

Breast Cancer: Don't Face it Alone

If you have been recently diagnosed with breast cancer, you probably have some unanswered questions and concerns. Chances are good, too, that your doctor gave you a lot of information in a short time, and that you didn't absorb it all right away. If this describes you, take heart. Help is just a phone call away.

We understand that people with serious illnesses -- like breast cancer -- often need the support of a knowledgeable and caring healthcare professional. That's why we have made Health Coaches available by phone, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at no charge to you.

Health Coaches are specially trained healthcare professionals, such as nurses, dietitians, and respiratory therapists. They have access to the most up-to-date and reliable health information available. Health Coaches can explain the different treatment options for breast cancer, and can help you work with your doctor to make a decision that's best for you.

Treatment Options for Early Stage Breast Cancer

Women with early stage breast cancer typically have two major treatment options. They can have a mastectomy, surgery to remove the entire breast, or they can have a lumpectomy, surgery to remove only the breast tumor and a border of healthy tissue around it, saving the breast. Women who have a lumpectomy (also called breast-conserving surgery) usually also have radiation therapy.

If you have early stage breast cancer, the choice you make between mastectomy and lumpectomy will not make a difference in how long you will live. Still, there are important differences between the surgeries. The decision you make will depend on how you feel about these differences, which include:

- How long you spend in treatment and how much it disrupts your life.
- How your body looks after surgery.
- The chance that your cancer might come back in the breast or breast area.

A Health Coach Can Help

If you are facing difficult choices about your treatment for breast cancer, a Health Coach can help. He or she can answer your questions and also help you prepare questions to discuss with your doctor. If appropriate, a Health Coach will send you a complimentary videotape, such as:

- Early Stage Breast Cancer: Choosing Your Surgery
- Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (DCIS): Choosing Your Treatment
- Early Breast Cancer: Hormone Therapy And Chemotherapy, Are They Right For You?
- Breast Reconstruction: Is It Right For You?
- Living With Metastatic Breast Cancer: Making The Journey Your Own

To talk to a Health Coach, call [1-800-658-2750](tel:1-800-658-2750). You can also get information online at www.thedialogcenter.com/bcbsnd.