



WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND TAKING CARE DURING BREAST CANCER TREATMENT

You may already be struggling with challenges due to your disability--breast cancer treatment can increase these challenges. It's now more important than ever to take on a healthy lifestyle that you can follow during and after treatment. Here are tips on changes you can make that will help you cope with your disability, as well as the effects of breast cancer treatment.....

Nutrition

- Cancer treatments can cause loss of appetite, dry mouth, and nausea. If you're on a special diet for your disability, ask your health care provider how to follow your special diet if dealing with eating problems caused by cancer treatment.
- Try to eat healthy foods, or those with plenty of protein and vitamins.
- Consider eating 5 to 6 small meals or snacks each day instead of 3 big meals.
- If you're not up to eating solid foods, you might want to drink milkshakes, smoothies, juice, or soup. If you have bowel and bladder control issues due to your disability, discuss your diet with your health care provider.

Fatigue

- Cancer treatment may make you tired. If possible, try to take short naps or rest during the day.
- Accept help from family or friends to do chores, run errands, and make meals.
- Try to relax by engaging in meditation, prayer, yoga, or guided imagery.

Physical Activity

- Try to do some physical activity. Check with your health care provider to see how much exercise you should be getting during each stage of treatment.
- A physical therapist will give you some ideas about appropriate exercises that can be done from a wheelchair.



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Dental Care

- Breast cancer treatment may cause side effects such as mouth sores and dry mouth. Ask your health care provider for a mouthwash to help with symptoms.
- Before you begin treatment, see your dentist and finish necessary dental work.

Psychological Support

- It's normal to feel sad and scared while you are going through cancer treatment. Get support from others who have breast cancer by joining a support group either in person or online.

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- Talk about your feelings with your family members, close friends, health care provider, clergy member, and/or an oncology (cancer) social worker.
- Consider keeping a journal to record your feelings and thoughts. If it's hard for you to write, try speaking into a tape recorder.
- See friends and be socially active.

REMEMBER—making lifestyle changes will help you cope with your disability, as well as the effects of cancer treatment. It's important to take care of yourself during this difficult time!



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