
healthy life. Begin slowly, working your way up to a minimum of 45 minutes each day, or 4 hours a week. Combine aerobic, strengthening, and flexibility exercises.

Diet is an important part of your recovery. Aim for 7-8 servings of fruit and vegetables daily, include whole grains, limit saturated fats, and choose lean meats, fish. Portion size is a key part of weight management. Plant based, low fat diets may protect against the cancer returning. Canada's Food Guide (www.hc-sc.gc.ca) will help you to plan a healthy diet.

Alcohol should be limited to no more than 3 drinks per week. Regular alcohol use may increase your risk of the cancer returning.

Bone health includes regular weight bearing exercise and/or weight training. You may also want to quit smoking, limit caffeine, take 1500 mg of calcium and 1000 IU per day of Vitamin D3 (5 cups of milk can be used in place of the calcium tablets).

Birth Control (contraception) must be used to prevent pregnancy in women of child bearing years while taking anti-hormone therapies. Oral contraceptives are not recommended for women with breast cancer.

Quit Smoking and reduce your risk of cancer. One of the best things you can do for your health is to be a non-smoker. If you need help, call The Smoker's Helpline: 1-877-513-5333 or online <http://www.smokershelpline.ca>

Skin care includes using a sunscreen and limiting your time in the sun. Take care to protect any areas that have been treated with radiation.

Symptoms to report to your family doctor (remember they may NOT be caused by cancer):

- Arm swelling
 - New lumps or thickening under the arm, around the collarbone or neck, chest wall, or breast
 - Changes near or in the surgical scar such as nodules or bumps
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Abdominal pain or bone pain that does not go away or gets worse
 - Burning, stabbing pain in the breast scar
 - New headaches or headaches that will not go away; especially with vomiting or stroke like symptoms
 - Nausea or vomiting, unplanned weight loss
-

- Depression, anxiety, obsessive fear of the cancer returning
- Vaginal "spotting" or vaginal bleeding between normal periods.

Support and Resources

Canadian

- London Regional Cancer Program
- Canadian Breast Cancer Network
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Never Too Young: Psychosocial Information and Support for Young Women with Breast Cancer
- Lymphovenous Canada
- Wellspring

Other:

- Susan G. Komen for the Cure
- American Institute for Cancer Research
- Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre

Comments, Feedback?

Contact Patient & Professional Education
519-685-8742

Email: lrcpeducation@lhsc.on.ca

Early Stage Breast Cancer

Information for Patients Completing Treatment



London Health Sciences Centre
London Regional Cancer Program

790 Commissioners Road East
London, Ontario N6A 4L6
519-685-8600
www.lhsc.on.ca/About_Us/LRCP/

Now that you have completed your treatment at the London Regional Cancer Program, you are ready to be discharged. Your family doctor will provide regular, follow-up care.

Your Treatment Summary

Chemotherapy regimen:

Drug names: _____

Hormone suppression therapy:

Drug name: _____

Start Date: _____

Stop Date: _____

Radiation therapy completed:

Date: _____

Recommended Care

Medical history and physical examinations should be performed every 3-4 months for the first 2 years after diagnosis; every 6 months for 5 years; and then yearly exams after 7 years.

Mammograms should be performed every year until age _____. Women who had reconstructive breast surgery only require a clinical examination.

Bone mineral density scan for post-menopausal women (not a bone scan) should be ordered every 2-3 years if the first test is normal.

Follow-up tests such as: blood tests, chest x-rays, bone scans, ultrasounds, CT scans are only recommended if you have new, unexplained symptoms and are **not** recommended for routine breast cancer follow-up care.

Common Side Effects of Treatment

Hot flashes are caused by changes in hormone levels and usually get better over time. Check with your family doctor before using anything that has not been prescribed for you.

Fatigue will often improve with exercise and time. If you feel tired for more than 6 months see your family doctor to rule out other causes.

Vaginal dryness and/or loss of interest in sex can be caused by anti-hormone therapy. Use a vaginal moisturizer such as REPLENS®, 3 times weekly and a thick lubricant for sexual activity. Estrogen products are not recommended. Discuss with your partner and family doctor.

Aching and joint stiffness may improve with the use of heat and/or exercise. Your family doctor will be able to decide if anti-inflammatory drugs will help. This side effect will usually decrease over time.

Numbness in feet or fingers can be caused by chemotherapy and may take many months to improve.

Bone density changes can be caused by some types of anti-hormone therapy and can cause thinning of the bones.

Skin changes in the area you received radiation is normal. Changes may include: a “tanned” color that may fade over time; permanent, small, red blood vessels may appear near the surface of the skin; and/or the skin may feel tight. Gentle massage therapy may be helpful after treatment is completed and skin is healed.

Lymphedema is an abnormal swelling that is caused by lymph fluid collecting in the tissues of the body following treatment. Lymphedema can appear at any time after treatment, even many years later. If you are concerned, discuss this with your family doctor.

Loss of fertility can occur after chemotherapy due to changes in ovarian function (especially in women over the age of 40). This change is permanent. If you have concerns about your fertility talk to your family doctor or nurse.

Insomnia or trouble sleeping may be related to hot flashes or stress. If you are having trouble sleeping, please discuss with your family doctor.

Memory Changes, sometimes referred to as, “Chemo Brain” have been reported by patients. It is not clear how, or even if, memory changes are related to cancer treatment. Generally this symptom gets better over time.

Emotional, social and practical concerns may surface as you return to everyday life. If your concerns or fears disrupt your life you may want to call 519-685-8622 to speak to someone from the Supportive Care Department, LRCP.

Health Maintenance Suggestions

A **Healthy Body Weight** may reduce your risk of cancer coming back. It can also prevent, or lessen, other health problems such as lymphedema, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, diabetes, and high cholesterol.

Exercise is an important part of a
