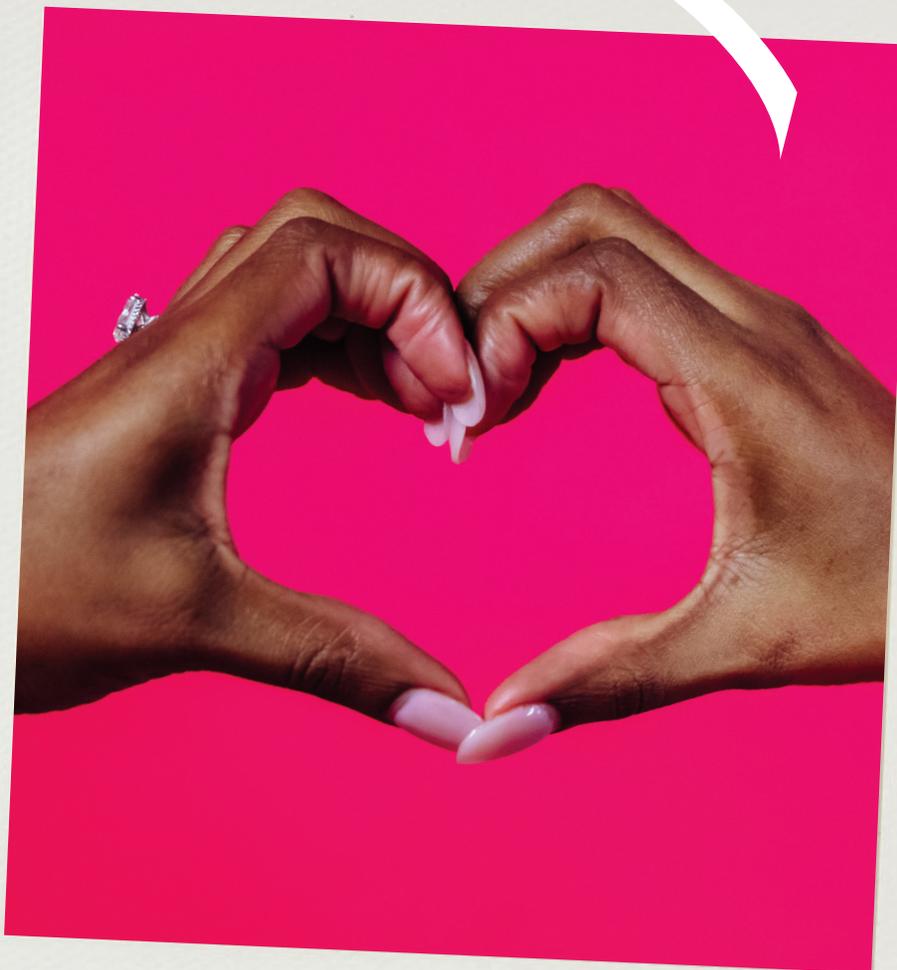


HERE FOR *the girls*

2022



Celebrating 15 years!

A GUIDE TO CARING FOR YOURSELF

This guide is a result of a collaboration between **Here for the Girls** and some of our medical partners to provide breast health information for you and those you **LOVE!**

Welcome

TO A GUIDE TO CARING FOR YOURSELF, WHERE YOU'LL FIND LOTS OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BREAST CANCER, BREAST HEALTH, AND BREAST CANCER SUPPORT.

As a nonprofit that has served young women affected by breast cancer since 2007, part of our goal from the very beginning (beyond providing social-emotional support) was educating people on how to avoid breast cancer risks and ensuring that everyone has the knowledge they need to be able to identify and advocate for themselves if something doesn't seem right with their breast health. We want every person to know what breast cancer is, how to detect it, and how to support someone who has the disease because, unfortunately, so many women get this diagnosis each year that at some point in your life you may be or know one of them.

We hope you will take the time to read through this Guide, learn things you didn't know before, and take that knowledge with you to improve your own health or the health of a loved one. Maybe you will even share what you learned with a stranger! We strongly believe that knowledge is power and should be shared.

Healthful Hugs.

The Team at Here for the Girls

CAN YOU CONTROL YOUR RISK? AVOIDING RISKS CAN REDUCE YOUR CHANCE OF DEVELOPING BREAST CANCER.

Although doctors don't know the exact cause of breast cancer beyond the fact that it stems from damage to a cell's DNA, a number of factors can affect your risk of it. Many of the known risk factors for breast cancer are beyond your control, for example, family history or having dense breasts. But you can control others, such as obesity, low exercise levels, and alcohol use. Exposure to too much estrogen, a female hormone that stimulates breast cell growth in many types of breast cancer, is another risk factor - some exposure to this hormone and substances that mimic it are controllable, while other exposures are not within your control.

Having any of these risk factors doesn't mean you will get breast cancer, nor does their absence mean you won't! The number one risk is being female, and aging (though a huge privilege!) increases risk. The best way to manage risk is to live a healthy lifestyle and practice early detection, which includes discussing your individual risk factors and appropriate screening methods (and when to do them) with your medical professional.

8 FACTORS YOU CAN CONTROL

- 1 WEIGHT** ♦ Being overweight or obese after menopause raises risk.
- 2 DIET** ♦ Although it is uncertain what foods affect risk, the recommendation for good breast and overall health is a low-fat diet high in fruits and vegetables.
- 3 ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION** ♦ Research is consistent. Alcohol increases risk. This is likely because it increases levels of estrogen and other hormones, can cause unwanted weight gain, and can damage DNA. Risk increases with the amount consumed. Drinking during adolescence and young adulthood also increases lifetime risk.
- 4 EXERCISE** ♦ Evidence shows a link between frequent and regular exercise and a lower risk, plus it's just plain healthy - physically and mentally!
- 5 HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY AFTER MENOPAUSE** ♦ The risk of using HRT after menopause varies depending on type, duration, and elapsed time since use. The American Cancer Society suggests you carefully weigh the risks and benefits with your doctor before choosing to use any HRT, including "bioidentical" or "natural" hormones.
- 6 BREASTFEEDING** ♦ Breastfeeding, especially for longer than six months, reduces risk of breast cancer.
- 7 VITAMIN D LEVELS** ♦ Research suggests low levels of vitamin D, which helps immune system function and may control breast cell growth, may increase risk.
- 8 OTHER RISK FACTORS** ♦ These include smoking tobacco and eating meats grilled at high temperatures.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS + BREAST CANCER RISK

The relationship between the environment and breast cancer (and other diseases) is not fully understood, but we do know that our bodies are exposed to potentially harmful chemicals every day. Scientists are studying many chemicals used in common items to better understand their effects on our bodies, but right now, you can avoid these possible risks altogether with simple habit changes.

A great resource to look to is Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (bcpp.org), an organization working to prevent breast cancer by eliminating exposure to toxic chemicals and radiation. Another great resource is The Environmental Working Group (ewg.org), whose mission is to empower people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment.

Here are some thoughts on where you can reduce exposure to chemicals in your daily routine:

◆ **CLEANING PRODUCTS** ◆ The EWG has a Guide to Healthy Cleaning that ranks thousands of cleaning products based on safety and a Healthy Home Guide to help you reduce chemicals used at home, and the BCPP has some excellent guidelines on these products as well.

◆ **PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS** ◆ The BCPP has a Campaign for Safe Cosmetics (safecosmetics.org), and the EWG has the Skin-Deep Guide to Cosmetics, both of which offer guidelines for choosing these items. The EWG also has a guide to safe sunscreens and bug repellents.

◆ **FOOD** ◆ What foods you eat and how they are packaged are both important. The EWG has several guides to food safety, including a Shoppers Guide to Pesticides in Produce, a Guide to Seafood, and a "Rate Your Plate" guide. The BCPP has a page of prevention tips related to food packaging, including avoiding plastic when possible.

8 FACTORS YOU CANNOT CONTROL

- 1 **FAMILY HISTORY OF BREAST CANCER** ◆ Having a first-degree relative (immediate family: mother, father, sister, brother, child) with breast cancer or a first-degree female relative with ovarian cancer increases your risk.
- 2 **GENETICS** ◆ 5% to 10% of breast cancers are thought to be hereditary, caused by abnormal genes passed from parent to child.
- 3 **PERSONAL HISTORY OF CANCER** ◆ A breast cancer diagnosis increases risk of a new cancer (not a recurrence) developing in the other breast or a different part of the same breast.
- 4 **DENSE BREAST TISSUE** ◆ Research has shown that dense breasts (detectable by mammography, and more common in pre-menopausal women) are more likely to develop breast cancer.
- 5 **MENSTRUAL PERIODS + MENOPAUSE** ◆ Women who had periods before age 12 or began menopause after age 55 have higher risk.
- 6 **RADIATION THERAPY TO THE CHEST OR FACE** ◆ Radiation to the chest area as a child or young adult as treatment for another cancer (such as Hodgkin's disease or non-Hodgkin's lymphoma) or radiation to the face for acne treatment as an adolescent increases risk.
- 7 **PREGNANCY** ◆ Women who haven't had a full-term pregnancy or who had their first child at age 30 or later have higher risk.
- 8 **CERTAIN BENIGN BREAST CONDITIONS** ◆ Certain non-cancerous breast conditions, such as atypical hyperplasia, raise risk.

THE OBSTACLES THAT SABOTAGE CARING FOR YOURSELF

(WE CAN ALL IDENTIFY WITH THESE!)

◆ **TIME CONSTRAINTS** ◆ Women today are usually stretched thin by demands on their time. We nurture and care for everyone else but fail to make ourselves a priority. It's time to put YOU on your calendar!

◆ **DENIAL** ◆ "I have no family history of breast cancer." "I eat right and exercise." "I'm too young to have to think about that!" These are just a few of the myths that are obstacles to self-care that you can overcome. We don't know what causes breast cancer, but we do know that early detection and managing risk are our best weapons against it!

◆ **FEAR** ◆ Fear of breast cancer prevents many women from even thinking about their breast health, much less doing what is necessary to protect it. Allowing fear to control your actions will not prevent breast cancer, but it may prevent you from taking the steps for early detection.

◆ **LACK OF KNOWLEDGE** ◆ Knowledge is power, so kudos for reading this guide and implementing some of the risk reduction strategies shared within. Don't stop here! Learn all you can to protect your health.



Breast Cancer 101

BREAST CANCER BASICS

Breast cancer is cancer that starts in the breast when cells begin to multiply out of control, typically (but not always!) resulting in a lump or mass. Most breast cancers start in the milk ducts or, less frequently, in the milk glands (called the lobules). Discovered at this point, when the cancer is still contained within the ducts or lobules, the cancer is designated stage 0. Once the cancer invades the breast tissue, the stages go up.

Breast cancer typically has no symptoms in its earliest stages, which is why screening is important for early detection. The most common physical sign is a painless lump. Sometimes breast cancer spreads to underarm lymph nodes and causes a lump or swelling. Less common signs include breast pain or heaviness; changes like swelling, thickening, dimpling, or redness of the skin; and nipple changes, including discharge, scaliness, or inversion. (If you notice any changes, be sure to see your doctor.)

A doctor may order a biopsy (generally after a mammogram, ultra sound, or MRI) to look at the cells under a microscope if they believe a lump or area of concern might be cancer. There are many different types of breast cancer, but most tumors (about 81%) are invasive, which means cells have broken through from the area where they began into surrounding tissue. Once a biopsy is done, breast cancer cells are tested for proteins called estrogen receptors, progesterone receptors, and HER2. Biopsies also reveal how abnormal cells and tissue look compared to healthy cells, which determines the cancer's grade. A stage identifies how large the primary tumor is and how far the cancer has spread.

All these facts help an oncologist decide what treatments are appropriate for a patient. Treatments can include surgery and radiation, as well as systemic therapies like chemotherapy, hormone therapy, immunotherapy, and more.

Each breast cancer case is unique, and there is much more to know about this disease that affects 1 in every 8 women in the US. Talk to a health professional or read more about this disease from some of the sources listed below.

Learn More!

YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT BREAST CANCER ONLINE FROM

- ◆ THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE (CANCER.GOV),
- ◆ THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY (CANCER.ORG/CANCER/BREAST-CANCER),
- OR
- ◆ THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC.GOV/CANCER/BREAST).

BREAST CANCER BY THE NUMBERS

- ◆ **1 IN 8 WOMEN** (13%) in the U.S. will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in their lifetime and 1 in 39 women (3%) will die from breast cancer.
- ◆ **ABOUT 281,550** new cases of invasive breast cancer and about 49,290 new cases of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) will be diagnosed in women in the U.S. in 2021.
- ◆ **ABOUT 6%** of women are Stage 4 (metastatic) at their initial diagnosis. 20% to 30% of people initially diagnosed with early-stage disease will develop metastatic breast cancer.
- ◆ **APPROXIMATELY 11%** of all new cases of breast cancer in the United States are found in women younger than 45 years of age.

CHANGING BREAST CANCER DEATH RATES

Breast cancer death rates for U.S. women have been falling for decades, but the trend has recently changed for younger women – new research shows that breast cancer death rates for women under 40 are no longer decreasing. Researchers attribute the rise to an increase in Stage 4 (metastatic) breast cancer among younger women. Researchers believe that younger women, who are not regularly screened unless they are at a high risk for breast cancer, may have cancers that go undetected.

- ◆ **STARTING IN 2010**, the breast cancer death rate rose 2.8 percent per year in women in their 20s and 0.3 percent per year in women in their 30s.
- ◆ **THE NUMBER OF 25- TO 39-YEAR-OLDS** with metastatic breast cancer increased 32 percent between 2009 and 2015.

NEWEST BREAST CANCER TREATMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Content provided by Riverside Health System

Treatments for breast cancer are constantly evolving and today's ideas and research become tomorrow's standards of care. If you or someone you love is diagnosed with breast cancer, you'll find helpful information below on some of the newest treatments currently available to patients as well as what may be on the horizon for treatment improvements in the near future.

◆ MEDICINES & CHEMO

Treatments for breast cancer are based on the cancer's stage and subtype, each of which respond differently to various treatments. Hormone receptor (HR) positive breast cancers, which grow in response to estrogen (ER) and/or progesterone (PR), are the most common; about 2 of 3 breast cancers have at least one of these receptors. The current standards of care for these types of tumors generally include hormone therapy, also called endocrine therapy, which is targeted drug treatment given either before or after surgery. According to Dr. Flavia Kostov, hematologist-oncologist with Riverside Health System, medicines currently used to treat these types of cancer include tamoxifen, or aromatase inhibitors like letrozole (Femara), anastrozole (Arimidex), and exemestane (Aromasin). "Endocrine therapy typically lasts five years. But now there is more knowledge about these treatments, and the standard of care can expand to 10 years."

Advances in the understanding of genetic mutations that drive breast cancer have led to better, more targeted treatments. Recent research has led to the development of drugs that can treat patients with specific mutations – for instance, new medicines called PARP inhibitors have been developed to specifically treat BRCA-mutated cancers. Genomic testing gives physicians information about a patient's specific breast cancer gene mutations and can also provide information on genetic traits that may increase cancer risk.

◆ GENETICS AND GENOMICS SOUND SIMILAR, BUT THEY DON'T MEAN THE SAME THING. GENETIC TESTING CAN HELP DETERMINE A PERSON'S RISK OF GETTING CANCER; GENOMIC TESTING CAN HELP DETERMINE THE BEST WAY TO TREAT AN EXISTING CANCER.

New breast cancer treatments are on the horizon for those with metastatic (stage IV) disease as well as those with earlier stage cancers. Clinical trials for CDK4/6 inhibitors which are currently used to treat metastatic breast cancer for hormone receptor-positive, HER2-negative cancers are now underway for patients with an earlier stage of cancer, and these show promise, according to Dr. Kostov. Trials are also underway with immunotherapies that target TNBC (triple negative breast cancer) as well as ER+ disease and could soon offer new treatment options for patients.

◆ SURGERY & RADIATION

For many patients, surgery is part of breast cancer treatment. Recent advances in breast cancer surgery include a focus on preventing lymphedema, a condition where excess lymph fluid collects in the tissue instead of draining through the lymphatic system. The result can be swelling, discomfort, and numbness. Breast cancer patients are at risk for developing lymphedema once the lymph nodes are removed during surgery, so new techniques aim to minimize this risk, according to Dr. Kostov. "We are trying to do fewer axillary lymph node dissections whenever possible. Lymphedema can lead to other health problems for patients." She encourages patients who have had lymph nodes removed to talk to a lymphatic therapist before lymphedema develops. One relatively new but well-established treatment now available in radiation therapy is internal beam radiation, known as brachytherapy, which uses a radiation source that is placed inside the body rather than outside the body, as is the case in standard radiation treatment. Brachytherapy reduces the duration of treatment time when compared to conventional radiotherapy.

◆ SCREENING

One cutting-edge breast screening technology that is becoming more commonly used to detect breast cancer is 3D mammography. A 3D mammogram is an imaging test that creates a three-dimensional picture of the breast and makes certain features easier to see. A breast MRI with contrast dye is another useful tool for tumors that are hard to see or for women with very dense breast tissue, Dr. Kostov notes. With this type of test, an injected dye helps create clearer images that outline abnormalities more easily. MRI can locate small breast lesions sometimes missed by mammography.

◆ LEARN MORE

For more information on current breast cancer treatments, visit: riversideonline.com/cancer ◆ cdc.gov/cancer/breast

CLINICAL TRIALS: FINDING TOMORROW'S TREATMENTS

Content provided by Virginia Oncology Associates

WHAT ARE CLINICAL TRIALS?

Clinical trials are research studies performed in people that aim to find out if a new treatment, like a drug or medical device, is safe and effective to use. Clinical trials are a primary way of improving the current standard of care followed by medical providers, according to Dr. Michael A. Danso, Medical Director and Research Director with Virginia Oncology Associates. "All standards of care of today were a clinical trial yesterday - what we do today creates the treatments of tomorrow."

Clinical trials are categorized in one of four different phases. Most new cancer treatments will typically go through Phases I, II and III. Not all therapies have a Phase IV clinical trial because this phase is not always necessary. "In these phases we are looking to discover first, is this treatment safe? And then, is it a better standard of care? These are the questions we look to answer," Dr. Danso explains.

- ◆ **In Phase I** cancer clinical trials, researchers test a study drug for the first time to evaluate the safety of the new drug, and at what dose. This typically involves a small group - 15-30 people - who are closely monitored.
- ◆ **In Phase II**, the focus is determining whether the drug is effective at treating a specific type of cancer. Phase II trials usually involve more people than in Phase I, but less than 100 people who all meet specific requirements set by the trial investigators.
- ◆ **In Phase III**, the new cancer drug is compared to the current standard of care. Patients may be broken into smaller groups and randomized into different treatment groups. Some will receive the standard treatment already available, and some will receive the new treatment.
- ◆ **In Phase IV**, the drug is tested further after it has been approved. This is used to collect information about its long-term effect on the patient's quality of life, length of life and any unexpected long-term side effects. Phase IV trials may also be used to try new combinations of approved therapies to see if there may be better outcomes.

◆ PLACEBOS ◆

Many patients ask if there's a chance that they will be given an inactive treatment, called a placebo. The use of placebos in cancer clinical trials is rare, but it does happen. In most trials, participants are either given the new treatment or they are given an existing treatment already approved to treat their cancer.

PARTICIPATING IN CLINICAL TRIALS

Today, clinical trial research is no longer conducted just at large university cancer centers or major hospitals, so more patients have easier access if they would like to participate in one without the need to travel as far.

Participating in clinical trials allows patients to access state-of-the-art investigational therapies while their own physician directs and closely monitors their care, so patients can remain at home near friends and family.

Cancer clinical trials are not just for patients who have stage IV, metastatic disease, according to Dr. Danso. "These studies can benefit all patients with cancer. With some therapies approved originally for stage IV, investigations may find that these are effective in an earlier stage. Often this improves patient outcome and survival."

Clinical trials are available in most quality hospital systems, Dr. Danso says, so asking your provider is a good place to start to find out what is available; or visit the National Cancer Institute's website to see all the currently enrolling trials.

Learn More!

VISIT THE
◆ NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE'S WEBSITE AT
[CANCER.GOV/ABOUT-CANCER/TREATMENT/CLINICAL-TRIALS](https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/clinical-trials)

OR VISIT
◆ [VIRGINIACANCER.COM/CLINICAL-TRIALS-RESEARCH](https://www.virginiacancer.com/clinical-trials-research)

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CLINICAL TRIALS.

Breast Cancer and Genetics

Content provided by Myriad Genetics

GENETIC TESTING MATTERS

As medical care becomes more personalized and tailored to each individual, women affected by breast cancer can also benefit from an individualized treatment plan by knowing if their cancer is hereditary. Genetic testing, also known as hereditary cancer testing, can help a woman and her healthcare provider know what surgery may be most appropriate, what treatments she may be eligible for, and what her future screening needs may be for her as well as her family.

While a variety of factors may contribute to the development of breast cancer, a hereditary cancer test such as Myriad myRisk® analyzes each woman's DNA to potentially identify if her genes contributed to her cancer diagnosis. By knowing her hereditary cancer status, a woman affected by breast cancer can make a more informed treatment plan with her healthcare provider and inform other family members of potential risk of developing cancer. Knowing your status can help both you and your family.

KNOWING YOUR OPTIONS

By understanding if a diagnosis may be due to hereditary causes, women affected by breast cancer and their healthcare providers will be better able to choose options in the following areas:

◆ **SURGERY** ◆ For women affected by hereditary breast cancer, there may be an increased risk of their breast cancer spreading elsewhere in the body or the development of a second cancer. Surgeons can use hereditary cancer status to determine which surgery may be most appropriate for a woman's current cancer and to reduce the risk of future cancers. The American Society of Breast Surgeons recommends all women with a diagnosis of breast cancer receive hereditary cancer testing to help with this effort.

◆ **TREATMENT OPTIONS** ◆ Women with hereditary cancer may be eligible for certain treatment options. If diagnosed at a later stage, certain drugs may be more effective in battling breast cancer for women with hereditary breast cancer. A hereditary cancer test can help an oncologist or other treating provider identify what options may be available.

◆ **FUTURE SCREENING** ◆ Knowing your cancer is due to hereditary causes may warrant more frequent MRIs or mammograms in the future. A woman with hereditary breast cancer may benefit from increased screening to help identify a recurrence or a future incidence of cancer earlier, when it is more treatable.

REDUCTION OF RISK FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

The same hereditary cancer test that can help determine your treatment plan can also help family members take steps to help prevent breast as well as other cancer types. The parents, siblings, daughters, sons, and cousins of someone with a hereditary cancer gene(s) may also have a risk of developing cancer at a younger age or multiple types of cancer. By understanding their risk today, they can take steps to help identify cancer earlier or even potentially prevent a cancer from developing. Even if you did not receive hereditary testing initially, you and your family members may still benefit from the testing after your treatment is finished.

Women with mutations in certain genes may have up to an **87% risk** of developing breast cancer in their lifetime. Women with an estimated lifetime risk of breast cancer of **20% or greater** are recommended to have more frequent screening.

This risk estimation can be calculated using tools such as Tyrer-Cuzick or the riskScore component of Myriad myRisk.

TESTING FOR ANCESTRY IS NOT HEREDITARY CANCER TESTING

While there are many companies who do genetic testing in a recreational capacity - for example, determining your ancestry - hereditary cancer testing, which looks at each individual's DNA to guide medical decisions, is different. Indicators such as the age at diagnosis and history of certain cancers within the family may qualify women for hereditary cancer testing. This testing is ordered by your healthcare provider. Tests that reveal ancestry information rarely - if ever - have information to help guide your medical decisions, so consulting with your healthcare provider can help determine the best option for you.



Young Women and Breast Cancer

If you know **Here for the Girls**, you know that our mission is specifically to help young women – we serve those diagnosed under age 51. If you ever wondered why we focus on this population, it's due to **TWO MAIN FACTORS:**

ONE ♦ typical support groups are filled with older women (the median age for breast cancer is 63), and

TWO ♦ young women face many different challenges because of their age and season of life than their more mature counterparts, challenges that can impact them far beyond diagnosis and treatment.

SO, WHAT ARE THESE “DIFFERENT CHALLENGES?”

Women in their 20s, 30s, and 40s are often in the midst of their careers and many are building and raising families. A cancer diagnosis and treatment can mean loss of work and income (on top of high medical costs), the financial impact of which can last for years; most breast cancer treatments put women in early menopause, which can lead to infertility; the physical and psychological impacts of treatment can cause sexual and relationship issues; treatment side effects make it hard to have the energy needed to raise children and/or sustain careers; and treatments can cause long-term health problems that will impact a younger woman for more years of her life (including possible bone-density loss, heart damage, neuropathy, and lymphedema). Then there's the fear of recurrence (we've named it “The Stalker”) that can arise with every ache or pain. According to recent research, younger women with breast cancer consistently show greater psychological distress than older women. Also, breast cancers in women under age 40 often have more aggressive features, tend to be diagnosed at a later stage, and often have worse outcomes. Recent research also shows that breast cancer death rates are climbing for women in their 20s and 30s after decades of decreasing.

But it's not all doom and gloom (seriously). **THE GOOD NEWS IS:**

ONE ♦ technology and treatments are always improving to increase life span and quality of life, and

TWO ♦ there are organizations like **Here for the Girls**, that can help! We offer robust social-emotional support for young women who face not just treatment, but long-term cancer survivorship issues. We provide lots of ways for these young women to connect with others like them who can offer understanding, information, and sisterhood so they can face (and conquer!) these challenges together. We call this “loving support.”

“I joined **Here for the Girls** three years after my diagnosis because I still felt isolated in my recovery. No one ever talks about the long-range effects of cancer: the fear of recurrence, the struggle to find yourself after the treatment ends, and the managing of short-term and long-term side effects from chemo. It wasn't until I joined **Here for the Girls** that I truly understood that I wasn't alone and I wasn't crazy.” – Kathy, 2021



HEALTH DISPARITIES and BREAST CANCER

Content provided by VCU Massey Cancer Center

Author: Vanessa B. Sheppard, Ph.D., Associate Director for Community Outreach, Engagement and Health Disparities at VCU Massey Cancer Center; Theresa A. Thomas Memorial Chair in Cancer Prevention and Control

The National Cancer Institute defines cancer health disparities as adverse differences between certain groups of people in various measures, including the number of new cases, number of existing cases, cancer-related health complications and deaths, survivorship and quality of life, screening rates and stage at diagnosis. Disproportionately affected populations may be characterized by race, ethnicity, disability, gender and sexual identity, geographic location, income, education, among other factors. People who have limited financial resources, lack health insurance, and are medically underserved with limited access to health care and racial/ethnic minority backgrounds such as African Americans (Black), American Indians/Alaska Natives and Latinos often endure a greater burden of disease than the general U.S. population.

◆ SCREENING/DIAGNOSIS

Over the years, there has been a steady decline in breast cancer cases overall, but an inconsistent decline across various populations. Black women in the U.S. experience double the rate of triple negative breast cancer – an aggressive form of disease – compared to white women, while Latina women are exponentially more likely to be diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. There has also been an increase in breast cancer diagnoses among younger women, who are also more frequently diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer. The good news is that when cancers are caught earlier, survival outcomes are better. It is critical that women take charge of their health by staying up to date on mammograms, knowing their family history and genetic risk, and practicing healthy lifestyle choices, including maintaining a healthy weight and exercising, avoiding tobacco, and eating plant-based foods, among others.

◆ TREATMENT

Not all breast cancers are the same, and where you go for your treatment matters. Nationally, African American women experience greater delays in the time between diagnosis and surgery or pre-surgical treatments. These delays are not just because women wait, but often because they experience systemic barriers that prevent them from getting timely diagnosis and treatment. It's very important that women have access to and understand the information needed to ask questions and understand their treatment options. But it's just as important that they don't delay treatment. Some women experience delays because they're told they're too young to have breast cancer. It is important that women have a healthcare team that they trust, listens to them and takes action regarding their concerns. If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, a multidisciplinary breast health care team offers patients the best opportunity for high-quality treatment, access to innovative clinical trials and support services, compassionate care and hope for the best possible outcome.

◆ CLINICAL TRIALS

Clinical trials offer patients early access to the latest promising cancer therapies not yet available elsewhere, and nearly all of today's cancer drugs were tested using clinical trials. However, Black and Latino/Latina cancer patients are significantly less likely than white patients to enroll in a clinical trial testing a new treatment for their cancer, and racial and ethnic minorities are vastly underrepresented in trials. Increasing minority participation in clinical trials is a vital way to address and potentially overcome many of the disparities and barriers that currently exist in cancer screening, care and survivorship. If diagnosed with cancer, ask about clinical trials that may be a fit for you. It is often an opportunity to have access to even more medical care, be exposed to new information or even participate in a study that may provide more survivorship support.

◆ RESEARCH

To really have an impact on reducing cancer disparities through research, it is critical to conduct community-engaged research focused on biological, clinical and social determinants of disparities, and it is necessary to increase study participation of minority and underserved groups.

VCU MASSEY CANCER CENTER: FOCUSING ON HEALTH EQUITY

Addressing disparities and promoting health equity is a priority of VCU Massey Cancer Center. This is because Massey recognizes the unique opportunity to serve our catchment area – central, eastern and southern areas of Virginia – by focusing on those groups most affected by cancer. Of approximately 4 million residents who live in Massey's catchment area, more than 40% identify as racial/ethnic minorities and more than half live in a rural area. Compared to white women in these areas, Black women have a higher mortality rate for breast cancer. Latino/Latina residents living in these parts of the state have more than double the incidence of breast cancer and nearly three times the overall cancer mortality as Latino/Latina residents who live in other parts of Virginia. Massey's Office of Health Equity and Disparities Research works to address disparities through research that helps reduce or eliminate disparities in cancer outcomes, through community outreach activities, and by supporting policy initiatives that can improve cancer outcomes for all Virginians with an emphasis on those disproportionately impacted by cancer.

Read more about what Massey is doing to promote health equity at [hereforthegirls.org/health-disparities-and-breast-cancer](https://www.hereforthegirls.org/health-disparities-and-breast-cancer).

You can also visit [masseycancercenter.org](https://www.masseycancercenter.org), email masseycrrc@vcuhealth.org, or call 804-827-0000.

Catapulted into *The Sisterhood*

HEARING THE WORDS

"YOU HAVE BREAST CANCER" will catapult you into unknown territory and may change your world in ways that you can't begin to imagine. All the women who are part of the **Here for the Girls** sisterhood have been in your shoes and they want to share their thoughts on the tumultuous time of diagnosis and to offer you hope, inspiration, and power. Their voices are here in these pages, and they are also here for you when you connect to the **H4TG** community.

Just as everyone is unique, each woman's breast cancer is different because of factors such as type, stage, and characteristics of the cancer. Because treatment options vary, each woman has to evaluate the risks and benefits of her choices in the context of her own personal values and lifestyle. How women react to having this disease differs greatly as well. There are no rules for how you should act, feel, or respond. Remember, this is a time in your life when restoring your health should be your top priority, so it is okay to put yourself first and allow your support system of friends and family to help you.

12 STRATEGIES FROM YOUR H4TG TRIBE

- 1 **Know** that the diagnosis may be beyond your control, but how you respond is not.
- 2 **Recognize** that you are not responsible for this disease and let go of any regrets about things you could have done differently.
- 3 **Find** doctors you trust with your life - you are trusting them with your life!
- 4 **Make sure** your doctors (particularly your oncologist) are compatible with your personality and style - yours may be a very long relationship.
- 5 **Learn and understand** your treatment options; consider getting a second opinion if needed or for peace of mind.
- 6 **Consider** complementary therapies to heal your mind and spirit, such as yoga, aromatherapy, meditation, prayer, guided imagery, hypnotherapy, acupuncture, and massage.
- 7 **Bring** someone with you (in-person or virtually) to your appointments to take notes, be your second set of ears, and ask questions. Having company at your treatments is a good idea, too.
- 8 **Know** that you don't have to be strong for everybody else around you.
- 9 **Allow** yourself to fully feel whatever emotions come along, whenever they come along.
- 10 **Celebrate** the successes along the way.
- 11 **Consider** writing a journal; it can be very healing. Keep friends and family updated with an online journal on a site such as caringbridge.org or start a blog.

AND FINALLY...

- 12 Consider whether you are a support group kind of person and even if not, try one - other women who have been there before you are able to offer strength, advice, and encouragement. They can reduce fear too. **Our favorite is us, Here for the Girls (hereforthegirls.org)!**



From Keesha (MS. NOVEMBER 2022)

"The advice I would give a newly diagnosed woman is to find the good in all things and don't sweat the small stuff. Take everything one step at a time, one moment at a time. It can feel like there are a million things that need to be done but be present in those moments, for yourself and those you love. Know that it is okay not to be okay some days. When this happens, make sure you lean in on your support system; let them spoil you a little."



From Shawn (MS. JANUARY 2022)

"There is strength in support from people who 'get it.' When I was diagnosed, it was such a breath of fresh air to meet with my sisters and talk. We laughed, we learned, we cried, we gave advice and made recommendations from a place of knowledge."

CANCER AND YOUR EMOTIONS

By Melissa Weaver, LCSW (H4TG Psychosocial Support Manager)

Melissa leads the H4TG Social Work Support Team. They help support our facilitator team (the volunteers who run our support systems), lead structured support series, and can offer referrals to our members for services they may need beyond the social-emotional support offered by H4TG programs.

Cancer often leaves individuals with a sense of being beaten, bruised, or knocked down. Every feeling and thought contains an overwhelming sense of being exposed in the rawest way imaginable. It is this rawness that inspires individuals to connect with their most authentic selves. Self-care becomes a necessity rather than a luxury; saying “No” becomes a survival technique; and the expression of thoughts and feelings becomes a lifeline.

Ask most people diagnosed with cancer if they mind responding to questions about their body, journey, or emotional state and they will often say that facing cancer has taught them that to be vulnerable is to be human. Sharing our accomplishments, fears, struggles, and hopes with others (being vulnerable) is how we build meaningful relationships. Vulnerability not only helps to ease feelings of loneliness and isolation, but it provides us with a sense of purpose and connection when we are facing tremendous stress.

Most people diagnosed with cancer say that there was life before cancer and life after cancer. Although no one is promised tomorrow, most who are facing cancer experience an acute sense of urgency and a need to live with mindfulness and purpose. A day, a week, a month, or a year becomes a cause for joy and celebration. Aging is seen as a gift and maintaining one’s mental and physical well-being becomes a source of resilience and empowerment. The truth is that cancer irrevocably changes your life. It is the force which drives a multitude of emotions and – surprisingly – can be a source of tremendous inspiration. You may feel the need to make changes, feel an increased love of self and others, a deeper focus on life priorities and goals, or a desire to strengthen relationships. There is hope within the cancer journey – a hope that as you are living through (or with) cancer, that you can come to know that your life matters, that you are heard and seen, and that you are not alone on this journey.

Many people facing a cancer diagnosis benefit from the specialized support offered by trained mental health practitioners, including individual or family counseling and clinical support groups. The **H4TG** Social Work Support Team encourages individuals to prioritize an ongoing focus on self-care and recognize the potential need for additional supportive services.



WHAT CAN YOU DO RIGHT NOW?

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH + REDUCE RISK OF RECURRENCE

Planning out how you can manage your health after a breast cancer diagnosis may offer peace of mind and give you a chance to adopt practices that can reduce your risk of recurrence and help you live your best life. You might feel like you have lost some control over your life – and that is a little bit true, because cancer comes in like a bull in a china shop and stomps all over the place – but there are things that you absolutely CAN do to keep yourself moving in the right direction! Here are a few simple things you can do right now to take control of your health going forward:

- ◆ **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF EMOTIONALLY.** Don’t be afraid to ask for help from a professional (see Melissa’s wise words above) or from your support system.
- ◆ **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF PHYSICALLY** (see pages one and two of this guide to find lots of tips on how to do this).
- ◆ **CONTINUE WITH REGULAR HEALTH SCREENINGS** (you need to keep seeing your other healthcare providers, not just your oncologist).

*“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another:
What! You too? I thought I was the only one.” - C.S. Lewis*

How to support someone with Breast Cancer

A breast cancer diagnosis affects not only the individual, but family and friends as well. You are a critical part of your loved one's recovery while she is on this difficult journey. There are many ways to offer encouragement, assistance, and a shoulder to lean on so you won't have to say, "how can I help" without a few solid ideas to follow! Just know that you are part of her team because she loves you, and there are many ways you can express your love for her as you stand by her side. Here are a few helpful ideas from members of our **H4TG** sisterhood to get you started.

- ◆ **OFFER TO COMMUNICATE** the diagnosis to neighbors, colleagues, and others so she doesn't have to keep bracing herself for the reaction each time she shares the news. Volunteer to set up and maintain a page on a site such as caringbridge.org to keep family and friends informed of your friend's progress, thus reducing the calls and texts she receives.
- ◆ **ACCOMPANY YOUR FRIEND** to medical appointments and take notes so she can concentrate on her conversation with the doctor. Chemotherapy appointments are a great opportunity to hang out together as they last hours and are, well, boring. If you aren't able to be there in-person, you can come along virtually thanks to technology!
- ◆ **ORGANIZE OTHERS** to prepare and deliver meals throughout treatment, especially following chemo days and surgery. Create a schedule to ensure she gets a variety of healthy meals and not lasagna every night. lotsahelpinghands.com and mealtrain.com are useful online tools for coordinating meals and other needed household tasks.
- ◆ **PAMPER HER!** Help your friend relax, unwind, and have a taste of those things she enjoys most! Rejuvenating face or eye masks, some decadent hand cream, a subscription to a streaming service, dark chocolate, soft slippers, comfy PJs, and books are always appropriate. You can also take your friend out for tea, lunch, a movie, a concert, a manicure, a massage, a museum visit, or a girls' night.
- ◆ **PRIOR TO CHEMO**, throw a hat party to help her collect hats, scarves, and accessories. Collect items for her that she can take with her to chemo in a bag, like a blanket, pillow, water bottle, slippers, coloring books and colored pencils – whatever you can think of to help her be comfortable and pass the time!
- ◆ **BE AVAILABLE** to listen and to offer a shoulder (and tissue) as needed. Let your friend lead the conversation. She may be tired of talking or thinking about the disease and may just want to chat about everyday things. Be sensitive about what you say. Trying to provide long-distance support? Send a cheerful or uplifting card frequently, or video chat just to let your friend know that you are thinking about her. Send small gifts such as those mentioned above, or a DIY gift basket! Over the past few years (thanks to a pandemic), we learned all about how to strengthen long-distance relationships!
- ◆ **REACH OUT** to the primary caregiver. The serious illness of a loved one can be extremely stressful, so the caregiver needs your love, encouragement, and support along the way as well. If you are the primary caregiver, please remember to take care of yourself and allow others to help you.

You may think that once her treatment is finished your friend doesn't need you any longer; actually, she may need you more than ever. The end of treatment can be tough as a woman tries to adjust to a life not dominated by medical appointments and procedures. While those around her are waiting for everything to go back to normal, she may struggle as she figures out her "new normal" after diagnosis and treatment. **You can help by continuing to be there for her!**



Caring for Caregivers

TAKE CARE OF YOUR CAREGIVERS

Having breast cancer can feel like being on a roller-coaster, both emotionally and physically! If you are fortunate, you have someone by your side giving all the comfort and help that they're able to give, whether it's a family member, spouse, partner, or friend. What a wonderful thing for them to do! In their own way, however, they are going through a difficult time too. Here are some ideas to help you help your caregiver(s) so they can continue to help YOU (we'll use the pronoun "they" below, but substitute whatever pronoun fits your caregiver):

- ✓ **UNDERSTAND** that they probably want to fix your diagnosis. Because they can't, offer them specific ways that they can help you – don't be afraid to make a list!
- ✓ **REALIZE** that as much as your life is spinning out of control, so is theirs. It can be just as hard (and sometimes harder) to be the one on the outside looking in. Let them know how much you appreciate having them by your side.
- ✓ **ENCOURAGE** them to get out of the caregiving space and visit with other friends or family! What they may not be able to say to you, they may be able to tell their friends, and it may lighten their load.
- ✓ **WHEN THEY TELL YOU** that you look great, don't list all the reasons why you think you don't. Just say "thank you," and accompany it with a hug. Know that they love you. As you undergo physical changes from your treatments, remember that you are much more than your hair, your body, or your breasts. Look beyond the mirror to the unique woman that you always have been.

RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

CAMP KESEM:

Children of parents with cancer can attend Camp Kesem free summer camps. ♦ campkesem.org

HELP FOR CANCER CAREGIVERS:

Helps cancer caregivers manage their own health and wellness needs. ♦ helpforcancercaregivers.org

MEN AGAINST BREAST CANCER:

Educates and empowers men to provide support for loved ones with cancer. ♦ menagainstbreastcancer.org

MOTHERS SUPPORTING DAUGHTERS WITH BREAST CANCER:

Supporting mothers whose daughters have breast cancer. ♦ mothersdaughters.org

SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

By Mary McGovern, MSW, certified mindfulness instructor (former **H4TG** social work intern)

When someone you love has breast cancer, you become their companion on an odyssey that rivals any hero's tale. Just as any mythic knight finds courage and strength in unexpected places, you can draw upon these (not so) ancient practices to help you meet all challenges of caregiving with love and resilience.

✓ BE REAL.

It's okay to feel it/think it/say it: cancer is life-altering! Every person – every family – experiences it differently, but the whirlwind of needs and changes (and all the feelings that go along with them) can be overwhelming. Letting yourself acknowledge the tough emotions and bad days can actually be a relief for both of you. It also lets you see where more help and resources are needed and frees up your energy to pursue them, including emotional support for yourself (see below).

✓ PRIORITIZE SELF-COMPASSION + SELF-CARE.

Be kind to yourself, because – well – see the point above! This is a great time to tell your inner perfectionist or self-critic to take a vacation. Be gentle and forgiving; give yourself the kind of support you'd offer your best friend. Also, prioritize sleep, healthy eating, and exercise, and at least some small thing that feeds your soul. Caring for yourself is absolutely essential to being able to provide the best possible care to her.

✓ ASK FOR HELP (PRACTICAL).

You are not alone! Friends, family members, and coworkers (yours and hers) all want to help, but they probably don't know how. Pick one person you trust and ask them to coordinate communications and support from your wider circle. Be creative and don't be shy! There are lots of ways that others can (and want to!) help: meal preparation, shopping, dog walking, childcare, kid transport, housecleaning, and yard maintenance are just a few of the possibilities. This allows your wider community to rally around your loved one in her battle, allowing you to be there for her 100%.

✓ ASK FOR HELP (EMOTIONAL).

You'll need support, and because she has her own battle to face, there may be times when additional emotional supports can be helpful. So, make sure you have someone to talk to about your own tough emotions and bad days – someone who can offer a sympathetic ear and shoulder to lean on – and reach out to them regularly. You might also consider seeking out a professional counselor; many people find such one-on-one support beneficial when facing a crisis such as caring for someone with cancer.

✓ FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT (AKA – DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF).

Care for her and care for yourself – tend to those things that are most meaningful and let the rest go. It's okay. This is the moment to marshal all your energy, attention, and care for the things that matter most.

Lifelines...

What help is out there?

If you or someone you love is diagnosed with breast cancer, it's easy to feel overwhelmed with questions and needs, and sometimes there's no clear way to get answers or help. This breast health guide you're reading right now is a good place to start! You're sure to need more information on your journey than what is in these pages, but our social work support team collected the resources listed below to help you get started. Also, if you're a young woman with breast cancer, you can access the **Here for the Girls** member hub that offers a robust resource library and links to videos related to the breast cancer journey. Just reach out to us at hereforthegirls.org to get connected.

LIFELINES: KNOWLEDGE + RESOURCES

- ◆ **AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY:** Resources related to research, treatment, and education for cancer patients and their families. ◆ cancer.org
- ◆ **BREASTCANCER.ORG:** Reliable information about breast cancer. ◆ breastcancer.org
- ◆ **BREASTCANCERTRIALS.ORG:** Current clinical trials and connects researchers with potential volunteers. ◆ breastcancertrials.org
- ◆ **IBC FOUNDATION:** Inflammatory breast cancer advocacy. ◆ eraseibc.org
- ◆ **NATIONAL LGBT CANCER NETWORK:** LGBT breast cancer education and advocacy. ◆ cancer-network.org
- ◆ **METAVIVOR:** Metastatic breast cancer awareness, research, and support. ◆ metavivor.org
- ◆ **NATIONAL BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION:** Information on early detection, breast cancer, and links to support. ◆ nationalbreastcancer.org
- ◆ **NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE:** The federal government's agency for cancer research. ◆ cancer.gov
- ◆ **NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CANCER NETWORK:** Information, resources (including financial), clinical trials, and webinars for those with cancer and their loved ones. ◆ nccn.org/patient
- ◆ **LIVESTRONG FOUNDATION:** Resources including support, managing finances, and fertility preservation. ◆ livestrong.org
- ◆ **PATIENT ADVOCATE FOUNDATION:** Case management, co-pay relief, and financial help. ◆ patientadvocate.org
- ◆ **SUSAN G. KOMEN:** Breast cancer and survivorship information. ◆ komen.org

LIFELINES: SUPPORT

HERE FOR THE GIRLS: In-person and virtual social-emotional support for young women diagnosed with breast cancer under age 51.

◆ hereforthegirls.org

HER2 SUPPORT GROUP: HER2 information.

◆ HER2Support.org

FORCE (FACING OUR RISK OF CANCER EMPOWERED): Support, education, and advocacy for those facing hereditary breast or ovarian cancer.

◆ facingourrisk.org

LIVING BEYOND BREAST CANCER: Support including a helpline and webinars, plus information and resources for anyone with breast cancer.

◆ lbbc.org

NUEVA VIDA: Support and advocacy for Latinas with cancer.

◆ nueva-vida.org

SHARSHERET: Cancer support and education for Jewish women and their families.

◆ sharsheret.org

SISTERS NETWORK, INC: Financial assistance, resources, and information for African American women with breast cancer.

◆ sistersnetworkinc.org

TRIPLE NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION: Information and a helpline about this specific type of breast cancer.

◆ admin.tnbcfoundation.org

YOUNG SURVIVAL COALITION: Resources, education, and support for young women with breast cancer.

◆ youngsurvival.org

LYMPHEDEMA

◆ is abnormal swelling that can develop in the arm, hand, breast, or torso as a side effect of breast cancer surgery and/or radiation therapy. Lymphedema can appear in some people months or even years after treatment ends. ◆

Visit breastcancer.org/treatment/lymphedema to learn about symptoms, treatment, and more.

Here's to The Medical Community!

When a young woman gets a breast cancer diagnosis, the first people there for her as she begins her journey are members of the medical community. Gynecologists, imaging professionals, surgeons, oncologists, and nurse navigators are some of the medical professionals who are there for a woman every step of the way to get her through the treatment process and to do everything possible to make her cancer-free and healthy!

At **Here for the Girls**, we work with our medical partners to connect their patients to our social/emotional support services. As we like to say to the women we serve, "The doctors have your fronts, but we have your backs!" If you work with young women diagnosed with breast cancer and would like our information to share with your patients, email us at support@herefortheirls.org or visit us at herefortheirls.org. (Read more about our services on the back of this Guide.)

HOW OUR MEDICAL PARTNERS ARE HERE FOR THE GIRLS

We deeply appreciate our partners in the medical community for many reasons, including the care they give their patients, the referrals they send to us to help, and their financial support of our mission. This year, we asked some of our medical community sponsors of A Calendar to Live By to contribute information about breast health to this health guide. Our medical partners consistently demonstrate through their contributions of time, knowledge, and funds, that they are truly **Here for the Girls** with us! Here are some ways our medical community sponsors who contributed content to this Guide are **Here for the Girls** and for all women with breast cancer:

◆ RIVERSIDE HEALTH SYSTEM

Riverside offers our community leading-edge, cancer therapies and technology; fellowship-trained physicians in breast surgery, surgical oncology, mammography, GYN oncology, physical therapists certified in lymphedema and board certified genetic counselors. Riverside's integrative multi-disciplinary team of cancer specialists, deliver personalized and compassionate care to each patient, with outcomes that meet or exceed national averages. Our breast cancer care is customized to each individual, providing you with a personalized treatment plan and also considering all aspects of your life (like the unique challenges you may face as a young woman with this disease). Riverside supports your cancer journey with our oncology nurse navigators that are with you every step of the way, from screening through survivorship.

◆ Find us at riversideonline.com/cancer or call (800) 675-6368.

◆ VIRGINIA ONCOLOGY ASSOCIATES (VOA)

At Virginia Oncology Associates we offer comprehensive, community-based multidisciplinary care and research built around our patients. With more than 40 years in practice and over 450 years of combined experience, we're changing the landscape of patient care. VOA offers an integrated team-oriented approach to provide patients with the best possible care during their breast cancer journey. When appropriate, clinical trials are available in collaboration with the US Oncology Network. Our breast cancer treatment services are delivered in a non-hospital setting at one of our nine locations in Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina, making patients and their families feel more at home. ◆ To learn more about our breast cancer services, visit virginiacancer.com/breast-cancer/ or call us at (757) 873-9400 (Peninsula) or (757) 466-8683 (Southside).

◆ MYRIAD GENETICS

The team at Myriad works every day to provide the highest quality testing to its patients and always keeps in mind that the results provided are affecting the lives of patients and their family members. Myriad's dedication to saving lives and improving the quality of life for patients drives its commitment to providing timely, accurate and actionable test results and ensuring that its genetic tests are available and affordable to those who need them (including young women with breast cancer or who may be at higher risk of getting this disease). Myriad is committed to serving as both a trusted advisor to patients and healthcare professionals and a collaborator with the scientific community. ◆ Learn more at myriad.com or call (800) 4-MYRIAD. To find out if you are a candidate for genetic testing go to Hereditarycancerquiz.com.

◆ VCU MASSEY CANCER CENTER

VCU Massey Cancer Center offers the full continuum of care for breast cancer and breast disorders - from prevention and detection to treatment and survivorship. We are home to the area's largest, most comprehensive team of international leaders in breast health who provide award-winning cancer care. Using the most advanced technology, treatment options and clinical trials, Massey's team offers a wide scope of care for women diagnosed with or at high risk of breast cancer. Our care is delivered compassionately, with respect, personal attention, and a focus on the whole person - not just the disease. ◆ To schedule an appointment with Massey's breast team, please call (877) 4-MASSEY or visit masseycancercenter.org.

GET SUPPORT or GET INVOLVED today!
Contact us at info@herefortheirls.org
herefortheirls.org

WE ARE **HERE FOR THE GIRLS!**

Here for the Girls, Inc. (H4TG) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit improving the lives of young women affected by breast cancer (diagnosed under age 51). We offer social-emotional support through services that provide personal connections and a shared experience among our members. Our research-based support model focuses on the overall well-being of our members and delivers our services through a non-clinical, peer-based approach. The result is a robust, inclusive community based on equity and cultural humility that cultivates a sense of belonging and empowerment from diagnosis, through treatment, and beyond.

All these offerings are available at no cost to those we serve.

WHAT WE **BELIEVE**

Here for the Girls treasures **"LOVE"** above all and is committed to a culture that celebrates all people regardless of their ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, and sexual orientation. We promote human rights for all through mutual respect and acceptance of differences without biases of any kind.

WHAT WE **DO FOR "THE GIRLS"**

- ◆ In-person and virtual social-emotional support
- ◆ Activities that encourage emotional healing, peer support, and personal growth
- ◆ Annual weekend wellness retreat
- ◆ Programs for women with metastatic, stage IV breast cancer
- ◆ Breast cancer-related education with partner physicians
- ◆ Connection to information, resources, and each other

YOU CAN BE **HERE FOR THE GIRLS** WITH US!

At **Here for the Girls**, we say, "it takes a village to raise a nonprofit," and we are so grateful for our "village" of supporters who share their time, talents, and treasure with us to support our mission and the women we serve. From businesses and community organizations to individuals and families, we all work together to make a difference in the lives of young women with breast cancer and their families. If you'd like to join our village, here are some ways you can be **"Here for the Girls"** with us:

Volunteer | Host a fundraiser | Participate in an H4TG Signature Event | Donate

With love

Here for the Girls, Inc. is not a healthcare provider and does not give medical advice. The information in this guide and the calendar is designed for educational, informational, and awareness purposes only. This information is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or to replace the services of a medical professional. For answers to specific healthcare questions and concerns, you should consult your healthcare provider. Here for the Girls does not endorse, recommend, or make any warranties or representations regarding the materials, products, or information cited from the organizations referred to in this guide.

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