



Breast Cancer Support Group Sussex

Hello

I hope that you all had a lovely summer. We've certainly been lucky with the weather,

Joyce's husband Geof put on a wonderful BBQ last month which was held in their garden. The garden was looking stunning and whilst the forecast threatened rain for most of the day, we were lucky that we saw only a smattering of rain. The event raised £600 for Joyce' foundation. Thank you to everyone who attended and/or contributed. It is much appreciated. Geof is continuing to raise funds and will be making the donations in the New Year.

My daughter recently gave birth to our granddaughter Dolly Ann so I've been busy helping Mum. Such an exciting time!

I hope that Adrienne is feeling better and is starting her treatment soon. We are thinking of all of our members who are currently undergoing treatment.

We have the Catholaity Fair at Cardinal Newman in November where we'll have our Pink Stand. If you have any items that you are able to donate for the tombola please let me know. Also any offers to help out on the day would be much appreciated

Look forward to seeing you at Monday's meeting

Best wishes

Gwen

Dates
For Your
Diary

September 17

Our Monthly Group Meeting with Speaker Elaine Noble

October 15

Our Monthly Group Meeting with Speaker Alex Golding

November 10

Our Pink Stall at Catholaity, Cardinal Newman School

November 19

Our Monthly Group Meeting

December 17

Provisional Date for our Christmas Party

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

Counselling Service at Macmillan Horizon Centre



As I'm sure you are all aware, the Horizon Centre offers lots of fantastic and invaluable services to those of us who have needed and continue to need support following a diagnosis of cancer. One of the services offered, which many people may not be aware of or made use of, is the counselling service for which I volunteered for a year as a counsellor, following my recovery.

Having had counselling myself, throughout my diagnosis and treatment, I do not believe I would have been able to get through that period of my life without it. So I wanted to let people know about the service and encourage anyone who might be interested to use this support.

I am a qualified psychodynamic psychotherapist in the NHS for the South London and Maudsley Health Trust and work with distress on a daily basis and, as I'm sure we can all agree, a cancer diagnosis involves quite some distress, both for us as patients but also for family and friends.

Counselling can be very helpful in dealing with this distress, together with other psychological aspects of having cancer, currently not specifically addressed in the treatment of cancer. I firmly believe it should be part of every patient's treatment because of the difficulty of coming to terms with such a diagnosis.

The counselling offered is 12 weekly sessions with the same counsellor and is available not just for patients but for friends or family affected by a cancer diagnosis.

It is often difficult to talk openly about fears a cancer diagnosis inevitably raises and perhaps to tell someone about the intense emotions such a diagnosis arouses. Counselling provides an opportunity to do this with a person willing and qualified to listen and offer support.

Counsellors do not give advice as such, it is more a place to explore worries, concerns and fears and I would recommend everyone seriously considers counselling if they feel they need more psychological support to deal with their cancer.

I am looking forward to discussing this service with you further at the meeting in September and answering any questions you may have.

Best wishes

Elaine Noble

Five tips on telling children about breast cancer

PUBLISHED ON: 12 September 2018 – Vita magazine

Anita struggled to tell her children about her diagnosis, and has since written a book for kids whose parents have cancer. She shares five tips for talking about illness with children.



I didn't think it was real

At the end of November 2016, I discovered a lump in my right armpit. I saw the GP the following day and was referred for an ultrasound.

I went to the breast clinic, where I had my ultrasound, a mammogram, and then saw a consultant radiologist. He had the awful job of telling me that there were two lumps in my breast, as well as the lump in my armpit.

He did a biopsy and a week later I went back to the breast clinic with my husband, Simon. My two children stayed with their grandparents. It was four days before Christmas.

Our fears were confirmed. The tumours had spread to my lymph nodes. The New Year was going to mark the start of my breast cancer treatment.

Simon and I drove home stunned. In a way, we were expecting it, but it couldn't be real, could it?

We've always been honest with our children

We knew we had to tell the children. Simon had to medically retire when his kidney transplant was failing. He'd been on two modes of dialysis, and our lives and what Simon was able to do had changed drastically.

We had always been honest with the children about Simon's health. We looked for books to help us explain the changes in our lives but had been unsuccessful. We used our own knowledge and experience to answer the difficult questions. Why does Daddy's arm buzz? Why does Daddy have a tube coming out of his tummy? Why can't Daddy carry me anymore?

This time around, the breast care nurse had given us a book for each of the children, Mummy's Lump, published by Breast Cancer Care. It help them understand what breast cancer was, and what was ahead.

I knew they'd be less scared if they understood

It's only fair to explain things to children. It's the way they learn and come to terms with the situations they face. We knew from our experience with Simon's illness that they would be less fearful about the procedures if they knew what was happening.

When we got home, we sat them down and told them about my diagnosis. We explained what cancer was, that they couldn't catch it, and that none of us caused it. We also told them that the doctors had said they could treat me with medicine, surgery and X-rays.

We gave them big hugs and answered their questions.

We were able to celebrate together

I started my treatment. I had six cycles of chemotherapy, followed by a double lumpectomy and lymph node removal. I then did a course of radiotherapy.

In the following days, weeks and months, we continued to tell the children about the upcoming treatments – how long they would last, what would be done to Mummy, and how it was going to help.

When there were complications, we were honest with our disappointment and anger at the situations we were all in.

After a year I had my review, and was told I was 'cancer free', and we celebrated together as a family.



Anita's five tips for telling children about breast cancer

1) Be honest

Make sure that you're calm as you explain the diagnosis and treatment options, but be honest about how you feel. Children will react to your emotions and they'll know when you're hiding things. They may find it harder to trust what you say if they think that you are not telling them the truth.

2) Tell them early on

We told our daughter when I found a lump that I was going to have some tests and that I would tell her the results when we knew them. She knew from experience that we would be honest with her and trusted that we weren't trying to hide what was happening.

3) Follow their lead

Our daughter has always lapped up any medical information that we've given her and used it to help her process her feelings. The question that I had expected her to ask came from our son.

He asked what would happen to him and his sister if both of us died. It was an extremely painful question to answer but as he was thinking about it, I knew I had to respond. I told him I hoped we would be with him for a very long time.

4) Keep them informed

We told the children about my diagnosis when we found out and continued to communicate at every stage of the treatment and subsequent check-ups and reviews.

5) Use available resources

After we told the children about my diagnosis, we gave them the books we received from Breast Cancer Care. We found that books and literature are a great starting point for talking to children about difficult situations.

While there were lots of books for breast cancer, we found nothing aimed at the children of renal disease patients, which is what Simon has. We decided to write and publish three books of our own. They are fictional accounts of two children whose parents cope with renal dialysis and transplantation issues.

We decided to crowdfund the fourth book in the series, B is for Breast Cancer. We hope it will help children understand the changes that happen in their parents' lives when one of them is diagnosed with breast cancer. We just reached our target, but any additional donations will contribute to marketing and allow us to donate copies of the book to families who need it.

If you're concerned about talking to family and friends about breast cancer, our information pages at www.breastcancercare.org.uk might help.

How to manage menopausal symptoms in the heat

PUBLISHED ON: 27 June 2018

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

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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.

This is how I have been managing them.

- Tips for managing hot flushes
- Tips for managing sweating
- Tips for muscular cramps
- Tips for 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 lip, 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.

Recipes for cancer sufferers: four healthy smoothies

Kickstart your day with one of these delicious smoothies



Health in a glass: Mark Jordan's banana and blueberry smoothie

Banana and blueberry smoothie

By Mark Jordan

SERVES 2-3

PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINS

1 punnet of blueberries

2 bananas

1 vanilla pod, scraped

1 pt soya milk

Place the blueberries and 1 banana into a blender and purée with the scraped vanilla pod until nice and smooth; at this point add some soya milk until it reaches a desired consistency.

Rinse the blender and add the remaining banana and purée, adding some soya milk to reach desired consistency. Pour over the first purée so that you get a purple smoothie with a yellow smoothie on top.

Slice a few raw blueberries and arrange them on top of the smoothie and serve straight away.

Fruit and nut smoothie

By Peter Fiori

SERVES 2

PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINS

COOKING TIME: 5 MINS

35g almonds

35g walnuts

35g Brazil nuts

35g hazelnuts

90g water

2 apples

50g raisins

50g frozen black fruits (use from freezer)

4 tbsp low-fat yogurt

Take all the nuts and water, cover and place into the microwave (900W) on full power for 2 minutes and then cool down.

Juice the apples, put into a blender. Add the chilled nuts, raisins, frozen fruits, yogurt and blend.

Top tip: make sure all the ingredients are chilled before blending

Fruit salad smoothie

By Peter Fiori

SERVES 2-3

PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINS

2 apples

2 pears

½ celery

3cm piece of cucumber

85g baby spinach

Small bunch of watercress

½ avocado

4 ice cubes

Juice the apples, pears, celery, cucumber, spinach and watercress.

Add the flesh of the avocado and ice cubes to the blender along with the juice.

Pour into a glass and serve.

Top tip: Make sure all the ingredients are chilled before juicing and blending

Watermelon, celery and cucumber replenisher

By Simon Boyle

SERVES 2

PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINS

500g fresh ripe watermelon

250g cucumber, without skin

100g celery

1 tbsp lemon juice

3 sprigs fresh mint

1 tbsp crushed flax seed

Put the melon, cucumber and celery through a juicer (a food processor will do). Add the lemon juice. Mix until combined. ≤ Chop the mint finely and add to the juice. ≤ Pour into glasses and sprinkle with flax seed.