Wellness Beyond Cancer Program

Pear Blossom:
Flower of Good Health and Hope

Breast Cancer Follow-up
Disclaimer
This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified health-care provider. Please consult your own health-care provider who will be able to determine if this information is appropriate for your specific situation.
Common and/or significant long-term and late effects of breast cancer treatment

General:
• Fatigue
• Distress (anxiety, depression, fear of recurrence or new cancer)

Due to surgery:
• Change in sensation in area of surgery
• Decreased arm range of motion
• Lymphedema (swelling) of the breast, arm, hand, and/or back
• Scarring causing pain that ‘comes and goes’

Due to chemotherapy medication:
• Tingling, numbness, sensitivity or pain in your fingers and toes (peripheral neuropathy)
• Problems with short-term memory and/or ability to concentrate (chemobrain)
• Risk of heart disease (due to muscle damage)
Due to hormone therapy medication:
• Menopause-like symptoms such as: hot flashes, sweats, vaginal discharge or dryness
• Early menopause
• Increased risk of bone loss/osteoporosis (weakened bones)
• Joint stiffness
• Changes in lipid or cholesterol levels

Due to radiation:
• Skin changes in the area that was treated (e.g. colour, texture, loss of hair)
• Breast pain, sensitivity or numbness
• Potential for heart damage due to hardening of arteries
• Potential for scarring of lung tissue, which often causes no symptoms
Symptoms to report
If you get any of the following, you should discuss them with your doctor/nurse providing your follow-up cancer care. Further tests may be required.

Any new, constant or worsening symptom without an obvious cause, such as:
• Dry cough or shortness of breath
• Persistent bone pain
• Changes in either breast—new lumps, change in texture, clear or bloody nipple discharge
• Vague symptoms such as:
  Increased/unusual fatigue
  Nausea
  Unexplained weight loss

Healthy lifestyle behaviours for breast cancer patients
• Maintain an ideal body weight
• Lead a physically active lifestyle
• Eat a healthy diet
• If you smoke, consider a smoking cessation program
• Moderate alcohol intake
Wellness Beyond Cancer Program

Providing support and guidance once cancer treatment is completed.

Notes