which has made me very happy to see.

Hoping to hear from some volunteers and looking forward to seeing you all at the group on Monday 20th May.

Best wishes
Gwen

A reminder of how to contact and chat with others via our social media sites:

WhatsApp [B C Support Group](#)

Facebook www.facebook.com/breastcancersupportgroupsussex

Twitter [BCSGSussex](#)

May 20

Our Monthly Group Meeting

June 15

Our Pink Stall at Blakers Park, Cleveland Road, Brighton
11.30am to 5pm

June 17

Our Monthly Group Meeting

August 8

Get glammed up & join us for a fun day Ladies Day at Brighton Races

Macmillan Horizon Centre,
Bristol Gate (opp A&E at the RSCH)
NOTE change in time to 6.15pm to 8.15pm

We need YOUR help please!

As you may be aware, each year we have a Pink Stall at the Blakers Park Summer Fair where we have a tombola. We're looking for help with:

1. Prizes – to the value of a couple of £s – preferably pink, but if not wrapped in pink paper
2. Help with wrapping prizes up
3. A few hours on the day to help set up and /or man the stall

We always seem to have the same ladies helping out with events like this for which we're really incredibly grateful, but we would appreciate some new volunteers

**If you are able to help, please
contact Gwen by text [07985 115381](tel:07985115381)**



Sun care after breast cancer treatment

You may be concerned about the effects of hot weather during and after breast cancer treatment.

Breast Cancer Care's nurse, Rachel, suggests ways to look after your skin and stay comfortable in the heat this summer, including going in the sun after radiotherapy, what to do if you have lymphoedema, protecting your scalp, and managing hot flushes.



Top sun-safety tips after breast cancer treatment

- Use a high sun protection factor (SPF) sunscreen and apply regularly, particularly after swimming.
- Moisturise your skin regularly
- Wear loose-fitting, cotton or bamboo clothing. Some bamboo fabrics protect you from UVA and UVB. Keep your head covered in the sun
- Avoid the hottest part of the day (11am–3pm)
- Drink plenty of water at regular intervals
- Check with your hospital team or doctor before swimming
- Use a high sun protection factor (SPF) sunscreen and apply regularly, particularly after swimming
- Use insect repellent (if required), particularly at night

Can I go in the sun after radiotherapy or chemotherapy?

Breast cancer treatments such as radiotherapy and chemotherapy can make skin more sensitive.

If you're having radiotherapy, don't expose the treated area to the sun until your radiotherapy has finished and any skin reaction has settled down.

The skin in the treated area will remain sensitive to the sun for some time after treatment so you will need to use sunscreen.

Take care in the sun by covering your skin and wearing a hat. Use a sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF) and avoid the hottest part of the day (11am–3pm). Remember, it's also possible to get sunburnt through clothing, so apply sunscreen underneath your clothes too. You may want to look at clothes that are made of bamboo fabric. Some bamboo fabrics naturally protect you from the sun.

How long after radiotherapy can I go swimming?

You may want to avoid swimming during radiotherapy and shortly afterwards (until any skin reactions have healed), as a wet swimsuit can rub the skin and cause discomfort. Chemicals in a swimming pool may also make the skin dry and irritated. Talk to a member of your treatment team if you normally swim regularly and want to continue.

Which sunscreen should I use?

Sunscreens generally fit into two categories, mineral or chemical. Mineral sunscreens act as a physical barrier that works immediately after you apply it, blocking both UVA (sun rays that lead to premature aging and wrinkles) and UVB (rays that cause sunburn). Chemical sunscreens use ingredients that absorb UV rays and break them down before they reach the skin but need to be applied 20 to 30 minutes before you go out in the sun.

Both types of sun screen should be reapplied at least every two hours.

There are so many sunscreens on the market but it's important to find one that you're likely to use on a regular basis.

I have lymphoedema, do I need to take extra care in the sun?

Lymphoedema causes the skin to stretch and it can become dry, flaky, itchy and prone to infection. Wear loose clothing with long sleeves to protect the affected area from the sun along with your sunscreen and wear a compression garment if you've been given one by your specialist. You can still get burnt through compression garments, particularly synthetic ones. Your lymphoedema specialist can advise you on which garments will offer the most sun protection.

Try to avoid extremes of temperature – getting too hot then too cold, or too cold then too hot.

What can I do to protect my scalp?

If you've lost your hair because of chemotherapy or your hair is just starting to grow back, keep your head covered while outside to help prevent burning. You may also want to apply sunscreen to your scalp. The most comfortable head coverings in the heat are made from natural fabrics that are gentle on the scalp and allows the skin to breathe.

Wigs can sometimes feel hot and itchy, particularly in warmer weather, but you can try wearing a thin cotton or bamboo lining under your wig. You can buy these from wig suppliers or find them online.

What can help with hot flushes?

Menopausal symptoms, including hot flushes, can be caused by breast cancer treatments. Hot flushes can vary for each person, from a couple a day to a few every hour. They range from a mild sensation of warming that just affects the face, to waves of heat throughout the body. Some women also experience drenching perspiration affecting the entire body.

Hot flushes can feel more intense during hot weather, so keep cool by using a fan, wearing loose-fitting cotton clothing and drinking plenty of water. Getting to know what triggers your hot flushes can help you avoid them. See the following article for some tips

I'm travelling abroad what else do I need to think about?

If you're travelling to a hotter, tropical area you may need to use insect repellent, particularly at night, to avoid bites and stings. Bites from insects such as mosquitos can become infected and are very uncomfortable.

If you have lymphoedema it's a good idea to ask your GP for some antibiotics to take with you. This is so you can start taking them immediately if you develop an infection in the area affected by lymphoedema.

If you're having chemotherapy, you may also be advised to avoid swimming pools. This is because chemotherapy affects your immune system's ability to fight infection, which might make you more susceptible to any germs in the water. If you do want to go swimming, discuss it with your treatment team first.

Check with your doctor if you'll need any vaccinations or preventive medication before you travel. Live vaccinations (such as yellow fever) are not recommended during chemotherapy or for six months afterwards, as they could cause serious infections. While inactivated vaccines (such as cholera and typhoid) are safe during and after treatment, they may be less effective if you have a weakened immune system. This may be the case in the first six months after chemotherapy. Talk to your treatment team about the best time to have any injections.

How to manage menopausal symptoms in the heat

Managing the side effects of hormone therapies like tamoxifen can be challenging, especially during summer. Helen, who was diagnosed in 2016, shares her top tips for managing menopausal symptoms in the heat.



Hot flushes, sweating, muscle cramps and insomnia

This hormone positive cancer is a funny ol'business and I have found it particularly tricky to negotiate the medication side of things. Initially, I was prescribed letrozole, and what fun we had together! Joint stiffness and muscle cramping were just the start. I changed to exemestane, but my problems got worse. The joint pain and muscle cramps were, at times, crippling. Since January, I have been taking tamoxifen. There are still issues, but things have improved. Although, dealing with the fabulous, gorgeous, and beautifully warm weather has been interesting! My biggest issues are with hot flushes, sweating, muscle cramps, and insomnia.

Helen's tips for managing hot flushes

- 1. Dress in layers** - My first tip is to wear nothing that cannot be rapidly ripped off as soon as your temperature goes up. Dress in layers and natural fibres.
- 2. A small, hand-held electric fan** - I got mine from Amazon and love it because it's rechargeable! Concertina fans are great too and easy to carry in a handbag.
- 3. A cooling pillow or 'chillow'** - This is a cooling pillow to slip in your pillow case for those unbearably hot nights. They are also handy for managing migraines.
- 4. Auricular acupuncture** - I had a course of this as soon as I started on letrozole, and then a couple of top up sessions last year. It seemed to work really well to begin with for me but sadly,

since taking tamoxifen, I haven't noticed a difference. But I would definitely recommend it as I had 12 months of relief that I suspect can be attributed to it.

5. Find some shade - Seek it out wherever possible, as it still allows you to be outdoors, top up your Vitamin D levels, and enjoy the sunshine.

Helen's tips for managing sweating

1. Wear layers to bed and change your sheets - When it comes to night sweats, besides the chillow, my best advice includes wearing layers of bedclothes that can be easily thrown off, and to frequently change your sheets.

2. Wear minimal makeup - I have pretty much given up wearing make up after it slid off my face within ten minutes of application one too many times. I still use eye makeup and lippy, but that's all these days. The 'au natural' look is definitely the best one for those inclined to a sweaty face.

3. Carry around a lens cloth - Thanks to regularly steaming up my glasses with hot flushes and sweating, I generally carry around a lens cloth.

Helen's tips for managing muscular cramps

1. Try some form of exercise - On the days when I do more than just lounge about, I definitely have fewer problems with cramping. Either a short energetic walk, or a longer, more ambling stroll works wonders.

2. Remember to stay hydrated - Drinking plenty and keeping hydrated also seems to help. I tend to drink a lot of water anyway but on the days when I have less, again, I notice the cramps are worse.

Helen's tips for dealing with insomnia

1. Listen to audiobooks - I have always been prone to insomnia, but tamoxifen or venlafaxine have taken it to a whole new level. Chemotherapy also left me with tinnitus. To combat the tinnitus while falling asleep, I started listening to audiobooks and it's delightful.

2. Remember to exercise - That old chestnut again. But it does work. I definitely sleep better after a good walk in the fresh air.

3. Sleep with the windows open - Earplugs are a godsend if your neighbourhood is noisy!

These are the tips I find most helpful for managing menopausal symptoms, and I have not yet found the warmer weather something to dread. Something to manage, yes, but it is manageable.

Helen writes her own blog, **Getting Abreast of the Situation** :

<https://gettingabreastofthesituation.wordpress.com/>

Fancy a day at the races?



Brighton Racecourse Ladies Day Thursday 8th August

TIME TO PLACE YOUR BETS: BRIGHTON WELCOMES THE MARATHONBET FESTIVAL OF RACING

Summertime wouldn't be complete without a day at the races and few days out have the charm or the spectacular views of our racecourse!

It is planned to be the festival of the summer where over 15,000 people will attend, 1,500 bottles of prosecco are consumed, 1,000 bowls of fresh strawberries are served and 7,000 pairs of high heels will be cast aside by the end of the three days!

This iconic venue will be teaming with racegoers all dressed to impress and looking for a win. Thursday is the hugely popular **Ladies Day** where the glamorous and stylish congregate here at Brighton. Growing in popularity over the years, this day is a sell out! So, glam up and enjoy the sensational atmosphere at the top of the hill!

Throughout this popular event there will be entertainment, food trucks, vintage pop-up bars, a ladies lawn with a complimentary photobooth airstreamer, and, of course, seven exciting races to get your heart pumping.

We've attended this event previously and it's always been a fun day out. Bring your own picnic!

Group Rate Tickets are £20 for the Premier Enclosure which includes

The Premier Enclosure allows access to the winning line as the horses flash past the post! As well as access to all facilities in the Grandstand and Paddock Enclosure you can also access the Premier Lawns.

Friend and family are of course very welcome to join us!

To book tickets please email Nickie – nickiebrooks1@outlook.com

Are you a good listener?

Do others come to you with their problems?

Do you want to give something back?

If so, can you help as a Group Facilitator?

Gwen has been doing a fantastic job (for which we applaud her) facilitating the group each month but you'll appreciate that it's very hard for one person to do this. We are appealing for one of our ladies to offer to step up to help facilitate at meetings. There's a training course offered by Macmillan which is available to anyone who can fulfil this important role.

Here's a flavor of what's involved?

Group Meetings

Creating a warm, friendly and inclusive environment

Listen and be aware

Welcoming new members and sending welcome cards

Conduct one to one meetings as required

Promote and encourage buddying/befriending

Facilitate meetings – round robin, encourage participation, create discussions, offer support

Liaising with speakers and welcoming them to our meetings

Maintaining group register

Ensure fair distribution of time by therapists

Providing practical and emotional support

Maintain regular contact with members

Arranging member events and days outs

Organising and assisting at fund raising events (and persuading volunteers!)

Arrange Christmas Party

Assist with items for newsletter

Involvement in our social media

Occasional attendance at Macmillan or other associated charity or company meeting

Help to shape the future of the group

Assist with the response to incoming calls made to the charity's mobile and to emails

Report to Trustees

Participation in meetings with Trustees as required

And lots more!

Training will be provided through Macmillan. If you can help please let Gwen know or email

info@breastcancersupportgroupsussex.co.uk

Personal Information

We're registered with the Information Commissioners Office as a data controller as we hold your name, address, contact number and how you found us. We securely hold this information so that we can contact you and provide you with information such as this newsletter and to record attendance at meetings and events. We may use this information for our own analysis, for example, to assess which type of speaker is more popular. We do not hold any other personal information or any records of conversations etc. Information is shared by Trustees and Facilitators and we do not pass your data to any third party

Part of our responsibility under the General Data Protection Regulations is to ensure that the information that we have is correct and not to hold the information for longer than we need to. We know that some of the personal details that we hold are out of date due to home move, email address or phone number change.

We'd be grateful if you would kindly let us have your up to date information by emailing us with:

Your Name
Home Address
Home Tel Number
Mobile Telephone Number
Email address

Can you please also let us know which of these methods we may contact you by:

Post
Home Phone
Mobile Phone
Email

And, please let us know

What interests you (eg talks, social events)
How we improve our group meetings
Your views on how we can attract more ladies to participate in the group
And anything else, you'd like to share as we do value your opinions

Please note that if you ask us not to contact you by email we will not be able to provide you with a copy of the newsletter as due to current postal costs, these are no longer sent by post. You do have the right to ask us to delete your information at any time.



We know that it can be important to try to eat well following a diagnosis. One simple way to boost your nutrition is to drink smoothies! Smoothies are perfect for cancer patients because they're packed full of healthy fruits and vegetables. They're also fast and easy to make.

If you've never tried to blend anything before, don't worry. We've made a list of the 3 best smoothies to drink during cancer treatment and throughout the cancer journey.

But first, let us walk you through the basics of smoothie-making.

What is a smoothie?

Smoothies are made by combining ingredients in a blender. Nothing gets processed out of a smoothie. You drink everything you put in. This means that smoothies are full of fibre. Fibre can help to keep you full longer and will keep your blood sugar stable.

Why are smoothies good for cancer patients?

Smoothies are easy to sip – especially on days that you don't feel like eating. They're full of nutrients, vitamins, and healthy fruits and vegetables. If you choose ingredients with healthy fats and protein, your smoothie will keep you feeling full longer, too. This will help you to fight off nausea.

Basically, smoothies are a fast and convenient way to get a lot of healthy food into your body. You can use almost anything you have on-hand, and still end up with a tasty, convenient meal.

What should I put in my smoothie?

We've put some great smoothie recipes at the bottom of this article. But anything can go into a smoothie if it tastes good to you!

Try following this simple formula and substitute ingredients with your favourite fruits and veggies:

- 2 cups of liquid (decaffeinated is best). Try water, milk or nut milk.
- 2 cups of fruit. Try bananas, berries, pineapple or mango.
- 1 cup of leafy green vegetables. Try spinach or kale (we promise you can't taste it in the final smoothie mix!)
- A protein source. Try nuts, yoghurt or protein powder. You'll only need about 1 tablespoon of nuts or ½ cup of yoghurt or protein powder.

What are some tips for blending smoothies?

- Add your liquids to the blender first. When you blend your smoothie, this will be gentler on the blender, and it will be easier to blend your ingredients.
- Keep it cold. Add ice or frozen fruits to the blender. Frozen fruits become very creamy when blended and they help to make the smoothie a bit thicker. Cold smoothies also taste very refreshing.
- Start blending at a low speed and gradually work up to a higher speed. This is easier on the blender (and a bit less noisy!)
- Don't add extra sugar. The natural sugars in fruits will keep your smoothie sweet.
- Choose a nice variety of colourful fruits and vegetables to blend.
- Try adding different ingredients and discover what you love! Oatmeal, nut butter, fresh ginger, and spices like cinnamon and turmeric can be delicious.

Here are 3 simple smoothie recipes to try if you're living with cancer:

Simple Summer Green Smoothie

- 2 cups cold water
- 1 peeled banana (fresh or frozen)
- 1 cup of mango chunks (fresh or frozen)
- 1 cup spinach
- ¼ cup plain or vanilla yoghurt

Very Berry Smoothie

- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup plain or vanilla yoghurt
- 1 peeled banana (fresh or frozen)
- 1 cup frozen berries (blueberries, raspberries or blackberries)
- 1 cup spinach
- 2 tablespoons oats

Tropical Smoothie

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup ice cubes
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 2-3 kiwis (peeled)
- 1 diced pear (peeled and seeded)
- Optional: 1-2 tablespoons of honey

Simply choose a recipe, add the ingredients to the blender in the order given, and blend away! A delicious, healthy drink awaits you.