

A Woman's Cancer Journey Primer©

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Why This Book?

Hello, my name is Carin and I am a Cancer victor. I use the term “victor” instead of a “survivor”, because I did not just survive, I was victorious over the disease. That victory as it pertains to my medical journey has very little to do with me and my strength. Many beautiful, strong spirited women lose their lives to Cancer. I thank God and my doctors for victory during the medical part of my journey. However, I am a victor in many areas of my life. Physically, although my body changed permanently and my health was temporarily lost, I found joy in learning new ways to address health and beauty issues. Emotionally, I experienced a new confidence during times that attacked my self-confidence. Spiritually, I became much more sensitive and open to God’s leading in my daily life.

During my treatment I talked with many women who, like me, were not only dealing with cancer but also related health and beauty issues. Following treatment I developed a workshop curriculum that served as a road map for the cancer journey, using my knowledge as a wardrobe and image coach. This easy to read book is that curriculum in written form.

You have been diagnosed with Cancer and may find yourself preparing for a treatment regimen that will last somewhere between several months to a lifetime. During this treatment journey, many health and beauty issues will present a greater challenge. This book will look at those issues and give you knowledge to face and combat these issues with knowledge, confidence and creativity.

***Disclaimer:** I am not a physician and do not subscribe to or recommend any particular medical procedure or alternative treatment. Your Primary Physician, Oncologist and/or Surgeon should be consulted prior to implementing any of the advice or regimens in this book. This information in this book is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat or cure any disease. The information and products in this book should be closely scrutinized by individuals with allergies or sensitivities. Additionally, although I have tried to cover the issues that face women journeying through cancer comprehensively – the information included in this book is still incomplete. This is for two reasons. First, it is simply impossible to address every issue a woman might face. Second, treatment options and, hence, side effects continue to evolve. My research is ongoing in order to stay informed and current to give the best information and advice when speaking and writing.*

God Our Healer

God gave some among us a passion to research how God intricately created us. Careful, methodic research increases knowledge to treat disease and illness more effectively. Those passionate researchers share that knowledge with our physicians whom God gave the desire and ability to treat the human body. This knowledge constantly changes and grows which, in turn, makes practicing medicine a continually evolving science.

We, as patients, should honor those physicians, both conventional and alternative, whom God has gifted for they are studied and experienced in the ways of the human body. It is never wrong to seek a human physician's help and perhaps, ultimately regain our health.

However, let us never lose sight of the Great Physician. God, the Father, who created us and formed us in our mother's womb, is a God of miracles. Pray and trust for a miracle. Your miracle may not come in the form of physical healing...it may be a mental and emotional healing. Allow God to grow you in ways you never thought possible before this disease invaded your body.

Poem written May, 2009

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Preface – My Personal Journey

Although it has been fifteen years since my personal journey with cancer began, I still feel compelled to share my story with you in hopes of offering caring support and encouragement for those of you who may have just begun your own cancer journey. My story, like anyone else's starts long before the actual cancer diagnosis...so please go back with me to where my journey began.

It was while I was in the shower one January evening in 1991 that my hand ran across a small hard lump at the base of my right breast. I was thirty-eight at the time and, I admit, I did not do monthly breast self-exams. In fact, I really had never done a self-exam prior to that evening. My reasoning was that I often experienced sore, lumpy breasts several days prior to menstruation, so I thought it would be very hard for me to determine what might be suspicious and not just hormonal. Instinctively, though, as my hand ran across this lump I knew I needed to do an exam as soon as I was out of the shower. I made a mental note of where the lump was and finished my shower. Once I was lying on my back on the bed, I began to feel around for the lump and I simply could not find it. I felt and prodded but could not find it. Nevertheless, I knew I had felt something...and I was convinced that God had orchestrated my hand running across the lump or I might have never found it even if I had begun doing self-exams that month. After several minutes, I finally felt the lump again. It was not painful and did not move much when palpated.

After telling my husband, Chris, what I had found we agreed I should call my gynecologist the following morning to set an appointment. There was no fear at the time that it might be cancer. I was "young", had never taken birth control pills or had an abortion, my only two pregnancy's were full-term live births and I had no family history on my mother's side. Even with all this going for me, my husband and I knew the smart, diligent thing to do was have it checked out. Once at the doctor's office, she too had a terrible time finding the lump, but with some guidance from me, she did feel it. She felt it would be wise to schedule my first mammogram – to establish a baseline and check out this lump. This mammogram did not detect the lump and so they scheduled me for an ultrasound. That did not reveal anything either. Since the lump was palpable, the course of action decided upon was a re-check each month to make certain nothing was changing. After six months of monthly exams and no seeming change the doctor felt it would acceptable for me to go six months between exams.

I continued on this course until June of 1994. Again, during my shower, I felt a

second lump. It was about two inches away from the first one. Back to the gynecologist's office I went. This time in addition to a mammogram and ultrasound, I had a MRI. It was determined that, although they could not see anything on any of these tests, I definitely had two palpable lumps that needed to be removed and biopsied. The surgeon assured me several times that he was quite certain the biopsies would be clear. After all, remember, I was not at a high risk for developing breast cancer.

JUST A SIDE NOTE HERE: Although none of the conventional diagnostic tests detected my lumps, I absolutely know that mammography; thermography, ultrasound, MRI's, Miraluma and other methods of detection are invaluable in saving lives. Please be diligent and schedule a regular testing based on your doctor's recommendation for kind and frequency. If your doctor advises you to have a follow-up diagnostic test, be certain to schedule it as soon as possible. This is your life – is it worth risking over the cost of a test?

My biopsies were set for August 16th and off we headed early that morning to the hospital having no idea what lie ahead. Once again, assured by my surgeon that he was quite certain all would be fine he began to “snip and pull”. During the procedure, I remember my husband saying something to the effect of “If these are benign...” I truly have no idea what else he said because I was a bit embarrassed that he was using the “if” word. After all, I felt very confident because I had been told all would be fine. Before I could get off the table to leave we already had news back from pathology – and it was not good news. The doctor told me I had infiltrative ductal carcinoma in both sites and that both sites were primary tumors. That last part was both good and bad news. The good news was my cancer had not metastasized. The bad news was that this news meant I had multi-centric cancer. So, not only was I receiving a cancer diagnosis, I was being told I had two separate tumors.

I remember my very first thought was how unfair this was to my husband and family. You see, I have had many health issues over the years. It seemed I went from one problem to the next – but this was a “biggie”! My second thought was that I had just made my sister, mother and children statistics. Wow...that was quite a thought! My loved ones would be treated differently by the medical community for the rest of their lives because of the diagnosis I received that moment.

So, began my cancer journey. The events of the next several weeks were emotionally charged. The doctors, my husband and I all agreed that I should have a lumpectomy and node dissection to make certain the margins were clean and determine

whether there was node involvement. Once into the surgery the doctor realized I needed a quadrantectomy to be completely certain of my prognosis. At the post-op appointment following the quadrantectomy I can still remember how I felt when the doctor said, "Well, you do not have any node involvement, however, we found three more primary tumors and we did not get clean margins on one of the tumors because we didn't know the tumor was there at the time of the surgery. At the very least, I had to have another surgery to get clean margins and the medical professionals felt the only real option was to do a mastectomy. After all, I had five primary sites in one quarter of one breast that had not been detected with technology. If the lumps were not palpable, we did not know I had them.

I know you can identify with what I will say next. I felt like I had been hit in the stomach with a baseball at full force. How could I feel fine and yet have a deadly disease? Shouldn't my body have screamed at me that there was a problem – or five problems in my case! The night before my first mastectomy, as I cried and prayed, I felt an incredible peace knowing that God was in control. Although I had planned to go to the grave with all my body parts intact, He had another plan for me, and it was a good plan even if it did not feel like it at that moment...and it didn't.

Because I am involved in the entertainment industry as a model and actress, I felt it was important to have my breasts "attached" to me at all times. I knew there would be times when the garments I was to model could not be worn with a bra. That, and the fact that I was relatively young at age 40, convinced my husband and me to take the reconstruction route. We also decided to begin reconstruction at the same time as the mastectomy.

These weeks were filled with varying degrees of physical pain, laughter, crying, praying, encouragement from friends and family, and the beginning of chemotherapy. I will move quickly past this part of my journey for sake of space. Suffice to say it was a time of immense growth emotionally and spiritually. In a bit I will share a few stories from my journal written during these weeks and the weeks surrounding where my cancer journey took me next.

The only reason I include this next part is that it is part of my story – not because I want to place fear or concern in anyone's mind.

Just a few short days after my second chemotherapy treatment I began to run a high fever and my affected arm became quite weak. I had already begun taking neupogen shots because my white blood count was very low. Honestly, I thought all that was wrong with me was I needed my daily shot and I lay bundled on the couch that evening waiting for what seemed like forever for my husband to come in from work.

This was just four days before Christmas and he worked for UPS...consequently he was working very long hours. When my husband came in and kissed me, I was burning up with fever. He immediately took me to the hospital where I was admitted. They knew I was infected with something – they just did not know what or where the infection was.

There is a very cool twist to this story! Getting an infection (which turned out to be a staph infection in the axillary incision) SAVED MY LIFE! Once they did all my blood work, they discovered that my spinal cord was shutting down. I was probably within twenty-four hours of death, because I was allergic to either one or all of the chemotherapy drugs. Had I not started running a fever – I never would have been taken to the hospital – I would have lay at home and died. God was really watching over me!

My chemotherapy was stopped short. There were no oral hormonal medications available at that time...and so I ended the first leg of my cancer journey.

A few months later, I learned of the Cancer Treatment Center of America. I went to the center in Tulsa, Oklahoma for the next five years. I cannot brag enough on the medical, emotional, spiritual and social care I received there. Their “whole body” approach fed my desire to be treated as natural as possible, while also benefiting from western medicine.

Over the next five years, I had four tumors in the remaining breast that were either benign or pre-cancerous. All were palpable – not one was detected by diagnostic tests. Because of my history with difficulty using diagnostic tools and chemotherapy intolerance, my surgeon suggested that I have a second mastectomy in 1999. His words were, “You are a time bomb waiting to go off”. Chris and I made a decision to do a prophylactic mastectomy in June of 1999. Shortly after that, I began the reconstruction process again, finishing in January of 2000. My lymphatic system and kidneys became weakened due to an infection that went systemic from a skin graft taken to rebuild my areola and I found myself battling lymphedema of the trunk. Although I continue to battle this to the present, I have found great help and relief from many avenues. I will share these in chapter 9.

Since spring of 2000, I have been in full remission. Praise God! I stay vigilant and am always conscious of any changes in my body. I am so blessed to be living a full, active life.

Journal Entries

Oct 21st – Today is our 22nd anniversary. I am falling in love with Chris all over again. Not that I had fallen out of love...I hadn't. We have a great marriage, but with the boys just moving out two months ago to pursue their lives, I wasn't sure we could have the same great relationship we had prior to the birth of our sons. We were so young then - naïve and immature – but in LOVE! Yet, he is so gracious and caring. He has never once made me feel ugly or deformed during this journey. I am so glad I get to spend the rest of my life with him.

Oct 25th – Yesterday, I read that it takes eight to ten years for a cancerous tumor to grow to 1cm...about the size my two largest tumors were. God, you have been showing me that you love me and all I need to do is trust and rely on your strength for the past eight years. You were teaching me the lesson you knew I would need for this time in my life.

Oct 28th – I need to decide if I will do chemotherapy and it seems to be an impossible decision for me. I have prayed and prayed about what I should do. I feel like I am mistreating my body if I do have chemo...it is such a stress to my body...but I also feel like I need to do everything conventional and alternative to help my body beat this disease.

Nov 10th – I am going to do chemo. Chris and I feel we simply need to move forward and do this. If I am not to do it, I feel confident God will show me that.

Nov 30th – I have been in survival mode to this point. Now, I am on the road to beating this disease. Today I thought about the fact that the cancer was quietly growing in my body for several years and I had been completely unaware it was there. I am a bit mad at my body. How could it have a disease that could kill me and not tell me? I feel betrayed.

Dec 9th – I am really feeling sorry for myself today. I am tired of the constant reminders to take it easy and stay away from people – the nausea – the metallic taste in my mouth continually – and especially being stabbed, poked and prodded constantly.

Dec 18th – Last night Chris told me I have a beautiful nipple. I heard a beautiful nipple and began to cry. He felt so bad. After all, he had complimented me but I heard it differently.

Dec 27th – So, I am allergic to chemo! I will take this as God's voice telling me I am not to do anymore chemo. He answered my prayer from two months ago. Not answered in the way I wanted, or could have imagined it would be, but the answer is very clear.

May 1995 – I like this spiritual analogy God gave me today. I have named it...

"THE SURGEON"

I have heard the analogy of God as the Great Physician my whole life. Today I see an analogy between God and a surgeon.

When we need surgery on our physical bodies, the Doctor prepares us by telling us the problem, the procedure, the possible complications and the expected outcome. We place our trust in him to perform the procedure.

Through modern day technology, we are administered anesthesia, which allows us to "sleep" during the procedure rather than feel the surgeon's scalpel. When we wake up, the surgery is over. Around the clock pain medications lessen our pain, and we begin the healing process. However, no matter how skillful the surgeon is we have unsightly scars that last a lifetime. Many times the outcome is not what the doctors or you had planned...or hoped it would be.

Spiritually speaking, when God knows we need surgery, He, too, tells us the problem. Sometimes through prayer and Bible study; sometimes by other people's witness. He may use many avenues. If we truly desire His best for us, we agree to "surgery". Often the procedure is long and painful. Unlike physical surgery, we are "awake" through all of it! Oh yes, He is gracious, gentle and loving, giving us peace and comfort, but we feel His spiritual scalpel intensely. We often cry out in the middle of it: "STOP"! I cannot take this; it is too much to bear. Being the merciful God that He is, He does our bidding, leaving us with open wounds and diseased spirits that will need more surgery later.

*HOWEVER, if we let His skilled hand finish the work and close the wound, the healing can begin. God is never unsure of the outcome. He KNOWS what we will become once we have healed. Something even more wonderful is that the scars from **spiritual** surgery will always leave us more beautiful than before. They will never disfigure us!*

...thank you God for the scars.

Introduction: It's all about You!

This book is for and about you and your cancer journey. Each chapter addresses health or beauty concerns. Some chapters will be more fun than others will, simply because they play with color and style. Every chapter will show you how to make decisions to help you feel good physically and emotionally. At a time when everyone is asking you to make decisions that are potentially life changing, this book offers a respite. I have written it in chronological order based on the issues you will most likely experience first, second and so on.

The first step of the cancer journey relates to health concerns and beauty issues for you to evaluate. You will want to answer the following basic questions. The answers to these questions will help you make good choices for yourself.

Question 1 In what way will my body change with surgery and/or treatment?

Explanation - For some of you, surgery and/or treatment will not affect your external body a great deal. Perhaps your most bothersome external side effect will be generalized swelling that will call for looser fitting clothing and elasticized waistlines. Others of you will have external body altering surgeries and/or treatment. (Chapter 3 will look at clothing choices for these challenges. Be sure to utilize local resources available to you. I am also available for phone consultations and seminars. Please refer to my contact information at the end of the book or visit www.bridges2beauty.net.)

Question 2 Will I keep my hair, have partial hair loss or complete hair loss including eyebrows and eyelashes?

Explanation - Different treatments and drugs will dictate the amount of hair loss, if any, during your cancer journey. Ask your oncologist what to expect based on the treatment and/or drugs in your program. We will look at this issue in depth in chapter five. For now, think about what amount of hair loss ("alopecia" is the medical term) you will experience. Once you know the answer to this question, you will be able to make headwear choices that suit you, and know if you will need (and want) to consider replacement eyebrows and eyelashes.

Question 3 During what season(s) of the year will my surgery(s) and/or treatment be?

Question 4 What type of climate do I live in? Is it generally hot, cold or moderate during the months I will be having treatment?

Explanations for questions #3 and #4 - These questions are asking the same thing, but in a different way. For some of you, your treatment will take longer, so it is important to look at each of the seasons your treatment will span. If your treatment regimen is only going to span one or perhaps two seasons, your considerations will be different from those whose treatment regimens will span multiple seasons. I have first posed the question from the standpoint of what special days and holidays your treatment period will encompass. Consider whether your anniversary (what anniversary it is), birthdays (again what birthdays they are), work related conferences, special events and so on will take place during treatment. Although you may choose not to wear a wig for everyday, you may want to go ahead and get a wig for these special occasions. There will be additional things to consider such as the best clothing choices for your lifestyle and profession, whether false (prosthetic) eyelashes and eyebrows are something you are interested in trying and other image issues. Secondly, I am asking you to consider some different things if you live where it is going to be cool to cold the majority of your treatment time and you are going to lose all of your hair. The cold weather will dictate things like a sleeping cap for nights and warmer hats or a wig during the days. Conversely, if you live where it is warm to hot the majority of your treatment time, you may want to consider options to wigs for headwear. Wigs are very warm so lightweight scarves and cotton turbans may be a viable part-time or full-time alternative to a wig. Make your clothing choices based on both comfort and ease during treatment, keeping in mind the season(s) you will be having your treatment - whether surgery, chemotherapy, radiation or a combination of the above treatments.

Do not become overwhelmed with these questions and issues. At a time when most every part of your life is out of control, you can have control over these areas - so have some fun!

Question 5 What kinds of hairstyles look good on me? Do I wear my hair very short or do I like having a lot of hair around my face?

Question 6 Do I like hats?

Question 7 Am I a risk-taker with my wardrobe and accessories?

Question 8 Do I love simple, natural clothing or am I more dramatic?

Question 9 Do I always wear makeup no matter the day?

Explanations for questions #5 through #9 - This is a fun series of questions to ponder. That is because they are truly ALL about YOU!

Think about what hairstyles you have gotten the most complements on over the

years. Also, do you love to wear hats or just see other people wearing them? Your answers may lead you to choose a wig as your only type of headwear (if the other factors already considered are right) or hats, turbans and scarves instead. Wigs are beautiful, natural looking and safe emotionally because they offer a bit of privacy during your cancer journey. Hats, turbans and scarves are beautiful, and they make a bold, confident statement about how you feel about yourself. That is because, headwear choices other than wigs generally let others know that you are on a cancer journey. You will need to decide if you are comfortable with that.

Those of you who are risk-takers with your wardrobe and accessory choices love trends and the latest styles. The majority of you are more comfortable in classic styles of clothing and accessories. I am certain you are beginning to see some patterns in how you answer these questions. The more daring and dramatic you are the more you will be ready to make a “cancer treatment fashion statement”. On the other hand, if you tend toward classic, you will choose things that are very similar to your pre-cancer journey outfits. Neither is right or wrong, they are simply your choice...isn't that wonderful?!

If you love very simple natural fabrics, patterns and accessories, and if you have chosen not to wear a wig, you will tend to choose scarves of soft cotton in solids or with a simple pattern. You will surround yourself with clothing, headwear and accessories that are not fussy and require no special care. I suggest everyone adopt a comfort policy during this time in your life even if you are most comfortable emotionally in dramatic, make-a-statement outfits. You can accomplish both of these at the same time, as you will see in chapter three.

I am certain some of you always wear makeup no matter the day. If makeup is as important to you as the clothes you wear, then you may want to take a few extra steps with your makeup during treatment. Look at your choices and choose a makeup regimen that will make you the happiest with your appearance!

Others of you choose to go sans makeup often. Makeup may elevate your mood during treatment, so choose a very simple makeup regimen and make certain your skin gets the moisture and nutrition it needs.

Question 10 Will I work part-time, full-time or not at all during treatment?

Question 11 If I will work, will I be in front of groups of people on a regular basis?

Explanations for questions #10 and #11 – Generally, your care team will be advising you to try to lighten your workload, if financially feasible. For many of you not working during treatment will not be an option for you.

My purpose in posing this question is to have you think about work in terms of your work image. If your work demands you be in contact with many people on a daily basis in a very professional atmosphere; a wig, false (prosthetic) eyebrows and eyelashes or a makeup regimen that includes using eyebrow stencils and eyelash techniques are as important as professional clothing. If however, your work situation keeps you behind the scenes you can choose how much or how little you want to do in terms of dealing with these beauty issues...and do not forget that whether you are in the limelight or behind the scenes, you will want comfortable, easy to care for clothing.

Question 12 Do I exercise moderately, aggressively or not at all?

Explanation for question #12 - The final thing you will want to consider before beginning treatment is your level of physical fitness. Do you exercise several times a week? Do you work out at a health club or are you a "do-it-at-homer"? Perhaps exercise is more of a hit-and-miss event for you? Maybe it has been years since you did any formal type of exercise. In chapter 2, I address exercise and the benefits it offers to both those going through cancer treatment and women, in general.

Now that you have a good handle on YOUR answers to these questions, you can start preparing for your journey.

Chapter One: Preparing for the Journey

When was the last time you went on a journey? Before leaving home, you took certain preparation steps, such as buying tickets, packing and getting the mail delivery stopped, right? You are beginning perhaps the most difficult journey of your life, and you need to be well prepared.

Sustaining health and maintaining beauty are two areas to focus on for this journey. Health entails many mental attitudes and physical disciplines. Although beauty begins on the inside with a love for life and people, along with a caring attitude, the beauty issues we will look at in this book concentrate on diet, exercise, skin care, makeup, hair and clothing. It is no secret that if you know you look good on the outside, it directly affects your attitude...and your attitude transfers over to feeling better or worse physically. In other words, maintaining beauty helps sustain health.

Below are your “packing lists” for the journey. Of course, not all the items are relevant to everyone. You need to complete the first list prior to any surgery you might be having. Complete the second list, if possible, prior to beginning chemotherapy and/or radiation. You can do the third list after treatment has begun.

Be sure to enlist the help of friends and family as you find you need them. If they have not taken a cancer journey of their own, they do not know how you feel or what you need. Although they want to be supportive and helpful, it is hard or nearly impossible unless you or your caregiver gives them specific tasks.

Before Surgery Packing List

- ✓ Purchase a couple of front opening nightgowns, a pair of non-slip slippers, and a robe that is easy on – easy off. (Nightgowns vs. pajamas give easier access to the body for doctor’s visits in the hospital.)
- ✓ Develop a resource list of names, phone numbers and addresses for doctors, insurance companies (be certain to include company information and policy numbers), family members, wig salons, specialty stores, support groups and other important contacts. This will be very valuable to you and your caregiver.
- ✓ Write out your personal health history. Include allergies, surgeries, former and current medications and dosages. Also, be sure to include any vitamin and dietary supplements that you are taking. Take a copy of this with you to each new medical appointment.

Pre-Treatment Packing List

- ✓ Make a personal beauty worksheet. It could include such things as:
 - ...brands and colors of makeup and skin care products
 - ...your best colors in clothing and makeup
 - ...a picture of you prior to treatment (This will help you make color choices for makeup you purchase during treatment AND wigs/hair pieces, if your coloring does not change much.)
- ✓ If your treatment is going to cause hair loss and you normally wear a longer style, cut your hair to a shorter, easy to care for style. Hair loss from chemotherapy tends to be in clumps. Long(er) hair presents a bigger challenge (than short hair does) when you lose your hair in clumps. If your hair is shorter, you will be able to wait longer before going to a wig, scarves, hats or turbans.
- ✓ When you cut your hair, keep slips of the hair from the front, top, side and nape of neck - labeling each of them. This will help you select a natural looking wig, if a wig is your choice of headwear.
- ✓ Buy all new skin care products making certain they are gentle enough for possible skin changes. I will discuss this thoroughly in chapter 4. Additionally, replace all your makeup applicators, tools and brushes. This is to insure that no bacteria are present when treatment begins. If you are able to purchase your products in tubes, that will provide added protection against bacteria spreading.
- ✓ Make an appointment to visit your dentist. At the appointment, tell him/her of your cancer diagnosis, and that you will be starting chemotherapy and/or radiation soon. Have your teeth cleaned and your mouth inspected for cavities and/or sores to reduce your chances of infection once you have surgery or begin treatment.
- ✓ Make an appointment to look at, and discuss wig options with a wigier if you are going to purchase a wig. You may make your wig choice at that time or go back after treatment begins to make that decision.

During Treatment Packing List

- ✓ Once you have lost most of your hair, make your second appointment with the wigier to finalize your wig choice (if you haven't already), and get a final fitting.
- ✓ If you are choosing to wear scarves for headwear, buy or make several scarves in plain colors. Refer to the scarf guidelines in chapter 5.

- ✓ Purchase turbans, hats and hairpieces if you choose this option. I have included some companies that sell these in chapter 5.
- ✓ Purchase or make a flannel sleeping-cap. This will help keep the heat loss through the top of your head, while sleeping, to a minimum. There are soft fleece caps in several styles for under \$10 at Hats with Heart. Call 1.800.708.0066 or go online at www.hatswithheart.com.

Additional Personal Checklist

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- ✓ _____
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- ✓ _____

Chapter Two: Staying Fit for the Journey

We are going to begin with water. Yes, water! The balance of body fluids is very sensitive even in healthy, active people. This balance changes quickly when there is inadequate intake of water, causing dehydration. Chemotherapy and radiation increase your body's demand for fluids making it vitally important for you to be aware of the amount of fluids you are getting. Part of this increased demand is to support your bladder and kidney function. By keeping them working optimally, you will be flushing out toxins.

Additionally, your skin must have proper hydration to remain healthy. Many people find that once chemotherapy begins, dry flaky skin is the first thing that affects their physical appearance. That is because chemotherapy adversely affects the skin's hydration. It is imperative that you get your minimum requirement of water daily.

The formula for determining your daily requirement of water is:

$$\text{Body weight} \div 2 = \text{minimum number of ounces per day}$$

Water is essential for flushing toxicity from your body. Watermelon and cranberries are two foods that encourage the kidneys to flush. Try drinking a cup of Weightless Cranberry Tea by Traditional Medicinals each day. I have searched for a watermelon tea, but have not been able to find one. Buy fresh watermelon in season and save the white seeds to boil and make your own tea. It is somewhat bitter, so you will want to add some honey to the tea. You can also purchase watermelon seed extract from Health & Herbs/Alternative Remedies. Their order number is 1.800.345.4152 ext 0 and their website address is www.healthherbs.com.

There are some of you, I am sure, who simply do not like the taste of water. Others will find chemotherapy changes the taste of water to a less than desirable flavor. Unfortunately, it needs to be water for proper hydration – not soft drinks, coffee, tea or fruit juices. (If you must drink one of the above, make certain it is NOT soft drinks or coffee – these will actually dehydrate versus hydrate). Fortunately, there are several companies making great, natural *flavored* water. A couple of good choices would be: Glaceau, MetroMint and Landers. These are available at health food stores and some grocery stores. They are flavored and sweetened with natural ingredients and contain no artificial coloring. Your body is working hard enough already – do not make it deal

with a lot of extra sugar, chemicals, flavorings and colorings. Try several brands and flavors until you find one or more you not only tolerate but that you really desire. Most stores have a lenient policy on returns due to chemotherapy side effects.

Deep breathing can be a powerful instrument for sustaining and maintaining healthy function of all body systems. During times of stress and illness, it is extremely easy to begin breathing less deeply. This is generally for one of two reasons. You may have one or both of these reasons. The first is a result of your cancer treatment being located in the chest area and therefore it is more painful to take full breaths. The second is due to the lack of energy during treatment. Sometimes breathing deeply simply expends more energy than you think you have. Once you understand what deep breathing can do for you – you will never want to take another shallow breath.

You may not even be aware that you have changed your breathing habits. My hope is that by mentioning deep breathing and its benefits, you will become more conscious of your own tendencies.

Deep breathing stimulates your lymphatic system. This system works as your body's sewage system. Lymphatic fluid surrounds every cell of your body. Your cells are dependent on the lymphatic system to drain off toxic materials (anesthesia and chemotherapy drugs) and excess fluid. Excess fluid can accumulate during cancer due to any number of reasons. ¹Trapped blood proteins and excess fluid around the cells would cause death if your lymphatic system did not function for just one 24-hour day. The two main blood proteins are albumin and globulin. Albumin's role is very important during cancer because albumin is the protein that enables your body to deal with stress. We all know cancer is a major stress to your body. Fresh albumin must replace the "spent" albumin constantly and simultaneously expel the "spent" albumin from your cells. Body fluid build-up also occurs during cancer due to many conditions. The need of a catheter during surgery is one of those conditions because it can compromise your ability to evacuate completely. This and other conditions can lead to edema which is swelling caused by fluid trapped in your body's tissues. Some, or all, of these conditions require the constant cleansing process the lymphatic system provides. Try doing this simple breathing exercise ten times, three times a day, to benefit both your lymphatic system and your general health.

¹ <http://www.healingdaily.com/exercise/breathing.htm> / Breathing for health

Inhale for 4 seconds

Hold for 16 seconds

Exhale for 8 seconds

Practice feeling the air enter a specific lobe of your lungs. First, try the upper right lobe; then the lower right lobe and so on. Although there is some air in each lobe of your lungs, using this technique, you will be able to feel more air enter the lobe you are concentrating on at that moment. This will ensure that you are using ALL your lung capacity.

Another very important thing to be aware of is that during times of stress your body requires adequate amounts of protein. This is because the liver makes albumin from protein to help handle the stress. If enough protein is not being consumed, the liver will actually “steal” it from other parts of your body to make albumin. Although it is in effect protecting you from the stress, it is also weakening you by eating away at your protein stores. This can lead to a protein deficiency. On the other hand, too much protein can cause or exacerbate other health problems. Be certain to check with your doctor or nutritionist to determine the optimal protein intake level for you.

Suggested Protein Amounts for Healthy Adults

45 to 60 grams per day (10-15% of caloric intake)

²There are two groups of protein: complete and incomplete. Complete proteins contain all the essential amino acids in correct proportions for growth. Sources for these proteins are dairy products, eggs, fish, fowl and meats. Incomplete proteins, on the other hand, lack either one or more of the essential amino acids or they contain them in the wrong proportions for growth. Sources for these proteins are beans, grains, fruits, nuts and vegetables.

Interestingly enough, if you combine two types of incomplete proteins, they can complement each other and create a complete protein. For more information on how to combine these incomplete proteins to create complete proteins and other helpful dietary

² <http://www.cancercenter.com/after-careservices/protein.cfm>

information, visit www.cancercenter.com/after-care-services/protein.cfm.

When purchasing animal products for protein, try to buy only those that are labeled “organically fed and hormone free”. The hormone free part of this statement is of utmost importance when you have a hormone-based cancer. Hormones added to the diets of livestock, dairy cows or poultry could counteract the drugs that are in your chemotherapy cocktail.

Buying organically fed, hormone free meat is a good practice, not only during treatment, but also for the rest of your life. Eating food that is organic is healthier, and ingesting hormones second-hand from meat is proving not to be nutritionally sound.

Additionally if you have a hormone-based cancer, consult your doctor regarding eating soy or soy based products as a source of protein during and after treatment. Soy has an estrogenic effect so some doctors feel it is best not to consume soy. Tofu, soy nuts and soymilk are direct sources of soy. Other foods, including some protein bars and protein powders, are soy-based. Avoid both direct and soy-based products if your doctor recommends no soy.

No matter what kind of cancer you have, concentrate on giving your body the highest quality food possible. Your body is in a deadly fight and needs organic, natural, chemical-free food to overcome the opponent.

Protein and perhaps food in general is not going to taste good to some of you during treatment. Both chemotherapy and radiation can cause this. Although the cause is somewhat unclear on both treatments, it is clearer with chemotherapy. It is most likely the same reason a person on chemotherapy may have mouth sores. (More on mouth care in a bit.) Chemotherapy attacks the cells in your body that multiply the fastest because cancer cells multiply so quickly. Cells in your mouth, including your taste buds, multiply quickly, and that is why they become a target with chemotherapy drugs. This compromises your taste buds, which may make food taste differently or even become distasteful. Combating nausea in addition to this can become quite a challenge for getting the nutrition you need to stay strong and fight your way back to complete health.

³Here are some practical suggestions, general guidelines and specific steps for eating well-balanced meals during your journey.

³ <http://www.cancerfightingstrategies.com> – General Guidelines, Too Sweet...

- recruit a family member or friend who can organize others who are willing to make meals for you (and your family, if applicable).
- taste aversions may be associated with chemo treatments (this is usually not the case with radiation treatments) – so do not eat your favorite foods on a day when you receive chemotherapy
- keep a simple food journal to keep track of what tastes good and what doesn't
- in the journal also track what makes things taste better or worse
- use the following tips to help improve the taste of foods

General Guidelines

1. Most important: Brush your teeth several times a day and use a homemade mouth rinse. Here are four options:
 - a. 1-cup water to 1-teaspoon salt
 - b. 1-cup water to 1-teaspoon hydrogen peroxide
 - c. 1-cup water to 2-teaspoon baking soda
 - d. Alkalol (see caring tip#1 on pg. 11)
2. Eat in a relaxed setting, if possible, and keep conversations light and fun.
3. If you can tolerate (and you crave) highly seasoned foods...let yourself have them on a regular basis.
4. Herbs and spices may help stimulate your taste buds. Additionally, grapefruit and other acidic foods may stimulate them. (Do not eat acidic foods if they irritate your mouth.)
5. Try out different food textures to see which ones you like the most. Crunchy, creamy, crispy and soft are some of your choices.
6. Whey based protein powders are generally well tolerated. Fruit shakes using these protein powders are a relatively easy way to get the protein you need without sitting down to an entire meal that may not appeal to you.
7. Instead of purchasing flavored water, try adding 1 ounce of cranberry juice to 8 ounces of water to encourage you to drink enough water.

If Foods Taste Too Sweet

1. Brew a cup of *Gymnema Sylvestra*, an herbal tea, to sip just prior to eating. It will deaden your "sweet" taste buds for about twenty minutes. Savor each

sip by holding it in your mouth several seconds. For the maximum result, the cup should take five minutes to finish.

2. You might tolerate fruit juices or other sweet drinks better when diluted with water or milk, depending on the drink.
3. Sweet fruits, such as bananas may be less appealing than vegetables. Although fruits are an extremely important part of a balanced diet, ask your doctor if you can substitute a daily fruit serving for a vegetable serving from time to time.

If Foods Taste Too Bitter

1. Add a little honey to foods and drinks. You might also try stevia. It is available in packets for individual servings. Be cautious at first because the sweetness may be overwhelming.
2. Meat will taste less bitter when eaten at room temperature or cold. Take the necessary precautions to avoid food poisoning when you are cooling meat.
3. Casseroles help meat, chicken, fish, eggs and many dairy products, including mild cheeses, taste better.
4. Try marinating foods. You can try sweet, salty, tangy or spicy marinades to suit your taste.

If All Food Just Does Not Taste Right

1. Mix water, tea and fruit juices with a natural club soda. This may help remove some of the strange tastes.
2. Munch on pretzels. Choose other starchy foods like bread, potatoes, pasta and rice. Add butter and other fatty substances sparingly to these foods because the fat may negate the benefit.
3. Bland foods generally cannot taste “off” because they do not have much taste to begin with! In this category are eggs, mild cheeses (including cottage cheese), tapioca, hot cereals and peanut butter.

The most important thing for you to do is find simple, nutritious foods that work for you. Although it would be ideal to eat a well-balanced diet every day, you may be unable to do that because of your lack of appetite and/or how flavors of food change during treatment. For example, if you find that potatoes only taste good scalloped; make

certain you eat them that way. They are an excellent source of potassium, and you will eat them if they taste good. This is not a time to follow the strictest of nutritional and caloric guidelines – because some nutrition is better than no nutrition! Natural ice cream has nutritional value in the form of protein and calcium – so eat it occasionally if you crave it and do not feel guilty. In addition, make a list of natural, nutritious snack foods that taste good enough that you will eat them regularly. Keep these where they are easily accessible in the house, at work or on the go.

œ caring tip# 1 If you have mouth sores...try gargling and swooshing with Alkalol. Alkalol is in no way related to "alcohol". Alkalol is a natural mouth rinse that is soothing, cooling and healing. You can find it in many drugstores and grocery stores for under \$3.

Exercise is a major player when we talk about staying fit through the journey; however, the concept of exercise during the cancer journey is something that is often misunderstood. I like the third definition of exercise as a noun in the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary: "Something performed or practiced in order to develop or improve a specific power or skill". I am not referring to exercise meant to develop a sculpted body or the ability to lift heavy weights. The correct concept of exercise during treatment should be to practice simple regimens to maintain or improve your overall health. Exercise maintains and improves your overall health both physically and mentally.

If you were in good physical shape when you began the cancer journey, your exercise regimen will be very different from the woman who has done very little or no exercise prior to her journey. Both of you are equally capable of improving your overall health based on some simple concepts.

Before I get to those concepts, I feel it is important to include a principle that relates to exercise. Often I hear statements like, "I feel too bad to exercise" or "I don't even have enough energy to walk through the house, how am I supposed to find the energy to exercise?"

Energy is an odd commodity. It takes energy to be able to exert...but it also takes exertion to acquire energy. In other words, it will take some exertion on your part to begin increasing your energy. The benefit is more energy as a direct result of that exertion.

You have heard this several times already, but I will say it again, please check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program. Having said that, the simple concepts to follow when you begin exercising are:

1. Try to set aside a specific time each day to exercise. If you generally feel better first thing in the morning, exercise then. Find a time that works the majority of the time without interfering with family time, appointments and work. If you must miss exercising from time to time because of other things in your schedule, that is fine. You want to be consistent but there is no need to feel guilty if you skip a day here and there. Remember you are doing this for yourself. If you feel guilty, you are undoing the mental lift that exercise gives you.
2. Start where you are. What I mean by that is, if you are having trouble walking to the mailbox and back, then walk halfway to the mailbox the first day. Take a few more steps each day until getting to the mailbox is no longer an over-exertion. The next day continue past your mailbox and pick up the mail on the way back...and so on. Before you know it, you will be able to make it around the block.
3. For those of you who are already walking, jogging or working out at a gym consistently before treatment, you can resume your regimen once your physician has released you. You probably will not want to increase your exercise time and degree of intensity much, if any, during treatment. What you are already doing is great for your body and mind.
4. Choose a workout you will enjoy. Do not choose to do a certain workout just because you think it will be the most beneficial. If you hate doing it, you will burn out fast. Obviously, some exercise is better than a great exercise program you are not doing!
5. Stay hydrated. I know we discussed this earlier in the chapter, but when you exercise, you will need more water to replace what you lost during your workout.
6. Along with your exercise program, be certain to include taking electrolytes both prior to and after exercising. Electrolytes are potassium, sodium chloride and bicarbonate and are present in your body at all times. The balance of electrolytes in our bodies is essential for the normal function of our cells and organs. Perspiring during an exercise program

will drain your body of electrolytes. Replacing these electrolytes as quickly as possible rehydrates your body and replenishes your minerals. Emergen-C is available at natural food grocers and has many flavors from which to choose. Another choice is Clif Shot. It is 92% organic and is available online at www.victorynutrition.com or at 1.800.969.6199.

7. Eat foods that will fuel your body. These include nuts, seeds, whole-grain breads and animal proteins. Stay away from refined sugar and caffeine. They may give you an energy boost, but it will be short-lived and leave you with less energy once the boost is over. It has been medically documented that sugar also creates an environment conducive to disease.

8. Wear comfortable clothing that moves with you and wicks moisture away from you. You want to sweat when it is appropriate for the level of your workout. Sweating helps remove toxins from the body, but there is nothing comfortable about being in constricting, soaking wet clothing because of sweating.

9. When your workout is going to include working out at a gym on equipment, be certain your red and white blood counts are close to normal range. Your doctor can advise you on how low is "too low" for both counts. A red blood count that is too low will greatly increase your chances of bruising and/or bleeding. Having a low white blood count will make you more susceptible to contracting illnesses carried by others in a gym environment.

No matter your level of fitness, working with a personal trainer during treatment is a wonderful option, if your budget can handle it. Interview several before making your choice. You will want someone who gives you individualized instruction, is familiar with all of your health issues and agrees to work with you to achieve your particular physical fitness goals.

☞ caring tip #2 ⁴ Here is a good tasting, easy way to fight fatigue and increase your energy. Mix 1½ tsp. organic honey in a glass of water and sprinkle on a little cinnamon powder. Do this twice a day: once after breakfast and once mid-afternoon.

⁴ Dr Milton - geriatric physician specializing in energy and mental alertness in senior citizens.

Chapter Three: Packing the Right Clothing

A women's fashion signature is hers and hers alone. It is a combination of her body type, her figure assets and challenges, her coloring, her style preference and her lifestyle. To help you understand what to pack for the journey we are going to look at the three parts of this combination that may change during the journey. These are: assets and challenges, coloring and lifestyle.

Having gone through multiple surgeries during my breast cancer journey I know the drive that comes from wanting to look feminine and beautiful each time you walk out the door of your home. Although the drive to look feminine may not be as strong with other types of cancer, each of you wants to look "put together" during a time in your life when you probably do not have much energy for that process. Dressing beautifully does not have to be exhausting. By understanding these few simple concepts, you will look your best and feel good about yourself.

Figure assets and challenges, simply put, are the parts or areas of your body that are sources of satisfaction or frustration. These can most definitely change during cancer depending on the type of cancer. Following any biopsy or surgery there will be some swelling of the area affected. Additionally, many medications and treatment drugs can cause weight gain or water retention. Of course, any area removed during a biopsy or surgery will also cause challenges when it comes to what to wear.

Many women I talk with initially think that their only choice during this journey is to wear bulky, non-figure descript clothing. Those clothing styles seldom make you feel beautiful and attractive. Choosing clothing that draws attention to an area not affected by any of the above circumstances is a much better alternative.

Let me give you an example. When I had my first breast removed, I chose to wear fuller blouses that I could tuck in at my waist and that had small shoulder pads to hold the blouse higher and away from my chest. I was choosing to draw attention to my small waist and not to my chest area.

Concentrate on having clothes that show off your primary figure asset. It might be a small waist, a beautiful graceful neck, well-toned arms or great legs. Perhaps you feel like there are not any real assets right now. Then concentrate on accessories. Try colorful pieces that suit your personality. We will look at this more in chapter 7.

Clothes made from fluid fabrics move with your body. They are alluring and

mysterious ...and they cover a “multitude of sins”! Think of the old hair coloring commercial “...does she or doesn’t she?” Why not keep them wondering?

The color of your skin will greatly determine what clothing, accessory and makeup colors will look best on you. On pages 19 and 20 there is information on specific skin conditions along with a color recommendations chart that will be very helpful. Before we get to the specifics, here are some general rules about color and clothing.

Rule #1 / part 1 – large contrasts in the tones of your skin, eyes and hair (either your natural hair or a wig) call for stronger colors in your clothing.

example: if your skin is porcelain, your eyes are blue and your hair color is auburn your best colors will be “jewel-tones” along with black and pure white for your neutral tones. Jewel tone colors are emerald green, sapphire blue, ruby red, topaz yellow and so on. Additionally all pastels will work as long as they are what are called “iced pastel’s” meaning there is more white than color in the pastel.

Rule #1 / part 2 – less contrast in the tones of your skin, eyes and hair (either your natural hair or a wig) call for softer colors in your clothing.

example: if your skin is olive, your eyes are brown and your hair is dark brown - your best colors will be muted colors along with navy, brown and off-white for your neutral tones. Examples of muted colors are peach, aqua, medium pinks and medium blues, periwinkle (blue-purple), rich browns and so on.

Rule #2 – it is generally best to wear color against your face instead of neutrals.

Rule #3 – lighter tones will make the area they are covering appear larger.

Rule #4 – darker tones will make the area they are covering appear smaller.

Lifestyle is of extreme importance when considering what clothing to pack for the journey. Although there may be parts of your daily life that will remain the same, much of your time will be spent at doctor appointments, having tests and receiving treatment. Your clothing must be practical for this temporary lifestyle change.

Base the practicality of your clothing on the following five factors.

- Comfort
- Pattern
- Fabric

- Appropriateness
- Value

Comfort is particularly pertinent during times you do not feel your best. I love the following quote because it is so true:

“Our brain needs comfort. When we irritate it, it cannot think.” - Zoran/ designer

I know you can identify with having a clothing label that pokes you all day long...or a pair of slacks that are too short in the crotch. You simply are not as productive as you could be when you are not comfortable.

That is why during your treatment it is even more important to find comfortable options in clothing choices. You are making life-changing decisions during this fight for your life. You need every possible advantage to do this.

Begin by wearing comfortable underwear. There are several great lines available for women journeying through cancer. Check out Luisa Luisa, JC Penneys “Jodee” line or Amoena. If you are in the UK check out Royce Lingerie at www.royce-lingerie.co.uk. Elastic bands that are wider, seamless bras with no seams to cut and rub, and panties cut to fit above or below treatment areas will work best. Whenever possible buy underwear made of cotton with a bit of spandex. Underwear made of cotton versus nylon will breathe better keeping you more comfortable.

You may need to wear pants and skirts that have elasticized waistbands to move with your expanding or shrinking waistline.

Keep in mind the location of your surgery, radiation or other treatment, so that you have clothing that can be put on and taken off with the least amount of effort. If the movement of your arms is affected, choose clothing that does not have to go on over your head. If you have had a surgery around the abdominal area, elasticized bands and soft stretchy fabrics for your slacks or skirts will be very important. You need to think about fasteners also. Zippers, buttons, snaps and Velcro are all fastener options – and obviously some are easier to work than the others.

Try not to wear nylons or tights for the first few weeks after a surgery affecting your arms or chest. Putting these on can be very painful (...take it from personal experience). If you must wear nylons for work then choose a larger size or try nylons and a garter belt. Another option would be to wear slacks with trouser socks or knee-high nylons.

Clothing with patterns versus solid colors is often a better choice during treatment because patterned clothing helps to hide little accidents like blood or body fluid seepage. In addition, you may not be able to get as close to the table as usual due to a number of reasons and may find food landing short of your mouth. Patterns are much more forgiving of these little accidents!

Natural fiber fabrics are always the most comfortable. Cotton, silk, wool and linen are all natural fibers. Although silk, wool and linen may be great choices in terms of comfort they need to be dry cleaned or washed with special care. Blends such as cotton/polyester, silk/polyester and wool/polyester are better choices as long as the natural fiber comprises the larger percentage of the blend. You want to make your life as simple as possible in the areas you can control... so make certain you have plenty of wash and wear choices. That means that during your cancer journey, knits are your friend! Wad them up, stretch and pull them. Knits will not lose their shape. Look online or inquire in stores about "travel knits". Don't concern yourself with clothing that demands a trip to the cleaners...or that you need to hand-wash, block or iron. I know there will be some occasions when these kinds of clothing are called for, but try not to make them your daily wear.

Appropriateness is self-explanatory. However, let me include just a word. There may be days that you only feel like wearing sweats to run miscellaneous errands. These are the days that a knit pant set will be a great choice. Not only can you throw the set on quickly, it is comfortable, and you can wear it sans accessories on your low energy days. You can easily dress it up on days you feel better with belts, necklaces and pins (see the caution in chapter 7 for pins). Remember, you never know who you might run into while out of the house. You are all professionals, whether that profession is an office manager, wife and/or mother, or bank president, and you are a representative for your profession.

The value of your clothing is important during this journey because, for most of us, there isn't extra cash sitting around. Cancer treatment is an expensive journey. Some of the clothes you will be wearing these months will not be pieces you will choose to continue wearing after treatment, so be cautious how much you spend. Often you can find good values on brand names online and you do not have to leave your home. Perhaps a friend will go shopping with you if you are not feeling up to everything a solo shopping experience involves. She can do the hunting and you can do the trying on. Remember to wear clothing for the shopping trip that is easily removed, in order to make trying things on as easy as possible.

Here is a basic list that you might find helpful

- 1 knee-length or mid-calf skirt with an elasticized waistband
- 1 long-sleeved V-neck or cardigan sweater
- 1 knit pant set
- 1 cotton/silk blend blouse or tunic
- a few undecorated cotton blend T-shirts (to wear alone or under a jacket)
- 1 pair of stretch jeans (or leggings if age appropriate)
- 2 pairs of stretch dress slacks

☞ *caring tip #3* *The Travel Knit Outlet has great knit clothing choices and prices. Go to www.travelknitoutlet.com or call them at 866.566.6590 ext 204*

Most women find that their skin tone changes with treatment. Although the change is generally minor, in some cases it may be quite noticeable. There are usually three possibilities.

The first is jaundice. Jaundice occurs when the liver is not functioning optimally. It can turn your skin a yellowish/green or yellowish/orange pallor.

The second condition is a sallow complexion. The skin becomes pale gray/green and has little or no natural color. It is probably the most common of the three skin tone changes. A sallow complexion is usually the outward manifestation of a body that is overwhelmed with stressors and toxins. Proper hydration, as talked about in chapter 2, is extremely important for you if this describes your complexion. In addition, we will talk about some skin care products that help detoxify the skin in the next chapter.

The last is petechiae or ruddiness. Characterized by redness, petechiae are actually small skin hemorrhages. Although this condition is not very common, dealing with it can be a challenge.

Following are some clothing color suggestions for each of these skin conditions.

Jaundice...purples, violets, periwinkle blues and blue-greens (more blue than green in the mix)

Wearing these colors that are complementary (opposites) to yellows, yellow-

greens and oranges on the color wheel helps to neutralize the yellowish/green or yellowish/orange pallor of jaundice.

Sallow...shades and tints of pink and peach, but no apricot

*Shades and tints of pink and peach will give life to your complexion by brightening it. Apricot is too orange and may accentuate the sallow pallor rather than brighten.

Petechiae...greens, gray-greens, and green-blues (more green than blue in the mix)

Wearing these colors that are complementary (opposites) to reds on the color wheel will help camouflage petechiae.

☞ *caring tip #4* **Shades are any color that has black added to it, such as navy. It is a shade of blue. Tints are any color with white added to it. Baby blue is a tint of blue.*

The last section of this chapter deals with special considerations for clothing choices during the journey. Some of the special considerations you will be able to address before you begin the journey so you can pack ample options. The others may come post-surgery or during radiation, and you will need to know what you can do quickly. Refer back to this section often while you travel through treatment.

Natural or Drug Induced Menopause
from Chemotherapy, or Hormonal Adjuvant Therapy

1. Wear fabrics that breathe (natural fibers)
2. Wear layers so that you can take some off as you “heat up”.

Above the waist surgeries: including Mastectomy, Atrial Catheters and Port-a- Caths:

1. Shoulder pads add balance to your figure following a single or double mastectomy because they hold your clothing away from your body.
2. Soft fabrics work best over chest appliances. They will also hide imbalanced breasts.
3. Wearing a soft, non-binding bra without an underwire when you have an atrial catheter or Port-a-Cath will minimize the chances of puncturing it.

4. Use a cowl neck to hide catheters and add balance following a mastectomy. Arrange the drape of the cowl neck so that it is placed where you need it the most. Carefully pin it in place if you think it will not stay in place on its own.

Below the waist surgeries: including Ileostomy, Colostomy and Urostomy

1. Wear undergarments that stop above or below the waist – not right at the waist. Avoid tight girdles or belts. If you have a stoma, it is more important to follow the above recommendations to minimize rubbing against the stoma.
2. Try using suspenders rather than belts during your time of recuperation.
3. While getting used to a new elimination system, wear prints or plaids instead of solid colors so small accidents will go unnoticed.
4. Buy fuller pants, skirts and dresses made of soft fabrics that will drape. The result will be a smooth, slim line with no hint of what is beneath.
5. Use loose belts and scarves tied on the opposite side of the surgical area. This will move the viewer's eye towards the unaffected side.
6. Panty hose can be constricting. Switch to nylons and a garter belt for a short time if you find panty hose uncomfortable. Try nude-to-the-waist panty hose occasionally to see if you can tolerate them. They tend to be less constricting than regular panty hose.

In case of Lymphedema

1. Do not wear any constricting clothes over the affected area, i.e. tight waists, cuffs, armholes, etc. Buy a roomy pair of gloves for cold weather if your arm is affected.
2. Do not wear underwire bras if the lymphedema is in your arm. Underwire bras may cause congestion of lymphatic fluids.
3. Buy clothing made of fabrics with stretch to accommodate for the swelling and pooling.

In case of Radiation Recall

1. Do not wear any constricting clothes over the affected area, i.e. tight waists, cuffs, armholes, etc. Buy a roomy pair of gloves for cold weather if your arm

is affected.

2. Avoid irritating the skin with harsh fabrics such as wool. Choose lightweight, natural fabrics that breathe.
3. Wear loose fitting clothing over the affected area.
4. Avoid wearing necklaces and other jewelry that might touch affected areas.

In case of HFS: hand-and-foot-syndrome

1. Do not wear nylons any more than necessary. Choose socks made of cotton or wool/cotton blends versus nylon, polyester or acrylic. Cotton and wool are natural fibers that will allow the heat in your feet to dissipate easier. Be cautious of scratchy socks made of wool, wool blends or any other rough fabric.
 2. Wear shoes that fit well to prevent any rubbing and blistering from the shoes. Shoes that do not fit well can aggravate HFS.
 3. Purchase roomy, soft cotton knit gloves for cold weather to reduce rubbing.
- ☞ *caring tip #5: use shoulder pads in many areas – not just your shoulders. Buy several sizes at your local fabric store. One great use for shoulder pads is tucking them in your bra to help create a balanced look following a single or double mastectomy. You will also find another great use for shoulder pads in chapter 5.*

Chapter Four: What About Your Skin Care Bag?

Your skin is the largest organ of your body. It breathes in, breathes out and protects you. Therefore, it only makes sense that you want healthy skin. For healthy skin during treatment, I advocate doing the least amount of work possible to get the most benefit. Healthy skin comes from a good diet, proper hydration and these three steps: cleanse, moisturize and protect. We have already talked about diet and internal hydration in chapter 2. In this chapter, we will discuss what special things you should include in your skin care bag to help maintain, or regain, healthy skin.

Following the theme of this book, I highly recommend natural and organic skin care products. I will explain the difference between natural and organic products in a minute, but I want to be certain that you understand why I am so convinced that natural or organic skin care products, hair care products and cosmetics are your best option during and after cancer. In fact, I feel strongly that this should be the choice for every one of all ages; healthy or journeying through cancer.

Each of you is personally acquainted with stress. Stress wrecks havoc on our minds and bodies eventually affecting our health. Additionally, external environmental toxins can affect our bodies both internally and externally. Unfortunately, it was only recently that people began to think about what was being put on, and in, their bodies that might be stressful and damaging. The truth is those pretty bottles and jars containing your cosmetics and skin care products may be adding stress to your life indirectly. That stress can lead to a breakdown in your immune system, disease and death.

Talc, propylene glycol, methyl-paraben, propylparaben, sodium lauryl and other common ingredients found in cosmetics, skin care products and hair care products are in the spotlight as those on both sides debate the safety issues regarding these ingredients.

There is no debate when it comes to the advantages these ingredients offer in some aspects. Advantages, such as ease of application, long shelf life and wonderful fragrances are what have made the beauty product industry include these ingredients in their products. However, the problem begins when the biologists, chemists and medical professionals have to debate the user-safety of these ingredients. The list of reported long-term effects is lengthy ranging from simple skin and eye irritations due to allergic reactions to more severe reactions and conditions.

The debate will undoubtedly go on for many years to come, partially because of economics and partially because of consumer demands. Meanwhile, I believe it is very important to consider how these ingredients can add stress to each of our lives. Even though this “stressor” may be an area you have not thought of before, the logical conclusion is that if what you are using on your external body is potentially harmful to you, then it is adding stress not only externally, but internally. Anytime your body has to deal with something that is not naturally based, certain body systems have to work overtime to eradicate the harm.

I am aware that it is impossible to stay away from all such stressors. But, there are some basic steps you can take that will help protect your body from dealing with unnecessary stress.

Step One: Start reading the ingredient lists on products.

Although some botanical names are hard to recognize, with a little practice, you should be able to decipher quite easily between the chemically based additives and the botanically based ones.

Step Two: Look for short ingredient lists.

This may sound too simplistic, but in reality, those products with long ingredient lists generally have more “things” in them than you want or need.

Step Three: Try to purchase products that do not have preservatives.

Yes, this means the shelf life of your product will be shorter. However, think about it with the same reasoning as preservatives in food products. Food that has a long shelf life is never as nutritionally supportive as food that will spoil rather quickly.

Begin thinking of your beauty products as nutrition for your skin. Each product you choose to put on your skin is either feeding it, or smothering it with ingredients it cannot use. If you are smothering it, that, in essence becomes starvation. This will add to your body’s stress level. Put your skin on a healthy diet beginning today!

...So, what is the difference between natural and organic? The classic definition of natural as it relates to beauty products is using botanically sourced ingredients currently existing in or ingredients that are formed by nature, without the use of synthetic chemicals, and manufactured in such a way as to preserve the integrity of the ingredients.

In other words, natural beauty products use naturally derived ingredients like herbs, flowers, essential oils and roots. Natural beauty product manufacturers combine naturally derived ingredients with naturally occurring carrier agents, natural preservatives, surfactants, humectants and emulsifiers.

The difference between natural beauty products and organic beauty products is simply this: the natural ingredients used in these products have been grown, harvested and processed organically.

I understand that some of you feel you simply cannot afford to go natural or organic. Let me share one of the most cost effective, multi-use beauty products available. It is Dr Bronner's Pure-Castile Soap. I have been using it as a face and body cleanser as well as my shampoo for several years. Just a small amount makes a great deal of suds, so a little goes a long way. I find I need less body lotion in winter because it does not tend to dry my skin, and it leaves my hair healthy and shiny. This soap is available at many grocery stores and most health food stores in several fragrances. Ask if you can sample the fragrances prior to purchasing the soap to make certain you are not sensitive to the fragrance.

No matter what skin care products you are using and may have been using for years, be very watchful of how your skin reacts to these products once you have begun treatment. This is also true when changing to natural or organic products just prior to or during treatment. You may have to modify or quit using some products to address some conditions that could arise from radiation and chemotherapy drugs. One potential condition is increased skin sensitivity to the sun depending on your treatment(s). Additionally, most women experience increased dryness during treatment. A few of you will experience an increase in oiliness. You might also develop inflammation and/or hypersensitivity to products you have used for years simply because of the treatment drugs interaction with your skin.

Each of you will have to search out what is best for you. For a place to begin, check out the short list on the next page of great product lines and a bit about them. The list begins (alphabetically) with the organic lines followed by the natural lines alphabetically and finally two non-natural lines. Each is available in stores, from beauty representatives or online. I have used "\$" signs to help you quickly find products in your price range.

\$ = low to moderate price point

\$\$ = moderate to high price point

ORGANIC

Juice Beauty/www.juicebeauty.com – order line 415.457.4600 – also available in USA retail stores certified / organic skin care and tinted moisturizer \$\$

Juice Organics/www.juiceorganics.com - order line 415.457.4600 – also available in USA retail stores (a subsidiary of Juice Beauty) / a simpler organic skin care line \$

Lily Organics/www.lilyorganics.com – also available in USA retail stores / certified organic skin care \$

Mychelle Dermaceuticals/www.mychelleusa.com – also available in USA retail stores / combining science and nature in skin care and some cosmetics \$\$

Saffron Rouge/www.saffronrouge.com – FREE samples with each order / a full line of organic skin, hair and body care products - including cosmetics \$\$

NATURAL

Arbonne/www.arbonne.com – order online or find a consultant near you / natural skin care and makeup with minimum fragrance \$\$

Bren Cosmetics/www.make-upusa.com – order line 888.426.5673 / natural makeup, bronzer and brow stencils \$\$

Burt's Bees/www.burtsbees.com – also available in USA retail store / natural full-line of skin care and makeup products \$

EnPointe Skin Solutions developed by Dr Christine Rodgers / plastic surgeon and breast cancer survivor in Denver CO – available online at empoweryourskin.com \$\$

Senna/www.sennacosmetics.com – main phone line 800.537.3662 / natural skin care, makeup and eyebrow stencils \$\$

Youngblood/www.ybskin.com – also available in USA retail stores / one of the original mineral cosmetics with great coverage \$\$

NON-NATURAL

Avon/www.avon.com – order online or find a consultant near you / laboratory tested full line of products including brow stencils \$

Clinique/www.clinique.com – also available in USA and Canadian retail stores / research based, allergenic /100% fragrance free products \$\$

Here are guidelines to follow when working with your skin

Use lukewarm water when washing your face or body to avoid excessive dryness. Be extra gentle with your skin. Harsh movements, rubbing or pulling will be more taxing on your skin than normal.

The following issues are important to consider when packing your skin care bag.

- Exercise caution with fragrances when choosing products. During the cancer journey, you are likely to be quite sensitive to many fragrances. You may find you cannot handle any kind of fragrance and need to choose fragrance-free products.
- Unless you find your skin extremely oily, avoid alcohol-based products. Please be aware that in cosmetic labeling, the term "alcohol" used alone refers to ethyl alcohol only. Cosmetic companies can label a product "alcohol free" if it does not have ethyl alcohol. However, it may contain ethyl alcohol, cetyl alcohol, stearyl alcohol, cetearyl alcohol or lanolin alcohol. You should avoid ALL of these. They will only aggravate your dry skin.
- You may be able to use masks and scrubs. Check with your doctor or dermatologist to see if you can use these products, and if so, how often. If you do use either a mask or a scrub, be very cautious. Use gentle pressure when applying and removing. Masks made with organic ingredients AND that do not harden on your skin are usually safe. Masks that harden are generally too drying. Mychelle Dermaceuticals Guava Cactus Mask is a great mask to try during treatment for two reasons. First, it is very hydrating and second, it provides potent antioxidants that fight free radicals. It is available at some health food stores, online at www.mychelle.com/cactusguavamasknew.aspx and www.vitacost.com.

You might want to consider purchasing and using a hydrating spray. There are sprays available for both the body and face. They are wonderful to mist on any time of the day. A spray with vitamins and minerals in its formula helps nourish AND hydrate. Any hydrating spray will give your skin the added moisture it so desperately craves during treatment.

Four that I recommend are:

Hydrating Mist by Juice Beauty - This blend of organic antioxidant juices, aloe

vera, rosehip, grapeseed oil and vitamins hydrates and balances the skin's natural moisture.

Organic Moisture Mist by Lily Organics - In addition to hydrating the skin, the herbs in this formula help rejuvenate skin cells and it is anti-inflammatory.

Fruit Enzyme Mist by Mychelle Dermaceuticals - The botanicals in this product are hydrating along with having anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and anti-aging properties.

Jurlique Lavender Hydrating Mist by Saffron Rouge - Ideal for rebalancing dry skin, this mist uses lavender and marshmallow to hydrate, tone and soothe your skin.

☞ *caring tip #6: keep your mist in the refrigerator during the summer months for an extra cooling effect on your skin.*

There is quite a bit of discussion currently, concerning the effectiveness and safety of sun protection products. I have my own opinion on this issue, but you need to check with your doctor for his/her guidelines. It is likely your doctor will want you to use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15 on both your face and your body. Try using a natural or organic sunscreen to avoid ingredients with free radical generating properties or ingredients that have an estrogenic effect. There are many available including Soleo Organics, Mychelle Sun Shield, Purple Prairie Botanicals, Lavera, Badger and Mexitan.

Up to now, we have been discussing skin care for your face, but every good skin care bag also has some wonderful body products in it. Again, you will need to decide what is best for your particular needs. Consider the amount of dryness you are experiencing when considering the degree of moisturizing qualities, the ease of application and fragrance of each potential product. The same companies I listed for facial products have a good number of choices for body products. Whenever possible make a copy of the ingredients to show to your doctor when asking for his/her advice on face and body skin care products.

Ointments containing vitamins A and D, Aquaphor ointment, lotions containing vitamin E, and products containing aloe vera are good options to pack in your skin care bag, if you are experiencing a great deal of skin discomfort during ongoing radiation treatment.

There are several effective scar creams available for helping your scars fade, but most are packed with chemicals, colors and preservatives that you should not be exposing your body to. A young breast cancer survivor, who I have had the privilege of working with, has developed several products including an all natural scar treatment cream called Hooray for Brallywood Butta® Skin Renewal and Scar Treatment Cream. Made from wonderful ingredients like shea butter, yucca, fruit essential oils and cocoa your scars may begin fading while your skin becomes more hydrated, soft and smooth. It is available at some natural food stores and online at www.shoppristinebeauty.com.

Here is one last word on skin care. Should you be on photo-sensitive chemotherapy drugs, you will have to be more cautious about spending time in the sun. You might want to try one of the natural self-tanning lotions that are available in health food stores to give you a bronzed skin tone. Be advised that every self-tanner has some percentage of di-hydroxyacetone in it. Di-hydroxyacetone is the chemical your skin reacts to that produces darker skin. Many people have an intolerance to this chemical. To make certain you are not one of them, test a small area on your upper leg before applying it to your entire body. It may take up to twenty-four hours to see an allergic reaction, so try the self-tanner a couple of days before you want the finished bronzed look. Hopefully you will be able to tolerate a sunless tanning product to add great color to your skin.

Nail care during treatment is extremely important. Although our nails are made of a dead, hoof-like protein, I thought this was the best chapter in which to discuss their care. Most medical practitioners will advise against having a professional manicure or pedicure during treatment. The potential for infection is too high. If you have a personal acquaintance who is a manicurist, you might see about inviting her to your home where you can sterilize everything she is going to use. It would be best to check with your doctor to get his/her thoughts on this. Additionally, it is likely that they will strongly discourage you from any kind of fake nail applications.

Many doctors want to see your nails sans color to help determine some things about your internal health so they may ask you not to apply colored polish to your fingernails. Generally, one set of nails sans polish is good enough for doctors, which means you can probably paint your toenails, if you wish. O.P.I. nail polish is a long-wearing, chip resistant polish that does not have DBP, toluene or formaldehyde in it. There are other natural polishes including water-based polishes by SafetyNails.com and

Suncoat. These polishes are easy to apply and give your nails long-lasting color. You can purchase Suncoat online at www.suncoatproducts.com.

When caring for your nails during the journey make certain to exercise caution when clipping hangnails. Just as with any small skin injury, hangnails raise the potential for infection if you pull at them or clip them too aggressively and cause bleeding. Soaking your nails in one of the many oils made specifically for nails prior to trimming and shaping your nails will make them easier to trim and shape. This is a wonderful way friends can pamper you when they ask what they can do.

To all you nail biters...try to break the habit during treatment! No matter how much you do to keep nails clean they have bacteria, dirt and other filthy things on and under them. Do whatever works for you to remind yourself not to put them in your mouth.

☞ *caring tip #7: Spend some time on these one-stop-shop sites for women's health products, natural and organic products, body and bath products, natural cosmetics, essential oils, nutritional food bars and so much more!*

Vitacost at www.vitacost.com

Herbal Remedies at www.herbalremedies.com

Naked Earth Whole Food Market at www.nakedearth.org.

Consider adding these beneficial vitamins, minerals and herbs to your daily regimen to stave off or lessen the harmful effects of treatment on your skin.

VITAMINS

Vitamin A strengthens the protective tissue of your skin. Additionally, it is essential for the maintenance and repair of your skin tissue. Because Vitamin A is a powerful antioxidant it helps fight off free radicals that damage and age your body systems.

The B Vitamins are a group of vitamins that are like an army of soldiers. Their only mission is to fight off the damaging effects of pollution, stress (cancer treatment) and environmental toxins.

Vitamin C is not only a powerful antioxidant like Vitamin A and E, but it is the major factor in tissue growth, repair and healing.

Vitamin E, as I stated above, is an antioxidant that also enhances healing and tissue repair. It can even prevent cell damage by negating the harmful effects of free radicals.

Vitamin K helps combat vascular problems of the skin. It can also promote healing in general, healing of skin discoloration and improve the appearance of scars. Vitamin K is very helpful if you are experiencing petechiae.

MINERALS

Chromium aids in reducing the chances of skin infections and helps heal skin infections that are already there. It is hard to get enough chromium in what you eat, especially with appetite and taste changes during treatment. Purchase some chromium picolinate and take 150 mcg daily.

Zinc aids in healing and helps prevent scarring. It also promotes a healthy immune system, which is so important during treatment. Zinc is a mineral antioxidant that fights off free radicals.

HERBS

Three herbs for general skin care health are: kelp, alfalfa and parsley. The iron and iodine in kelp helps regulate the thyroid, which fights germs and bacteria. Alfalfa boosts the immune system because of its calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus and sodium content. Parsley is high in vitamins A, B and C, so it is a great antioxidant.

Three more herbs to consider for keeping skin healthy are:

Holy Basil - it is an adaptogenic herb that heals skin very quickly. It also improves skin's elasticity and reduces wrinkles. There is some evidence that it may even help prevent skin cancer.

Aloe Vera - it is soothing, healing and moisturizing.

Comfrey - reduces redness and soothes irritated skin.

Chapter Five: Good Hair Days and “No Hair Days”

The type of treatment and the drugs used in your treatment will determine whether you will lose any, some or all of your hair. You may lose just the hair on your head or you may lose all of your body hair. This includes eyebrows, eyelashes and nose hairs. In the first part of this chapter, we will discuss hair care for those of you who will not lose your hair or will only have partial hair loss. The last part of the chapter will look at total hair loss options. In chapter 7 you will be shown techniques for brow and lash simulation and replacement if your chemo cocktail causes total hair loss.

Hair care....before, during and after treatment is extremely important. Much of this applies to you even if you will lose all your hair during treatment.

Before: If there is some time between your cancer diagnosis and the beginning of treatment, this is the time to take extra care of your hair. The goal is to go into treatment with the healthiest hair possible to withstand the stress of treatment. Following these guidelines can potentially lessen the amount of hair loss OR prolong the length of time you keep your hair if the drugs or radiation you are on will cause partial or total hair loss.

⁵Bleaching, coloring or perming your hair will put it in a weakened state. Additionally, using curling irons, hot rollers and hair dryers will dry your hair – so limit your use of these appliances. Changing to a natural/organic shampoo is a wise choice. Harsh chemicals applied on a regular basis are the last thing your hair needs prior to treatment, during treatment or following treatment. There are wonderful natural shampoos (I will mention a few in a moment) but always read the labels before purchasing. Some manufacturers hide potentially harmful ingredients by including the word “natural” in the name or description of their products. Propylene glycol, methylparaben and propylparaben are currently in the spotlight. Manufacturers, consumers, medical practitioners and holistic practitioners are deliberating concerning the safety of these ingredients in products consumed by or applied to humans. Look for short ingredient lists. This may sound too simplistic, but in reality, shampoos (or any beauty-related product) with long ingredient lists generally means there are more “things” in them than you want or need. Finally, try to purchase shampoo that does not have

⁵ <http://www.mayoclinic.com> Chemotherapy and hair loss: What to expect during treatment

preservatives in it. Although the shelf life will not be as long – those preservatives can add stress to your hair. I mentioned Dr Bronner’s Pure-Castile soap in the last chapter as an excellent option to clean both your hair and skin. Another castile soap to check out is Country Rose Soap. It is available at www.countryrosesoap.com. Giovanni, Aubrey Organics, Simply Organic, Avalon and Nature’s Gate all have organic shampoos that are gentle yet effective without all the chemicals.

During: In the event that your treatment will cause only partial hair loss, use a shampoo appropriate for your hair type. Try one of the wonderful organic shampoo’s I have already mentioned. Do not shampoo excessively and avoid harsh movements when drying or brushing. If possible, do not use electric styling appliances. Use sprays and mousses sparingly, and definitely do not perm or color your hair during treatment. Condition your hair on the same schedule you normally would; again remember to be gentle.

Whether you will experience partial hair loss, or full hair loss, begin using a ‘satin pillowcase. This will lessen your chances of hair catching and pulling out while you sleep. If you brush your hair, make certain you stroke slowly with a soft bristle brush. Consider skipping a washing if your hair is not showing signs of being dirty or oily.

If you are going to lose all your hair, shaving your head once you have begun losing a considerable amount is a good choice. First, it will save you the potential embarrassment of “shedding” in public and secondly, shaving your remaining hair may reduce scalp irritation that can sometimes occur during treatment.

After: Once you have completed your treatment – congratulations! –⁷continue to treat your remaining hair or your beautiful new growth with kid gloves. You should not bleach or color your hair with a chemically produced coloring for at least six months following completion of treatment. Some doctors recommend a full year. This is for two reasons. The first is that you may not get the desired color result due to chemicals that are still in your body and hair follicles. Secondly, your body and hair are still in a fragile state. Any chemicals applied to your hair will add to the stress on your body and hair. Just upon completing treatment is not a time when you want to stress yourself unnecessarily.

Natural colorants, such as henna or vegetable products are safe and gentle enough to use once treatment has ended, however you should still try to wait as long as

⁶ <http://www.mayoclinic.com> Chemotherapy and hair loss: What to expect during treatment

⁷ <http://www.mayoclinic.com> Chemotherapy and hair loss: What to expect during treatment

possible before dyeing your hair with one of them. It is not as likely that you might experience “off color” results, but these natural colorants can still interact with the possible before dyeing your hair with one of them. It is not as likely that you might experience “off color” results, but these natural colorants can still interact with the residual chemicals in your body and hair follicles and produce an unpredictable color.

Naturcolor and Aubrey organics are two reasonable, easy to find permanent natural colorant brands to try once you feel it is safe to color. Tints of Nature permanent hair color at www.nakedearth.org or www.nutriglow.com also uses natural, certified organic ingredients wherever feasible. Robert Craig at www.robertcraig.com has a gentle, natural product in addition to a consultation option on their site called “Ask Karin” which is very helpful. Daniel Field’s Watercolour is an organic line that is available at Sainsbury in the UK and online at www.honestycosmetics.co.uk.

If you are not a “color-it-yourselfer”, ask around or search the web to find a local salon that uses natural hair coloring. They are not easy to find, but they are out there if you are persistent. Unfortunately, for those of us in the United States – the UK, New Zealand and Australia are way ahead of us on this one. These countries offer websites giving names and locations of salons that use natural or organic hair-care product lines. Hopefully, the US will catch up soon.

There are also a few natural semi-permanent color products available. Vegetal by Herbatint is one. It will last through five to six washings. Goldwell Colorance HairColor Mousse is not completely natural; however, it does offer an ammonia and oxidant free semi-permanent color that lasts through six to eight washings.

One last option for adding color to your crowning glory is to use a tinted styling mousse. I have not found a completely natural one yet, but I am certain there will soon be one due to demand. One product that uses basic ingredients and stays away from unnecessary extras is Keune Tinta Color Mousse. The company is located in The Netherlands and all Keune hair products are readily available in Europe. The good thing about a hair mousse is that it is not absorbed into the hair shaft; it simply sits on the surface. This means it only lasts until you shampoo your hair the next time. Therefore, although the product may not be natural or organic the effects of unnatural, non-organic ingredients are not as potentially dangerous as products that completely coat the hair shaft. An extremely good website for a large variety of hair products from shampoo to conditioner to styling products is www.haircareusa.com. There are many natural and organic choices to choose from, including those I listed on the previous page.

Based on the questionnaire in the introduction, those of you who will lose all of

hair during treatment have probably already determined whether you are going to choose a wig, scarves, turbans and hats or a combination of all four. If you have, then you will find helpful information and tips throughout this chapter. If you have not made that decision yet, perhaps what I share will help you make your decision.

Whether you have chosen to or are considering wearing a wig, investing in a wig is not a low cost endeavor. Check with your insurance company to see if they pay for prosthetic devices. Wigs are hair prosthetics because they are replacing hair that has been lost. If your insurance company covers wigs, have your doctor write a prescription (on an official prescription pad) for a hair prosthetic. He/she may add “due to the side effect of chemotherapy or radiation treatments”. Ask your doctor to write the prescription prior to your initial wig consultation appointment. Once you have made a decision on a wig and purchased it, request that the store receipt read “hair prosthesis” – not “wig”. Make a copy of the prescription and the detailed sales receipt from the store for your records. Submit the original prescription and receipt to your insurance company.

Just a note about hair loss with radiation: you will only lose your hair on the area(s) radiated. That means, if your radiation is not on your head and you are not having chemotherapy you will not lose your hair.

A wig consultant is a “wigier”. Ask your doctor or someone you know who has purchased a wig and had a good experience for their recommendation. It is best to make your first appointment while you still have your hair and before treatment possibly changes your skin tone. That way the wigier will be able to see your natural skin tone along with the texture, color and style of your hair. A knowledgeable wigier will pile your hair on the top of your head if it is long for a proper fitting. You cannot properly adjust a wig to fit your head at the crown – only at the nape of your neck. The nape of the neck must fit properly. This is where the wigier will make any necessary adjustments, so that your wig will fit tight enough to stay put and yet be comfortable for extended hours of wear. You will notice that the wigier always puts on the wigs you are trying front to back while she holds the back of the wig. You will need to practice the same process when putting on your wig at home. If you go past your natural hairline in front with the wig...start over. Otherwise, your wig will not fit correctly and look unnatural.

If you cannot see a wigier until you have begun losing your hair, take slips of hair you cut off before treatment and a current color photo of yourself to the appointment.

Wigs are available in several sizes ranging from ultra-petite (19-inch diameter) to large (22 to 23-inch diameter). There are not many style choices in the ultra-petite size, but that is changing. If you need an ultra-petite but are not able to find a style that suits you in that size, you can have tucks taken in the neck tabs of a small sized wig. Additionally, you can apply a roll-on skin adhesive called “It Stays” to your forehead or crown to hold your wig in place. This product is great for everyone, no matter your head size. It is available from Amoena at www.amoena.com and Headcovers Unlimited at www.headcovers.com. “It Stays” is designed specifically for women who have alopecia due to medical treatment therefore it is usually tolerated. Toupee adhesive is another choice for keeping your wig in place although it may not be tolerated by your skin. You can purchase toupee adhesive at wig shops, beauty supply stores and drug stores.

Just like any great hairstyle: color and cut are the keys to a great looking wig. Consider choosing a color that is a little lighter than your natural color, due to the loss of natural skin color you may experience during treatment. Choose a cut that is becoming to your facial bone structure and a style that suits your personality. It is important to know that wigs take a considerable amount of thinning, once cut and styled to make them look completely natural. Your wigier should often remind you of that as you try on different wigs. The wigier will cut and style your wig choice to your desired specifications before thinning it.

There are some definite distinctions between synthetic hair wigs and human hair wigs that you want to consider before you make your decision. Whether you choose a synthetic hair or human hair wig is completely up to you. Use the two charts, one below and one on the next page, for the primary differences. I have listed these differences in terms of “pros” and “cons” to make your choice as easy as possible.

Synthetic Hair Wigs

Pros	Cons
Looks natural	Can be quite hot during summer weather
Very easy to care for	Can frizz on styles longer than shoulder length
Will not burn – only singe	Will singe

Human Hair Wigs

Pros	Cons
Will not frizz with styles longer than shoulder length	Can be quite hot during summer weather
Will keep color well	Will singe AND burn
	Will shrink if it gets wet
	May look dry because it is made from dead hair
	Possibly cost prohibitive

☞ caring tip# 8 A great way to have some light-hearted fun on your journey is by choosing a wig color you have always wanted but were a bit too timid to try. People who don't know it is a wig will be so busy commenting on how beautiful the color is on you - that you may be able to get away with letting them think it is your own hair!

Scarves as head wraps are a stylish alternative to hats and wigs. Looking great in head wraps is not hard, but it takes some practice. Below are some guidelines to guarantee great looking wraps.

- Buy cotton or cotton blend scarves. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's washing instructions. Cotton and cotton blends are generally machine or hand washable. Two bonuses with scarves made of these fabrics are that they generally will not slip off your head, and in hot weather these fabrics breathe allowing the heat of your head to escape.
- Basic head wraps should be 26 or 28-inch squares. Larger squares up to 32 inches will make fancier wraps.
- You can make your own scarves from fabric store remnants. They usually have a great variety of fabric choices and cost very little. You only need to cut them to the desired size, turn the edges under ¼ to ½-inch, stitch, and voile' – you are ready to wear it.
- Dress up head wraps with ribbons, braids, jewelry or another scarf in a contrast color and texture. Use beautiful oblong scarves tied around the square scarves as

head wrap trims.

- Tie any contrast scarves off-center, not in the middle of your forehead unless you want to emphasize your nose. Slightly off-centered is better because it is more eye-catching and dramatic.
- Be cautious about where you place the fold of the scarf. It is more flattering to keep the fold closer to where your eyebrows normally are versus your normal hairline.
- Hairpieces of bangs and curls placed at the forehead and temples are great! These are available at wig shops and several websites.
- Attach a small shoulder pad (this is another great use for shoulder pads) with a body adhesive called “It Stays” to the crown of your head. The pad will add height, giving the illusion of hair being under your head wrap. Again, this product is available from Amoena at www.amoena.com and Headcovers Unlimited at www.headcovers.com. Some wigiers may also carry this product.

Turbans and hats are also stylish comfortable options. Turbans offer protection and wonderful warmth during cold weather because they completely cover your head and help hold in heat. There are many great choices for turbans and hats. Check out the “newsboy hat”. It is a perfect sporty look that provides better head coverage than a regular baseball cap. Look for many functional choices in hats and turbans at your local wig shop or from these companies: Hats with Heart at www.hatswithheart.com, Headcovers Unlimited at www.headcovers.com and Parkhurst Hats at www.parkhursthats.com. Parkhurst Hats also has snoods and pre-tied scarves in addition to hats and turbans. Nordstrom carries some Parkhurst Hats items. Headcovers.com and Hats with Heart carry cotton headliners to protect your scalp from a hat made from a rough fiber or fabric. Many choices of head covers offer great coverage in a wide variety of colors and styles to match your personal style... There is sure to be something that suits you from one of these companies.

Try adding small hairpieces to any of these hats to give the illusion of a full head of hair. Choose from hair hoops, bangs and curls. A hair hoop is a full headband that has hair sewn into it so that it falls just below the ears and across the nape of the neck. When worn with a hat it gives you the illusion of having a full head of hair. Bangs and curls attach with adhesives. These are all available at wig shops and many online stores. Remember that adding a shoulder pad to the crown of your head under any hat will give the illusion of hair.

Wearing a scarf in conjunction with a hat is very stylish. Tie on one of your smaller scarves and then top it off with a wide brimmed hat. This is a wonderful option if you live in a climate with cold winter months.

Whatever you choose for your headwear; it should be fresh, creative and true to your personality. You can be dramatic, classic, natural or romantic. The options are endless...and so much fun!

☞ caring tip #9 Although you now have wonderful choices and options for headwear, you may instead wish to focus attention on your eyes, cheeks and lips. If that is the case, wear headwear in neutrals and more colorful makeup to draw the “eye of the beholder” to your facial features.

Hair or no hair – scalp massages are very beneficial. Not only are they extremely relaxing but if you have no hair loss or partial hair loss they will keep your hair as healthy as possible during the treatment journey. Scalp massages will stimulate hair growth and prepare your scalp for the new growth if you experience complete hair loss. These massages are something a friend or your spouse can do for you. You will love it...and they will feel great about helping!

There are some very nice scalp massage oils available. Try using one with vitamins A and E or jojoba oil in it. Or try Saw Palmetto oil to stimulate hair growth. You can also make your own oil combining vitamin E and almond oil.

You may experience scalp discomfort during treatment. Although this is not terribly common, it does occur. You will not want to indulge in a massage if this is the case, but you can gently cover your head with one of the suggested oils and wrap it in a warm, clean towel. The oils will still penetrate enough to be beneficial without a massage.

If you are not experiencing scalp discomfort...let yourself be pampered! Ask your friend or spouse to slip a plastic trash bag over the top of your favorite chair while you wrap up in a soft terry bathrobe and warm slippers. Then settle back...and enjoy!

Chapter Six: Makeup...Don't Leave Home Without It!

Remember the American Express marketing slogan "...don't leave home without it"? During your cancer journey, you don't want to leave home without makeup – even if it is just the simple basics. I am sure you have discovered over the years that you feel better about yourself when you “have your face on”. Do not forget that looking good and feeling good about how you look are great boosts to the healing process.

Although it is fine to go sans makeup when you are at home from time to time, do not make it a daily practice. Applying basic makeup, even if it is just for you and your family, will give you an emotional boost.

Just as with clothing, during the cancer journey you will find yourself wanting to achieve an attractive look with the least amount of effort on a day-to-day basis. The makeup regimen that I will outline on the next several pages is one that involves the very little work and great results.

Before we get to the creative part...I feel it is important to address the fact that choosing between organic, natural and non-natural cosmetics is much more difficult than it is with skin care and hair care products. Although I listed some great natural and organic skin care companies in chapter 4 that also carry cosmetics, their lines often contain just the basics. Crushed mineral makeup is a great natural option that is readily available as foundation, shadow and blush. There are also some good choices for lipstick and lip-gloss. However, it is a challenge to find natural or organic cosmetics specific to your cancer journey that address both particular skin conditions and, just as importantly, ease of application using the fewest products possible. Case in point: I have searched for a natural or organic bronzer moisturizer for nearly a year and, sadly, have never found one. Mascara is another item that is extremely difficult to find natural or organic. Arbonne's mascara is made from botanical ingredients, but it still has chemical preservatives and several alcohols in it. Suncoat makes sugar-based mascara that is completely natural, but it does not last all day. So, natural and organic products are wonderful from a health standpoint, but they just do not perform as well as the non-natural lines. Each of you will have to make a personal decision on which products you feel are best for you.

Now, let's move on to the creative part. I have outlined a four-step makeup

regimen on the next several pages offering a few different methods for some of the steps. Choose the method in each step that works best for you.

Makeup Regimen

First Step – Face method one: Remember – you want to keep it simple so make one product do as many duties as possible. Apply a bronzer moisturizer over your entire face and down your neck. This will give you moisture and color in one simple step. There is no need to apply blush over the top of bronzers. You can choose a bronzer moisturizer with or without a sun protection factor (SPF). For sun protection purchase a bronzer moisturizer that has at least an SPF of 15.

First Step – Face method two: Substitute a tinted moisturizer for a bronzer moisturizer and apply blush to your cheeks, if you are unable to find a bronzer moisturizer. If you wish to apply sunscreen, look for a tinted moisturizer with an SPF of at least 15 or apply your sunscreen prior to the tinted moisturizer. (There are several organic tinted moisturizers, including one from Juice Beauty at www.juicebeauty.com.)

First Step – Face method three – natural or organic: Apply moisturizer followed by crushed mineral foundation. Finish up with a crushed mineral blush. Sunscreen would need to be applied prior to the crushed mineral foundation if you want sun protection.

Second Step - Eyebrows method one: apply reusable, removable false eyebrows. Yes, there are false (prosthetic) eyebrows on the market! Refer to illustration 1-0 on the next page for the best placement of the brows. Lasting between six weeks to two months, these false eyebrows attach to your skin with a special adhesive. This adhesive is formulated to come off the back of the prosthetic brows easily when you remove them for repeated use. One brand of prosthetic eyebrows is nuBrow. It is an easy to use, natural looking choice I have been selling to customers for the past several years. They are available in several hair colors that you can dye to look more like your natural brow color, if you wish. Check them out on my site at www.bridges2beauty.net or the company site www.nu-brow.com. Natural Brow is another brand of prosthetic eyebrows. They are made of natural hair and although they are more expensive than nuBrow - they look great! You can purchase them from Headcovers Unlimited at www.headcovers.com. You should choose a brow color that is no darker than your natural color so that the brows do not stand out too much.

This option is great for everyday wear or just special occasions. Of course, there

is always the chance you could react to the adhesive, so watch for any type of irritation. Because there is natural rubber latex in it, if you have a history of allergic reactions to latex you will probably not want to choose this method.

Use care when handling your prosthetic eyebrows to get the longest life out of them.

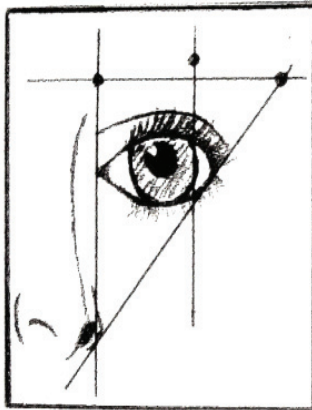


Illustration 1-0

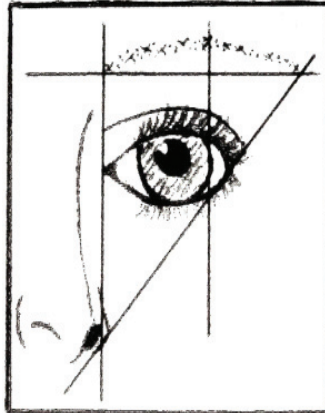


Illustration 1-1

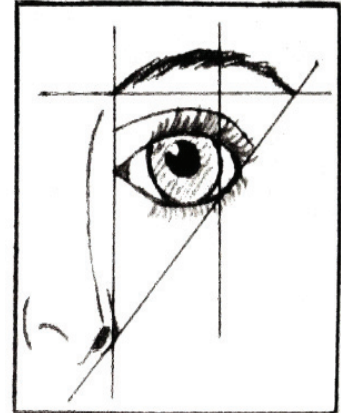


Illustration 1-2

Second Step - Eyebrows method two: fill in or reconstruct your eyebrows by placing an eyebrow stencil where you wish to draw in your eyebrow or thicken it. There are several good choices available for stencils and brow pencils. Bren New York (Make-up USA) has brush on brows and stencils available at www.make-upusa.com. Another great choice is Form-A-Brow by Senna Cosmetics. It comes as a compact with two brow colors, applicator, brush and three eyebrow stencils. The stencils come in assorted shapes to help you match the natural shape of your eyebrow. You can even use two stencils: one for the outer shape and another for the inner shape. Please refer to illustration 1-0 above to determine where the outer and inner corners of your brow and highest part of the arch should be. If you are using a stencil that does not come with brow colors choose two colors. The first should match your natural brow color and the second one should be one shade lighter. Holding the stencil of choice in place, apply the colors (dark one first and heaviest) with the applicator. Once the color is on you may remove the stencil. Using the brush in the compact that resembles a mascara brush, roll

it across the brow you have just stenciled. This gives the effect of individual hairs. You can also use a clean mascara brush for this effect if the stencil you are using does not come with one. Spray the finished brows with a hydrating mist to help set them. Be certain to hold the spray at least six inches from your face or you may wash the brows off rather than set them. Refer back to pages 27 and 28 for a list of hydrating sprays.

Second Step Eyebrows method three: choose two colors of eyebrow pencil for this technique. One should be the color of your natural eyebrows and the other one shade lighter. Remember an eyebrow is not a solid line. It should look feathery. Follow the⁸written guidelines while referring to the corresponding illustration for each brow.

1. Study illustration 1-0 on the previous page for a well proportioned and shaped brow. I have also included a written description for those of you who find written instructions easier to follow.

The eyebrow should begin directly above the inside corner of your eye. The thickest part of your brow is this area and tapers from there up to the arch. The arch's mid-point should be in line with the outside edge of your eye's iris. The outside of the brow tapers until it is in line with the outside edge of your eye. The beginning and end of your brow should be even with each other horizontally.

Once you have these proportions mastered move on to step two to begin drawing in your brows.

2. Mark your eyebrow shape using the darker eyebrow pencil. (illustration 1-0)
3. Alternating the two colors of pencils, mark the skin with light dots along the course you have made. (illustration 1-1)
4. Make one short, feathery stroke upward and outward from each dot. Fill in with extra strokes where needed. The goal is to achieve a look similar to your natural brow. This which includes being able to see some skin underneath. (illustration 1-2)
5. Very lightly brush translucent powder over the finished brow to set it.

Third Step - Lips: apply a lipstick or gloss on your lips. Choose something that works

⁸ Written descriptions and illustrations adapted from [Beauty and Cancer](#)

well with your coloring during treatment. Refer to the Makeup Colors and Tips list on page 48 for more specific information. You can choose to use a lip product with or without an SPF.

This three step makeup regimen lets you spend the least amount of time and energy to get that “put-together” look. However, there will be special occasions when you want to wear more makeup. For those times adding eye shadow and drawn-on eyelashes or false eyelashes will complete your look.

Fourth Step – Eyes: always exercise extra caution when you are working around your eyes. They are one of the most vulnerable places for getting infections. You should purchase all new makeup products at the beginning of your treatment to insure they are free from contaminants. During treatment make it a habit to wash your eye makeup applicators in a non-fragranced natural soap after each use. Replace your eye makeup products every 6 months during treatment. You should continue this practice after your cancer journey. Eye products are by nature a breeding ground for bacteria.

Drawn-on eyelashes, in my opinion, are a much better option than applying your own false eyelashes. It gives the effect of lashes without the danger of infection as long as you use fresh products and clean applicators.

If you are a visual learner, you may want to refer to the illustrations on the next page to draw on your eyelashes in addition to following the written steps.

⁹Dot Technique for Eyelashes

Select an eyebrow pencil the color of your natural lashes (one shade darker will also work). Sharpen the pencil before each use to prevent bacteria. You should get in the habit of washing the sharpener on a regular basis. I suggest after every 2nd or 3rd use.

- dot the pencil along the upper lash line - (where the roots of your eyelashes normally would be. (illustration 2-0)
- smudge the dots upward with a small sponge tip applicator or Q tip, moving from the outside to the inside corner. (illustration 2-1)
- draw a line on the lower lid, starting again at the outside corner. Stop just

⁹ Written description and illustrations adapted from Beauty and Cancer

below the pupil. (illustration 2-2)

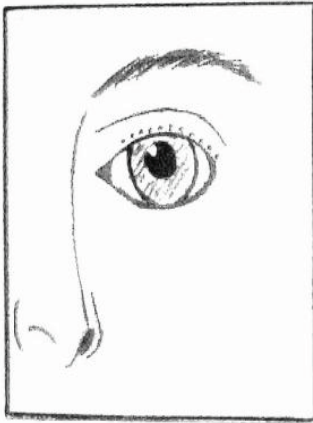


Illustration 2-0



Illustration 2-1



Illustration 2-2

If you choose to wear false eyelashes, I strongly suggest that, unless you have applied them yourself for years prior to treatment and are proficient with the process, you seek out a professional to apply them. I have included the steps for how to apply false eyelashes below if you are insistent on learning and doing it yourself. However, you will see from the steps that it is quite a process. It is so important to remember that your eyes are one of the most vulnerable places for getting infections. Getting the false eyelash adhesive in your eyes can not only cause discomfort; but rubbing, pulling or tugging at the false eyelashes due to discomfort from edges improperly applied opens the door for germs and bacteria from your hands to migrate to your eyes.

Many beauticians are proficient at applying false eyelashes. Call your salon and ask if yours is, or if they have someone else at the salon who can apply them for you. Should that prove futile, call your local department store and ask for the cosmetic department. The makeup artists working at cosmetic counters are generally trained to apply false eyelashes. The fee to have them applied is quite nominal.

Applying False Eyelashes

1. Remove lash from tray by placing your thumb on top of the outside corner of

lashes (not by band). Slide your thumb downward until lash band is loosened and then gently lift off the band. When facing the package, the lash on the left is for your right eye.

2. Practice first: Look into a mirror at your eye; note where your lashes were. Glide the false lash down until inside corner touches the lid where your lash roots would be. Hold it with your other hand and drape the false eyelash along the top of your lid.
3. Check the fit: If lashes extend beyond the edge of your eye, trim the excess from the outside corner, a few hairs at a time.
4. Using a toothpick carefully spread an even line of adhesive along the entire band. Position the lash along your eyelid, as in step 2. Press gently, especially at the corners, until adhesive dries.
5. To remove: Gently peel lash band from outside to inside corner of lid. Peel off old adhesive and store lashes on tray.

As we discussed in chapter 3 most women find that their skin tone changes with treatment. Generally, the change is minor, but in some cases, it is more noticeable. Here I will restate the three most common possibilities.

Please refer to the “Makeup Colors and Tips” list on the next page to help you determine what color(s) of makeup will be best for you to use based on any particular skin tone changes you may experience. I have included a few other skin concerns in the list with helpful makeup color options.

The first is jaundice. Jaundice occurs when the liver is not functioning optimally. It can turn your skin a yellowish/green or yellowish/orange pallor.

The second condition is a sallow complexion. The skin becomes pale gray/green and has little or no natural blush. It is probably the most common of the three. A sallow complexion is usually the outward manifestation of a system that is overwhelmed with stressors and toxins. Proper hydration, as talked about in chapter 2, is extremely important for you if this describes your complexion. In addition, refer back to chapter 4 for skin care products that can improve your skin health.

The next is petechiae or ruddiness. Characterized by redness, petechiae are actually small skin hemorrhages. Although this condition is not very common, dealing with it can be a challenge.

Another possibility is the loss of most of the color in your skin or bruising during your journey. Follow the guidelines in the list below to help counteract either of these.

Finally, steroid use can pose some very different challenges. Below I give two of the possible side effects to steroids and how to combat these. For those special occasions when you want to look your very best you may want to visit with a makeup artist. They can teach you the best techniques for using contour creams and highlighters, for dealing with facial puffiness.

Makeup Colors and Tips

Jaundice

- use neutral eye shadow colors (browns, brown-reds, beiges, pink beiges, champagne)
- use a purple-based concealer under your tinted moisturizer
- to make the whites of your eyes whiter, line the rim of your lower eyelid with a blue eye pencil.

Ruddy skin

- use a green-based concealer under your tinted moisturizer OR dust on green pressed powder if you are not using a tinted moisturizer or foundation of any kind.

Sallow skin

- use a pink-based concealer under your tinted moisturizer OR dust on purple or violet pressed powder if you are not using a tinted moisturizer or foundation of any kind.

Pale skin

- dust on a rose-colored pressed powder alone or over your tinted moisturizer/foundation.

Excessively Dry Skin

- use matte shades of makeup instead of frosted colors. Frosted colors will emphasize fine lines and wrinkles.

Petechiae or Bruises

- apply a darker tinted moisturizer, bronzer or self-tanning product to the area.

Steroid Side Effects

- use contour creams and highlighters for facial puffiness to create and re-define

features. A local makeup artist can teach you these techniques.

- use a soft brush and brush any excessive facial hair downward. Then cover with concealer
- another option for excessive facial hair is to have your face professionally waxed, but check with your doctor first.

Partial Hair Loss

- apply eyeshadow to your scalp in a color that closely matches your hair color OR try hair mascara
- you can also apply a temporary hair color using an old toothbrush.

Chapter Seven: All the Fun Extras!

Packing all the essentials for a trip really is not the fun part. The fun comes when you pack those little touches that turn individual pieces of clothing into ensembles. Jewelry, belts and shoes can change clothes from mediocre to WOW! This is a small chapter but there is a lot of punch in it.

Based on chapter 3 you want to remember to have accessories on hand that work with the clothing you packed. You can wear ensembles sans accessories on days that you are not at your best, and you will still feel put together. However, when you feel perky and energetic, accessories will add panache to your ensembles.

Once again, you will need to keep in mind your skin tones. If you are jaundiced it is best to stay away from gold or gold-tone jewelry around your face. Stick with silver or silver-tone jewelry. Conversely, if you are sallow or pale, gold or gold-tone jewelry will enliven your complexion. Of course, you can always wear colored jewelry that has little or no metal tones.

When choosing earrings you need to take into account whether you will lose your hair during treatment. If so, then choose earrings that dangle at least an inch below your earlobe. This simple “trick” leads the eye away from the normal hairline behind the ear. It is most important to follow this advice when you are wearing scarves, turbans and hats. Even when a woman pulls her hair up some hair will still be visible at the hairline. Because you will not have hair, you do not want to draw the eye to that spot. Wigs are great, but the normal hairline can still look a little bare and drawing the eye downward from that spot is best. You can choose dangle earrings with beads, gems, or simple hoops to match both your clothing and your personality.

Necklaces can be any length; however, you need to decide where you want to draw the eye. If you have had a breast or both breasts removed, you probably will want to choose necklaces that fall no lower than two inches below the base of your neck. Necklace fasteners are another important consideration. Wear necklaces that can be easily removed and replaced at medical appointments. Think about this both as it relates to the necklace clasp and as it relates to your being able to reach high enough to open and close the clasp.

Pins and brooches are nice options to necklaces because they do not need to be removed at appointments. Exercise extra caution when pinning them on and always pin

them on the side opposite any port or catheter you might have on your chest.

Bracelet and watch options are endless. Do not wear any wrist jewelry with tight elastic or a tight fit if you are swollen. This is very important in order to keep lymphatic fluids from pooling. Additionally, you will not want to wear bracelets or watches on the arm where blood is drawn or treatment is administered.

Belts offer a wonderful, inexpensive way to perk up clothing or completely change the look of an outfit. Because the width and style of belts change almost seasonally you may want to check with your favorite fashion guru ("What Not to Wear" - a cable TV show, In Style Magazine, etc.) regarding what is "in" for the current season. Wide belts worn directly at the waist look great, if you have a small waist AND this is the style for the season. Wearing belts below your waistline or at your hips can be very attractive if you have a wider waist and slender hips. Although this look is best on young women, older women can modify the look by wearing neutral colored or metal belts that are no wider than 2" slightly below the waistline. Classic neutral-colored leather belts are always a good choice no matter the season. You can never go wrong with them. If you love the colors of the current season and want to make a strong fashion statement purchase a belt or two in these colors.

You probably already have a closet full of shoes. Should that describe your closet, you do not need to purchase any more pairs for the journey. Yet, purchasing one inexpensive pair of new boots or sandals, depending on the season, can give you a nice little emotional boost and perk up your ensembles.

The great thing about accessories is that even if the colors for the current season are not "your colors", purchasing jewelry, belts and shoes in those colors that mix and harmonize with "your colors" will look stylish and make you come alive!

Have fun - the extra thought given to accessories is always worth it, both in terms of how you feel and how you look!

Chapter Eight: An Extended Visit

Congratulations! You are finished with the first leg of your journey. However, your ticket was not a round trip ticket. Instead, you have two one-way tickets. That is because your doctor has suggested you go on an extended treatment program. You will stay on this cancer treatment journey awhile longer before returning home.

¹⁰Shortly before the turn of this new century, there was a great shift in the reasoning behind administering oral chemotherapy as an adjunct treatment following intravenously administered chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. Before that time, cancer protocols that included oral chemotherapy were primarily for those with metastatic cancer. I am not qualified to explain, agree or debate the reasoning that led to this shift and, more importantly, that is not what I want to write about in this book. You can find some good information on this subject and I would encourage you to avail yourself of this information if your doctor is suggesting oral chemotherapy.

Due to the additional time your body is subjected to chemotherapy drugs, you may find some of the conditions you are already experiencing exacerbated – or at the least continuing. Please refer to the next chapter for help in addressing those specific conditions.

I believe the most important issue to address in this chapter is the emotional side of an extended visit. Your body, mind and spirit have been through a lot these past months and you want a reprieve. I remember telling God, when I was on my personal cancer journey, that I was tired of learning life lessons and I wanted summer vacation! So, how do you continue on, strong in mind and spirit during this next leg of your journey for the sake of your body?

First, I would advise you to rely on God for daily strength. Read Psalm 23 on a regular basis...it will be encouraging to you and point you to God.

One of the best things you can do to stay strong mentally and emotionally is experience the outdoors on a regular basis. If you are too weak to take a walk or a hike

¹⁰ Clinical Cancer Research 2669, Vol. 5, 2669-2671, October 1999

around your neighborhood, have someone drive you to a spot that you know will lift your spirits such as a local park, the beach, a lake or the mountains. Pack a folding chair, water bottle, sunglasses and hat so you can enjoy the beauty. If you are on any drugs that are photosensitive (sun-sensitive) make sure you wear long sleeves, slacks and a hat. Remember light colors will reflect the sun away from you to keep you cooler and more comfortable during hot weather.

If the weather is inclement in your area during the time of extended treatment, watch videos of places in the world you find fascinating, exhilarating or relaxing. For me, a video of villages and vineyards along the Mediterranean will always “take me away”. What pushes your buttons? Is it reading books, knitting, writing poetry, sketching or just sitting quietly with a hot cup of cocoa? Whatever it is, do it for your emotional health.

Try something new! If you will be sans hair a while longer, now might be the time to be a bit wild and crazy, and purchase a wig in a different color and style. If your hair is coming back, buy some hair mascara in a couple of colors and highlight away.

Maybe you need some new surroundings. When I was in the middle of treatment, I found myself wanting to move. I thought a move to a townhome would be good for several reasons. My wise husband told me that making such a big decision at an emotional time was not a good idea. Instead of moving, we purchased new bedroom furniture. It was wonderful for two reasons. First, I was excited about having something new and second, it provided a fresh and beautiful environment for our love life. Cancer can definitely affect your sexual desires and abilities. If your cancer is a hormone related cancer such as uterine, ovarian or breast, your image of yourself as a woman – and a sexual being, may be quite different than it was prior to cancer. Your physical body may be quite different as well. Your sex life might never be the same as it was – but that does not mean it cannot be good! Once you are healthy enough to engage in intercourse new surroundings can make it exciting and fun.

Acupuncture can help immensely with discouragement, anxiety and panic attacks. As I have said so many times before, be certain to check with your doctor first.

Aromatherapy can be very helpful for creating a calm mood. In addition to its potential benefit emotionally, aromatherapy can be useful for everything from raising low white blood counts to reducing inflammation and muscle pain to helping combat

nausea. Contact me to get free information in the form of a newsletter on aromatherapy. Simply ask for “Essential Oils and Cancer”. Also check out Esoteric Oils and Young Living Oils online.

There are a few herbs that may be helpful if you find yourself struggling with depression. Some of these are St John’s Wort, Ginkgo (Gingko Biloba), Licorice and Ginger. Talk with your doctor if you are considering using any herbs. Although you may experience great results with herbs, they can be contraindicated or even harmful based on many other potential health issues.

One last thing to address before leaving the subject of oral chemotherapy is that some of these drugs can greatly affect the growth and health of your hair. One great product to try is No Scary Hairy® Hair and Scalp Revival Serum. This product was developed by the young breast cancer survivor I told you about in chapter 4. It is available at some natural stores and online at www.shoppristinebeauty.com.

Your extended visit will, I trust, not last forever. Be gracious with yourself and allow yourself to be real with what you are feeling and thinking. It is alright to be needy. The time will come, by God’s grace, when you can again be helpful to those in need. Do what you can to keep your body, mind and spirit strong but also allow yourself days when you take a break –a break from it ALL.

Chapter Nine: Side-trips

Addressing Neuropathy, Hand-and-Foot Syndrome, Nail Health, Osteopenia/Osteoporosis, Adjuvant Hormonal Therapy and Breast Cancer, Lymphedema, Prosthetics and Reconstruction

Neuropathy

Neuropathy is a very prevalent side effect of cancer treatment(s). It is a condition that can last long after treatment is completed. What causes neuropathy? What is a simple explanation of neuropathy and can you treat it or do you have to let it run its course? The next few paragraphs will address these questions about this very important and frustrating condition.

Neuropathy is a malfunction of the nervous system that leads to nerve damage. Neuropathy that occurs outside the central nervous system – such as hands, fingers, feet and toes – is called peripheral neuropathy. Peripheral neuropathy and cancer treatment(s) often go hand in hand.

The drugs used for chemotherapy are the primary cause of peripheral neuropathy. These drugs are designed to target fast growing or functioning cells like cancer, hair, mucous membranes and nerves. Unfortunately, this deathblow to cancer cells also affects cells we need to function properly. The result of the drug administration is a temporary lack of oxygen to the cells. This condition is called “anoxia”. ¹¹Nina Komniey, a Certified Holistic Health Practitioner explains what causes peripheral neuropathy very succinctly in the following quote: “Portions of your nerves were starved for oxygen. They responded with the only survival tool they had. They shriveled themselves inward, reducing their length to conserve energy, and gaps between the nerves were stretched to the point that normal sized nerve signals could no longer jump this gap.” This results in numbness and tingling that may last months, years or a lifetime. The amount of anoxia determines the extent of the damage.

The good news is there are several things that may help peripheral neuropathy.

The first is exercise. I know that word comes up a lot – however, it is necessary not only to keep your body functioning optimally but for the stimulation of the nerve

¹¹ Nina Komniey – Certified Holistic Health Practitioner – owner of Frequency Rising Wellness for the Body, Mind and Spirit

endings on these damaged nerves. Base your exercise regimen on your overall level of physical fitness, following the guidelines I set forth in chapter 2: "Staying Fit for the Journey". Structure your own program if you are in tune with your strengths and weaknesses and feel confident enough to do this. Other options are to check with your doctor, or go online for local cancer exercise programs. There is a wonderful program here in my part of Colorado called The Summit Cancer Program. The program employs exercise physiologists who are versed in the specific problems arising from cancer. I know there are many such programs around the country to plug into. If there is not one close to you, recreation center or fitness-club exercise physiologists are knowledgeable of the function of body muscles. They may not know how to address some specific cancer needs and issues, but they will be able to structure a good regimen for you.

There are also promising benefits for peripheral neuropathy from taking 200 mg of SAME twice a day. Pronounced "Sammy," S-Adenosyl Methionine occurs in the body naturally. It is made from the amino acid, methionine, and is believed to be involved in many critical biochemical processes in the body.

Scientists say it helps in the production of neurotransmitters. The production, health and healing of neurotransmitters is essential for your peripheral nerves. Ask for an enteric coated SAME supplement so that the nutrient will pass through your stomach acids untouched offering better absorption and results.

With peripheral neuropathy, the nerves have demonstrated that they need a larger signal transmitted across the gap. If your neuropathy is in your feet and legs the ReBuilder 2407 Electronic Stimulator is an FDA registered, Medicare approved, AMA certified system that sends a tiny electrical signal (10 times larger than normal) that exactly imitates a healthy nerve signal. It wakes up the nerves and re-educates the pathways so that subsequent normal signals can follow the right path to the brain. These healthy signals encourage the shriveled nerves to relax and reach out to one another thereby improving the rate at which normal signals are effective. Currently, ReBuilder is not equipped to work on arms, hands and fingers. However, the great results on feet and legs with the Rebuilder make it very probable that technology will soon address other areas of the body.

Extensive information about both peripheral neuropathy and the ReBuilder 2407 Electronic Stimulator is on the sites listed below to educate you thoroughly and help you make a decision regarding purchasing a machine. Remember, it is Medicare approved. So, if you want to purchase one AND you are on Medicare, have your doctor write a prescription for a ReBuilder 2407 stating "peripheral neuropathy" as the diagnosis. You

may recoup some, or all, of the cost through your insurance. Personally, I would have your doctor write a prescription no matter what health insurance coverage you have. It never hurts to try, right? Here are those websites:

www.frequencyrising.com

www.peripheralneuropathytreatments.com

You can also contact Nina Komniey, whose quote I used earlier. Her email address is: frequencyrising@aol.com

Hand-and-Foot Syndrome

¹²Several chemotherapy drugs, both intra-venous and oral can cause hand-and-foot syndrome. The technical term for this syndrome is Palmar-Plantar Erythrodysesthesia. Two of the main chemotherapy drugs that can cause hand-and-foot syndrome are Xeloda and Capecitabine. The reason for this uncomfortable and painful side effect is that following the administration of chemotherapy – again, either intra-venous or oral – small amounts of the drug(s) can leak out of the capillaries that are in the palms of your hands and soles of your feet.

Most of you will be able to identify with how it feels to be sunburned. It can leave your skin everything from warm and tender to the touch, to blistered, weeping and completely miserable. This is a good way to describe Hand-and-Foot Syndrome. There are three grades with Grade 1 being uncomfortable and Grade 3 being very painful.

Any heat your hands and feet are exposed to, in addition to friction, can increase the amount of drug(s) in the capillaries and hence increase both the potential for and the amount of drug leakage. Hand-and-foot syndrome causes redness, tenderness and potential blistering and peeling on the palms and soles. Additionally, these areas can become dry and numb and you may experience tingling. This numbness and tingling is not peripheral neuropathy. Your doctor can help determine if you are experiencing one or the other, or both, in order to choose the best options for relief and healing.

Prevention is the key with hand-and-foot syndrome (HFS). In most cases, any actions that are taken prior to developing the syndrome will lessen the severity of symptoms should they develop. ¹³To reduce heat and friction to your palms and soles

¹² http://www.chemocare.com/managing/handfoot_syndrome.asp

¹³ Chemocare.com “Care During Chemotherapy and Beyond” presented by Scott Hamilton

you should modify some of your normal activities for one week following an IV administered drug OR for the duration of an orally administered drug.

Here are ways to modify your daily schedule to reduce heat and friction to these areas:

- Avoid long exposure to hot water such as washing dishes, long showers or tub baths. Instead take short showers in tepid water. Remember simply standing in hot water increases the amount of exposure your soles will have to the drug(s).
- Do not wear dishwashing gloves because the rubber will hold heat against your palms.
- Choose to jump lightly on a mini-trampoline in cotton socks OR take short walks in comfortable shoes and cotton socks instead of jogging, aerobics, power walking or jumping.
- During cold weather, wear gloves that are of soft cotton knit versus leather to allow your palms to breathe.
- Limit your use – or, if possible discontinue use for the duration of treatment - of garden and household tools that are a hard surface and need to be squeezed in order to use them.

Keeping your palms and soles cool is also extremely important for prevention of HFS. Should you develop HFS, cooling can also give temporary relief for pain and tenderness. Keep a frozen bag of peas close at hand. Because peas are small, the bag stays pliable yet cold so your palms and soles are well covered. Wear loose slip-on shoes whenever possible so you can cool your soles regularly whether at home or work.

When I began researching HFS, I was so excited to find this incredible natural source of help. It is henna. The henna tree grows in North Africa and India. For many centuries, people have ground the tree's foliage into a powder to dye cloth and skin. Much more recently, it's anti-inflammatory, anti-pyretic (preventing or alleviating fever) and analgesic properties have come to the fore-front. These properties are proving to be a savior for many women suffering from hand-and-foot syndrome.

¹⁴Grades 1 and 2 of HFS seem to respond very favorably to a henna paste. The relief ranges from immediate temporary relief to moderate ongoing relief to complete alleviation. If you are in Grade 3, henna probably will not provide the healing and relief you need. Make sure you talk to as many health professionals and other women who

¹⁴ <http://xelodasideeffects.blogspot.com/>

have been in Grade 3 as possible for advice and support.

Below are a couple of important pieces of information about this potent source of help for you who are trying to prevent HFS or are in Grade 1 or Grade 2. I would also suggest that you go to the following link for ten pages of testimonials, advice and dialogue among women using the henna paste: <http://xelodasideeffects.blogspot.com/>

- Buy pure henna powder. Do not buy henna for hair OR anything named “black henna” or “neutral henna”. (Additives and dyes may be present in these.)
- Stay away from tattoo henna in powder, paste or pen form.
- The favorite henna of many who have used it for HFS is Jamali. It comes from either Pakistan or India and has a better consistency for making paste.

œ caring tip #10 Because of our individuality, there is no perfect henna paste recipe. You may need to experiment in addition to reading what has worked for others.

Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) may be helpful for prevention and treatment of hand-and-foot syndrome. Talk with your doctor about adding this to your daily nutritional regimen.

Adding moisture to your palms and soles is now more important than ever. However, you must exercise extreme caution not to rub your hands and feet when applying moisturizing lotions. Try gently patting Bag Balm® on and slipping on cotton socks and gloves at bedtime to allow the moisture to soak in as deeply as possible. Look for lotions with vitamin E, no preservatives and no fragrance. Bath by Bettijo® has an organic whipped shea butter blended with vitamins E and A. Its consistency makes it easier to apply. Shea butter has wonderful moisturizing qualities and there is evidence that it relieves minor skin irritations. Check this product out at www.bathbybettijo.com.

Refer to page 22 in chapter 3 for more helpful specifics on clothing choices if you are experiencing hand-and-foot syndrome.

Nail Health

Many of the oral chemotherapy drugs can wreak havoc on your nails and nail-beds. Xeloda is one such drug that particularly to blame for problems with nails. Your nails may turn dark or even black. They might get white lines in them and may fall off.

The reason for these problems is body toxicity. Again, while it is important to bombard cancer cells with strong drugs to kill them off – the other cells of your body

suffer from these same drugs.

To help flush toxicity from your body make certain you are drinking enough water. Follow the guidelines in chapter 2 if you are struggling with the taste of water. Cranberries and watermelon are two foods that encourage the kidneys to flush. Try drinking a cup of Weightless Cranberry Tea by Traditional Medicinals each day. To make watermelon tea: buy fresh watermelon in season and save the white seeds to boil and make your own tea. It is somewhat bitter, so you will probably want to add some honey to the tea. You can also purchase watermelon seed extract from www.healthherbs.com. I have searched for a watermelon tea, but have not been able to find one.

Massaging tea tree oil directly onto your nails should be beneficial. Tea tree oil (Melaleuca) comes from Melaleuca leaves. This oil possesses antiseptic and antifungal properties. Jason's Nail Saver is a blend of tea tree oil and many other oils including primrose and sesame seed oil. The blend also includes Vitamin E to aid in healing. Gently massage a small amount into your nails (both fingernails and toenails) each morning or evening for the greatest benefit. Wearing cotton socks on your feet after applying Jason's Nail Saver to your toenails will allow the oil to penetrate deeper. You can purchase Jason' Nail Saver at many health food stores and online at www.jason-natural.com or www.vitacost.com.

The liver is an important organ to support during toxicity. Milk thistle and burdock root are two powerful plants for liver health. You can find many formulas containing one or both of these plants. Always be certain to ask your doctor prior to adding any internal natural remedy to your regimen.

☞ caring tip #11 Simply massaging your nails sans oil will keep a strong blood flow to your fingers and toes. Keep this in mind when you find yourself sitting and waiting at doctor appointments.

Osteopenia and Osteoporosis

A common side effect, if you can call it that, of chemotherapy is osteopenia. The reason I put in that disclaimer is you may suffer bone-loss during chemotherapy, but age may also be a factor. During peri-menopause and menopause, a women is at the greatest risk of developing osteopenia and/or osteoporosis without being administered chemotherapy drugs. In other words, osteopenia may be a condition you have to

address due to age only; chemotherapy and age; or just chemotherapy.

Radiation can also cause bone loss to any radiated areas. If you are having radiation to your mouth, jaw or chin, have your teeth checked often to determine if you are experiencing bone loss that could compromise your teeth.

Osteoporosis is the medical condition describing bones that have become so thin and weak they break easily. Hip, spine and wrist fractures are the most common breaks that occur with osteoporosis.

Osteopenia is also bone loss, but not enough bone loss to be a diagnosis of osteoporosis. From the health industry's viewpoint, osteopenia is often the precursor to osteoporosis because a woman is more likely to get osteoporosis once diagnosed with osteopenia. I have outlined several natural methods to reduce and/or stop bone loss in the section below. Remember what works for one woman may or may not work for you.

For building and keeping bone I believe natural methods are successful enough to warrant a thorough explanation. There is growing evidence that the standard medications prescribed for osteopenia and osteoporosis are not working as well as was originally thought. These medications can also cause gastro-intestinal problems including heartburn.

Many people think that bones are dry, hard and inflexible. The truth is that your ¹⁵bone is living tissue composed of a mineral matrix (including calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, silica and more) and a non-mineral matrix made mostly of protein. The minerals make your bones hard and dense and the protein makes them flexible. In other words, your bones need the right balance of minerals and proteins to maintain their strength, density and flexibility.

Some of the factors that can lead to weak bones are smoking, excess caffeine, salt or sugar, certain medications (including chemotherapy – intravenous or oral and hormone therapy), poor digestion, hormonal changes and stress. A highly acidic diet is another contributing factor. That includes diets high in processed foods, meat and soft drinks. Soft drinks are the biggest offenders, in respect to an overly acidic diet. Acidic foods leach calcium from your bones thus compromising your bones.

We all know milk has a lot of calcium in it, and at first glance we think milk will suffice. However, even though one serving of milk has nearly ten times the daily recommended dose of calcium, if you are not eating food high in magnesium you may

¹⁵ Natural Grocers Health Hotline – March, 2009 “Bone Health 101: Beyond Calcium” by Lindsay Wilson

have a magnesium deficiency. When that is the case, your body tends to take off bone rather than build it due to an improper balance between calcium and magnesium. Calcium alone does not build bones. Magnesium **MUST** be included.

Any or all of the above mentioned factors will lead to an imbalance between the minerals and the proteins in your bones. Another way of stating this is that these factors separate or combined become “bone breakers”.

Accordingly then we need to look at “bone MAKERS”, right? I have already stressed the important role calcium and magnesium play in this, but that is only the beginning of maintaining or regaining bone health.

The best form of calcium and magnesium to take to build or maintain your bone is citrate. It is the easiest form for your body to digest. Another way of describing citrate is a “master mineral”. The term “chelated” is synonymous with master mineral. All minerals should be in a master mineral (chelated) form in order for your body to gain the greatest benefit.

Here is an easy way to picture chelated minerals: the mineral(s), in this case calcium and magnesium, are wrapped with a covering derived from citric acid. The citric acid is the binding material or chelating agent. Other forms of minerals, such as carbonate are not nearly as effective.

There are many calcium/magnesium citrate formulas available. Flavored liquid calcium/magnesium citrate formulas give you your calcium and magnesium in an easy to take, tasty form. My personal favorite is Bluebonnet brand. It is best to take this in the evenings, just prior to retiring. Another benefit of calcium/magnesium citrates formulas is their ability to stimulate and regulate bowel activity

Bones also need vitamin D whose ¹⁶function is to move calcium from the intestine to the bloodstream and then into the bone. The best source of vitamin D is from the normal day-to-day exposure of your arms and legs to sunlight. If you are on photosensitive drugs that keep you out of the sun or you feel you need additional vitamin D (which most of us do), many suggest taking 2,000 mg daily of vitamin D-3. Be certain to clear this dosage with your doctor.

Other “bone-building vitamins and minerals” are vitamins A, C and zinc.

¹⁶ “Calcium! Do You Get It?” pilot education program funded by FDA’s Office of Women’s Health

There are two final things that are wonderful bone makers. First, all dark green leafy vegetables like spinach and leaf lettuce should be included regularly in your diet ...and, second, weight-bearing exercises. These need to be done consistently, not hit-and-miss to gain bone mass. You do not need to use a lot of weight, especially when just beginning. Three-pound weights are a good place to start. Contact your local recreation center or gym and work with a personal trainer once or twice to be sure you will reap the greatest benefit from weight-bearing exercises without risking injury.

Adjuvant Hormonal Therapy and Breast Cancer

“Adjuvant” means “to help or contribute”. Radiation, chemotherapy, targeted and biological therapy are all adjuvant therapies to surgery for cancer.

Those of you who have journeyed through the first leg of treatment for breast cancer with hormone receptive breast tumors may find that your doctor suggests you consider an additional form of breast cancer treatment called hormonal therapy. Research has found that certain drugs may help reduce your chances of recurrence.

Tamoxifen is one such drug. ¹⁷It belongs to a class of drugs called selective estrogen receptor modulators. This drug is sometimes called an anti-estrogen drug, because it blocks estrogen from attaching to your cells. The other class of drugs used as adjuvant therapy is aromatase inhibitors. Aromatase inhibitors are drugs that suppress a particular enzyme called aromatase which converts sugars in your body to estrogen. Femara, Arimidex and Aromasin are aromatase inhibitors.

Unfortunately, although these drugs can be a valuable part of treatment they have some ¹⁸common side effects. I will address each of these below along with some natural ways to combat the symptoms. Some of you will experience other side effects that are less common. Although it would be great to address every side effect that is, of course, not feasible. If you find yourself dealing with a side effect from hormonal therapy that I do not address in this book, please feel free to contact me. My contact information is at the end of the book. I do not always have the answers, but will do my best to find them for you.

Hot flashes: Acupuncture can be a valuable treatment to lessen the severity of

¹⁷ <http://www.erc.endocrinology-journals.org/cgi/content/full/11/3/39/>

¹⁸ <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/breast-cancer-treatment /AT99999/METHOD=print>

hot flashes. Vitamin E can also be helpful. Try 800 IU's daily. Make certain you get a vitamin E that is NOT in a soybean oil base. Soybeans have an estrogenic effect, which might interfere with the effectiveness of the drugs.

There is an herbal formula called Femi-Yin that helps balance the luteinizing hormones. A luteinizing hormone is a hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland. Its purpose in females is to control the length and sequence of the female menstrual cycle. It also prepares the uterus for implantation of a fertilized egg and is responsible for ovarian production of both estrogen and progesterone. It is also known as interstitial-cell-stimulating hormone (ICSH). It has lessened the severity of hot flashes in some women. Ask your doctor about both Vitamin E and Femi-Yin. Femi-Yin's ingredients and information are online at www.biomed-health.com. There is also a very good article explaining the concept of how Femi-Yin works at www.associatedcontent.com.

You may also consider having your doctor test the iodine level in your urine. New studies are showing that low iodine levels can increase the severity and frequency of hot flashes. If your levels are low, your doctor may prescribe potassium iodide to increase your iodine level.

☞ caring tip# 12 Two things that can help at the onset of a hot flash are: deep breathing and massaging a pressure point located on the inside of either wrist. To massage this pressure point, use your index and middle fingers and move in a clockwise direction making a small circle using gentle pressure to the count of ten.

For bone and joint pain, muscle aches and headaches from adjuvant therapy drugs try taking white willow bark regularly. ¹⁹White willow bark used by ancient Assyria, Egypt and Greece down through the ages to the Native Americans, has been effective for pain of different types, including headache, fever, arthritis, gout and angina. The bark contains salicin, which is a precursor of salicylic acid. Aspirin is chemically produced salicylic acid. The naturally occurring salicin in white willow bark appears to enhance the analgesic (pain relieving), antipyretic (fever reducing), disinfectant and antiseptic properties more than aspirin.

¹⁹ "Herbs of Choice: The Therapeutic Use of Phytomedicinals" by Varro E. Tyler, Ph.D., an internationally renowned expert in the field of pharmacology and botanical medicine

²⁰“All the therapeutic properties of willow bark are expressed more slowly but continue to be effective for a longer time than if salicylate (aspirin) itself were administered”. Due to its gentle, gradual conversion process in the body, you must be consistent with taking white willow bark. It has also shown some ability to build immunity and fight infection.

Heating pads, analgesic ointments on localized areas and Epsom salts baths may all be helpful for bone and joint pain.

Water weight gain and water retention are common with adjuvant therapy drugs. This is a double-whammy. It is uncomfortable AND it attacks your self-esteem so it is both a physical and emotional issue. Some, or all, of the following may offer you relief and improvement.

1. Drink a cup or two of Traditional Medicinals “Weightless Tea” each day. This is a cranberry based tea, which helps to keep your kidneys and bladder functioning properly.
2. Make sure to drink plenty of water. Refer to the formula on page 5 in chapter 2 for the minimum daily water requirement for your body. As odd as it sounds, drinking water helps your body move out unneeded water and fluids.
3. Follow the dry skin brushing technique explained on page 70.
4. Be watchful of your salt and sugar intake. We all know salt can make you retain water, but sugar makes your kidneys work harder thus putting unnecessary stress on them.

Elevated cholesterol levels: Here are some helpful ideas for lowering your cholesterol naturally.

1. Garlic can help reduce cholesterol. Add it to your food or take a supplement containing garlic. Kyolic Garlic has a cholesterol formula that works well.
2. A tablespoon or two of coconut milk daily can help raise your HDL level and lower your LDL level. It has monounsaturated fat, which is a healthy fat. Of course, you can take more than that, but this is the minimum amount you should consume. I love coconut milk in protein shakes!

²⁰ Dr Daniel B. Mowrey, Ph.C. Basic Research, LLC

3. A mixture of 3 teaspoons of cinnamon and 2 tablespoons of honey blended into 16 ounces of water taken 3 times daily has been found to reduce the level of cholesterol in the blood by 10 percent within two hours. If you find this is too much for you, you may still see measurable results by cutting the recipe in half. Or make a whole recipe and drink it throughout the day.
4. Although they are high in cholesterol, they help lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol. This is because they are rich in nutrients, low in saturated fat and high in protein.

NOTE: The key is to eat eggs in conjunction with a diet that is low in saturated fats.

☞ caring tip #13 Here's an easy way to remember which is which in respect to good and bad cholesterol. LDL is bad cholesterol. You want your levels low, "L" of the LDL. HDL is good cholesterol. You want your levels high, "H" of the HDL.

Potential Osteoporosis and Bone Fractures: refer to the section on Osteopenia and Osteoporosis on pages 62 to 64.

Lymphedema

What is lymphedema and why is it so prevalent among those of us who have journeyed through cancer? Simply stated, lymphedema is a pooling of lymph that occurs when the lymphatic system is not functioning optimally.²¹ There are four main parts to this extremely elaborate system. First, is a labyrinth of channels throughout your entire body making up the lymphatic system. Second is lymphatic fluid, called lymph, which bathes the tissues of your body and passes into the lymphatic channels and nodes, cleansing toxins and impurities from the tissue on its journey. Third are the lymph nodes. Nodes are within the lymphatic channels and are small "purifying plants" that remove microorganisms and debris from the lymph before sending it to the bloodstream. Finally, there are two lymphatic ducts. These ducts empty the lymph into the bloodstream.

²¹ Maedica / A Journal of Clinical Medicine, Volume 2, Number 1, 2007

Surgery, radiation, drugs and other health related issues can all compromise the lymphatic system. Surgery is this system's greatest enemy, because with the removal of body tissue there is also removal of lymphatic channels. I like to think of it in terms of how plumbing works. If you take out part of a pipe and replace it with a plug, you will have a problem with a plumbing system. In addition, when lymph nodes are removed during surgery to see if cancer has spread (remember these are the "purifying plants" so they will filter out cancer cells) the filtration system becomes compromised. Since the nodes function is to filter out toxins, poisons and cancer cells it is understandable why lymph nodes are a valuable tool for determining the stage of cancer.

Thankfully, many women who journey through cancer never develop lymphedema even though they have had surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

However, for those of us who have, or will, I would like to offer several natural ways to stimulate the lymphatic system and strengthen it. Personally, I have found that each of these ways is of value to me. You may find that one or two of them are sufficient for you. Beyond the first two universally agreed upon suggestions, there are no hard and fast rules as to what will work for everyone. Therefore, numbers 3 through 8 in the list are not in any particular order.

1. Work with a practitioner versed in lymphedema to find and purchase a compression garment. Compression garments, including stockings and sleeves, are of great value because they encourage the lymph to pump through the lymphatic system.
2. Begin having lymphatic massages on a regular basis. I know many of you feel like massages fall under the "pamper" category. Nothing could be further from the truth. Lymphedema responds very well to massage and therefore it is a medical necessity if your condition is acute. Many insurance companies will cover all or a portion of this kind of massage, if the diagnosis is lymphedema. **MAKE CERTAIN** you find a massage therapist trained in lymphatic massage **AND** lymphatic rechanneling. This is imperative because, as I said above, a compromised lymphatic system may never function optimally. A massage therapist trained in rechanneling knows how to move the fluid a different direction than it would normally flow thus increasing the relief and results you will see after massage. Most massage therapists will teach you a few massage movements that you, your spouse or a friend can do to help between massages.
3. Diuretics can offer relief, however you need to be under the watchful care of a physician or naturopathic doctor if you make this choice. Prescription-strength

diuretics may do nothing more than remove the water from the lymph leaving behind the minerals, proteins, toxins and debris. This situation is much harder to treat effectively than if the lymph fluid is left in the body. Herbal teas with cranberry work gently and effectively without any adverse effects. Specifically, you might try Traditional Medicinals "Weightless Tea". Watermelon and watermelon tea made from white watermelon seeds are also wonderful natural diuretics. Cranberry tablets such as Cranactin® by Solaray or U.T.I.-Care® by NaturalCare can be of help as well.

4. Keep your weight under control as much as possible through a good healthy diet, plenty of water and exercise. Lymphedema, by its nature, adds fluid weight. Any help you can give the lymphatic system by not overwhelming it with excess adipose (fat) weight is a plus.
5. Dry body brushing stimulates lymph flow. Here are some important tips for dry body brushing.
 - a. Purchase a body brush with natural bristles.
 - b. Each morning or evening - or both if you have the time - brush your skin. Begin brushing upwards starting at your feet. Sweep up each leg with the body brush using light brisk strokes, while making small circular movements. You want to make all brushing movements towards the heart to encourage the return of blood and stimulate lymphatic flow. After you have finished both legs, continue up your body around the lower back, abdomen and groin area. One of the two lymph ducts is on the lower left side of your groin. Remember to focus on that area a moment or two longer than other places. Next, brush your arms with the same upward motion, moving towards the heart. Finish with brushing upwards over the solar plexus to the chest area and then downward just above your collarbone on the left side. This is where the other lymph duct is located.

The entire brushing should only take between three and five minutes.

☞ *caring tip #14 Remember, it is not how hard you brush that brings benefit from dry skin brushing. Vigorous, hard brushing will not give you any additional benefit ...only irritate your skin.*

6. Consider taking raw glandular lymph and/or kidney to encourage proper lymph flow and elimination. The function of a glandular is to support that particular organ. However, even if your condition is chronic, you do not want to stay on a

glandular for extended periods. Although there is no harm done in extended use of a raw glandular, research shows there are less benefits which may even cease if used too long. Work with an alternative care practitioner or nutritionist to find a regimen that works best for you.

7. Stay physically active. It just keeps coming up, doesn't it? When stimulating the lymphatic system, though, staying active does not just mean structured regular exercise. The lymphatic system responds to any body movement. Opting to park further away from shopping and taking the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator are a couple of ways to keep moving. If you cannot find the stairs in a shopping mall, take a brisk walk up the escalator. Try setting an egg timer to ring every half hour to remind you to get up and move around. Even the smallest of movements stimulate lymph flow. I am bouncing my legs lightly as I sit here writing. I also make a practice of lightly marching when showering. You do not have to pick up your feet; just lift up your heels and roll forward to your toes alternately. This reduces the chances of slipping.

The following exercise called the "active bridge" is wonderfully stimulating to the lymphatic system. Because a major part of the lymphatic system is in the abdominal area where it is not close to skeletal muscle it takes some special movements in this area to encourage the lymph to keep moving. Here is how to do it.

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor at shoulder width. Keep your arms at your sides.
2. Slowly squeeze your buttocks and abdominal muscles and lift your hips into the air until all your weight is on your feet and shoulders. Get as high in the air as possible without straining your back and neck.
3. Hold this position three seconds and then slowly lower your body back to the floor.
4. Repeat this fifteen to twenty times. It may be difficult, in the beginning, for you to do that many in repetition. Should this be the case, do two sets of eight or ten.

Using a rebounder is another way to stay physically active and stimulate the lymphatic system. A rebounder is a mini-trampoline. Walking works your large leg muscles, but a rebounder works ALL your leg muscles. There are

several rebounders on the market with or without safety rails. Choose one that is right for you. Benefits to bouncing on a rebounder include increased circulation to provide more oxygen to your tissues, reduction in cardiovascular disease, increased production of red blood cells and improved respiration.

NOTE: any rigorous exercise offers these benefits.

8. Ionic foot spas are yet another way to stimulate lymph flow. ²²Ionic therapy uses a low-intensity electrical current to create a weak electromagnetic field in a salt and mineral bath. An adaptation of the Arndt-Schulz law believes that if you put your feet into this field, it will stimulate your natural electromagnetic field to provide a boost to a sluggish lymphatic system. Although there are several ionic foot spas available, Dr Susan Lark recommends the following brands. (Dr Lark is one of the foremost authorities in the fields of clinical nutrition and preventative medicine.)

ionSpa – available at www.theionspa.com

Ion-Chi – available at www.ionchi.com

(Please note that the reason the water turns muddy and dirty looking is not due to the toxins drawn out of your body. Instead, it is a natural color change that occurs because of the chemical effects on the minerals in the water by the ionization process.)

9. Deep breathing is the final way to make your lymphatic system work better. I suggested deep breathing for general lymphatic health in chapter 2, but if you have lymphedema – it becomes that much more important. ²³“To keep it (*the lymphatic system*) clear, you need to increase its drainage capacity or reduce its intake of toxins.” Diet and stress reduction are two ways to reduce your intake of toxins. We have discussed diet and stress in chapters 2 and 4. Additionally, we have looked at the fact that chemotherapy and many other medications used during cancer are toxins to the body, albeit necessary toxins. Exercise and deep breathing are two ways to increase the lymphatic systems drainage capacity.

I included a simple deep-breathing exercise in chapter 2, but feel I should include

²² Women’s Wellness Today: Health Strategies that Work by Dr Susan Lark, December 2008

²³ <http://www.healingdaily.com/exercise/breathing.htm> Breathing for health

it here also. ²⁴Try doing this simple exercise ten times, three times a day to experience the maximum benefit.

Inhale for 4 seconds

Hold for 16 seconds

Exhale for 8 seconds

Practice feeling the air enter a specific lobe of your lungs. First, try the upper right lobe; then the lower right lobe and so on. Although there is some air in each lobe of your lungs, using this technique, you will be able to feel more air enter the lobe you are concentrating on at that moment. This will ensure that you are using ALL your lung capacity.

Refer to chapter 3 for specific clothing concerns and suggestions to consider when dealing with lymphedema.

Prosthetics and Reconstruction

For those of you diagnosed with breast cancer, the next several paragraphs will give you valuable information on prosthetics and clothing should your journey include a mastectomy or double mastectomy.

Making a decision regarding reconstruction or not - and what kind of reconstruction - is a very personal decision. Many factors must be taken into consideration. Make certain you listen to all the information first and then base your decision on what procedures your doctor says are suited to your situation. REMEMBER: there is no right or wrong decision when it comes to choosing to have or not to have reconstructive surgery. While you are making this decision regarding reconstruction, you will want to research your option for prosthetics.

There are many great prosthetic and bra fitters around the world. You should rely on them to advise you properly. I just want to touch on a few basic pieces of information.

In my opinion, the best prosthetic company is Amoena. Amoena is Latin for "the lovely and beautiful". Go to their site www.amoena.com to learn more about the wonderful products they carry.

²⁴ <http://www.healingdaily.com/exercise/breathing.htm> Breathing for health

The advancements in prosthetics change almost daily. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes to fit your lifestyle. Some prosthetics are weighted to make them hang more naturally. Those made of silicone warm to your body temperature. Attachable breast forms offer active women peace of mind during sports and other strenuous activities.

Should you choose reconstructive surgery – you will need to decide which reconstruction procedure is best for you based on the available options.

Here are some personal observations and assumptions when thinking about saline, silicone or flap transplant reconstruction:

- Although the tissue expanders used for saline or silicone implants are quite uncomfortable when first inserted; they are generally necessary and your body becomes accustomed to them in a short time.
- With tissue expanders you will need to make frequent visits to the doctor prior to their removal and surgical replacement with the permanent implants.
- Saline implants look great in clothing with or without a bra!
- Saline implants do not yield when pressed against and therefore can feel like bricks when you hug someone - also they are very hard to lay on for more than short periods.
- Silicone implants look very natural out of clothing but you may want the uplift a bra gives in certain clothing.
- Silicone implants yield when pressed against, so they feel more natural to both you and those you hug!

I definitely recommend having a smaller implant placed behind the remaining breast if you are having a single mastectomy and choose reconstruction. This will help make you more symmetrical in your birthday suit in terms of “perkiness”.

There are some very different considerations when thinking of doing a flap transplant - either trans or latissimus dorsi. With two incisions, you will be less able to care for children or lift anything heavier than five pounds for an extended time. If you do the latissimus flap, you will still have use of your arm without the muscle. However, function and strength will most likely be affected to some degree due to the loss of muscle. This is especially true if you are very athletic and play tennis or volleyball.

Since I did not do a flap transplant, I cannot comment on how they will look nor how natural they will look and feel to you. I know many women who are quite happy with them. One of the things I hear quite often from women who have had a trans flap

transplant was the added benefit of a tummy tuck!

During the reconstructive process following your mastectomy(ies), OR if you have chosen reconstruction because you are misshapen from a lumpectomy, you should definitely purchase a post-mastectomy bra. These bras generally have a wider band at the bottom and wider straps for added comfort. They are made of soft, non-irritating cotton or cotton blends. You can stuff the pockets with fiberfill using however much you need to get the right effect. If you are going through tissue expansion, you can keep adjusting the amount of fiberfill to your new size.

Check with your insurance company for your policy's coverage on bras and prosthetics. If it covers either or both of these, you will need a prescription written by your doctor for a post-surgical bra and/or breast prosthetic to turn into the insurance company. Reconstruction is an art unto itself. The different procedure options offer women breasts that are natural looking and sexy. However, it is important to note that even with reconstructed breasts and nipples, your breast(s) will not fill out the cup of a bra like a natural breast. Reconstructed breasts are more rounded. You can choose poly-fill bras or athletic bras. Adding a bit of fiberfill or a nipple prosthetic to your bra also works well as long as you are not wearing something that will show ridges and edges through your bra. One last thought on reconstructed nipples. They will be rigid at all times. That means that although you can go without a bra once you have healed or wear lighter weight bras, you will need to be mindful of not appearing sexually aroused when it is inappropriate. There is a wonderful little product called Nippits made just for women like us. They are nipple concealment strips that adhere and remove painlessly so there are no embarrassing moments. Check them out at a local lingerie boutique or online at www.nippits.com.

Choosing lingerie, swimsuits and camisoles made for woman who have a one or both breast removed can be fun and make you feel very sexy with all the varied styles, colors and fabrics that are available. Jodee by JC Penney has very nice, reasonable options in swimsuits, lingerie and underwear. Call your local JC Penney's store, or go online to www.jcpenney.net. Once on their site, click on catalogs and the Jodee (Post Mastectomy) Catalog is on the second page of catalogs. Amoena also has wonderful swimsuits. In addition to swimsuits, Amoena carries basic lingerie and is currently developing more "sexy" options.

Whether your journey has taken you the prosthetic route or the reconstruction route, I am certain the choices we have will continue to grow and improve. Check often for "new and improved" prosthetics, clothing and more!

Chapter Ten: Journey Companions

This chapter is for those in your life that are caregivers, relatives and friends. There are times that being your companion on this journey is extremely tough. You know how you feel emotionally and physically at any given moment, but they do not have the privilege of knowing this. They can only ask, guess and surmise. They are trying to deal with their own emotions about your journey through this disease and, at the same time, trying to figure out exactly what you are feeling, what you need and how to help encourage and support you.

I remember when I was on my cancer journey there was a wonderful friend in our church who always asked how my husband was doing before asking me the same. Although it seemed a little odd, it was so very refreshing. He had many people supporting him but few, if any, actually asked him how he was doing before asking about me. I have never forgotten that and have implemented that tactic with people in my life going through tough times.

This is not meant to lay any kind of a guilt trip on you...you do not need that! They are on board with you, and that is where they have chosen to be. The rest of this chapter is full of hints and pieces of advice for these great people.

To the Caregiver

- Take care of yourself! I cannot state that strongly enough. If you do not get the proper nutrition, hydration, exercise and sleep, you will not be able to stay on board with the one you are caring for on the journey. Call in others to spell you for a while or help you. I know many times this is easier said than done, but – do it...for your sake and the sake of the one you are caring for.
- Allow others to pray with and for both of you. While on my personal cancer journey I became what I called a “prayer piggy”. When people would ask if they could pray for me I always responded with an emphatic “YES!” Do not ever underestimate the power of prayer and God in both of your lives.
- When you are having a tough time with YOUR emotions or health, share it with the one you are caring for. I know this may sound odd...after all, don't they have enough to deal with already? The reason I say this is because it is not healthy mentally for them to be the focus of attention constantly. When you are

honest and open with them, like you would be if they did not have cancer, they feel more of a sense of normalcy.

- Find reasons to celebrate! Even if what you are celebrating seems insignificant – it is not. Every positive turn in the road poses an opportunity for celebration. Purchase balloons, buy some silly hats and have a party. If your loved one is strong enough to have the party last more than a few minutes, invite a few guest. In the summertime, purchase or cut fresh flowers to make a small arrangement. (Be very careful to avoid any plants or flowers that might cause an allergic reaction.) These floral additions can brighten both their spirits and yours.
- Ask what sounds good to them for meals, snacks and beverages. Try not to be overly strict on what they eat. I know the doctor may dictate certain dietary restrictions. Beyond that though, do not constantly scold or supervise what and how much they are eating. They are much more likely to eat if it is appealing to them. Take their request and find ways to make these foods and dishes as natural and nutritious as possible. For example; if they are craving french fries: cut up fresh potatoes, and place them in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Spray them lightly with olive oil, salt them (if salt is allowed) or use a natural salt substitute like Mrs. Dash. Bake them at 450 degrees for 20 to 30 minutes. You can also sprinkle them with parmesan cheese if dairy is permitted.
- Be cautious with fragranced laundry soaps, fabric softeners and personal care items. Although fragrances may have been tolerated prior to treatment, now they may cause skin irritations, rashes or nausea. It is best, as a rule, to stay away from fragrances during this time.
- If there are children in the home, do everything possible to create a sense of normalcy. This includes maintaining schedules, if possible. Generally every child will react differently to both the disease itself and to the family member journeying through cancer. That is fine unless there are unhealthy signals such as not eating, crying excessively, withdrawing from both of you or other family members and friends. Avail yourself of professionals who can counsel and teach coping techniques to your children.

To Relatives Not in the Home and Friends

- When making phone calls, emailing or writing notes make certain you include questions and comments about things other than cancer. This will help your loved one or friend step away from their cancer journey for a few moments and

be part of the outside world.

- Be specific when offering help. Pick something you are good at or like to do and offer to do that for them.
- Ask what bothers them the most that is left undone. It may be that they love having a well-groomed yard and need someone to rake the leaves for them during the fall, etc.
- Offer to make a meal. Make sure you ask about any special dietary restrictions and needs. If there are children in the home include something fun and special for them. Ask what day and time is best for you to bring the meal. If they have a good sized freezer, they may say you can bring a meal over anytime to freeze and use later, so making meals that can be frozen is a great idea.
- Offer to give them a head massage. This will not only be pampering for them but will help stimulate the scalp for healthy and quicker hair re-growth. You can use any oil they have been using during treatment that they are not sensitive to or almond oil that has a little Vitamin E blended in to it. Trim your nails prior to doing the massage. Be certain to wash your hands just prior to starting the massage. Massage very gently taking extra caution not to touch them with your nails even though you just trimmed them. Fingernails increase the risk of injury and therefore infection.
- Help them catch up on personal / business correspondence and calls (as appropriate). You can have them dictate thank you notes to you. Be certain to provide a short explanation at the bottom regarding the dictation. Include your name under theirs on the card.
- Surprise them with a bouquet of silk flowers in a beautiful vase. Choose flowers that are complimentary to their home's decorating style and colors. That way you will not risk causing an allergic reaction, AND ... best of all ..., they will not have to remember to water them!

Chapter Eleven: Your New Home

This chapter is dedicated to you beautiful, strong-spirited women who have not only had an extended journey through cancer but find that you are not returning home. You do not have a return ticket in your hand. Short of a miracle from God, your cancer journey is completed, and you have a new home called “terminal”.

Encouragement, courage and hope have taken on new meanings. Encouragement, during the early stages of cancer, was about spurring you on to help stimulate you to gain your strength and health back. Now, encouragement is about inspiring your spirit with courage and hope: courage to endure what still lies between you and death, and hope for the release from pain and suffering in the life to come.

At the very beginning of the book, I referred to myself as a cancer victor because I have been cancer free for many years. I stated then that I did not think for one moment that those of you who lose the battle of life to cancer are not victorious. I wish to say again that this could not be further from what I believe. If you have a personal faith in God yet will eventually lose your life to cancer - you are not only a victor but also a war hero! Though your journey ended prematurely because of the battle, you have arrived in your eternal home victorious.

Imagine, with me, your own award ceremony in the presence of God where you are awarded the purple-heart medal for the fatal wound dealt you by life here on earth. Do you remember the advertising slogan from Wide World of Sports for many years? It went like this: “the thrill of victory...the agony of defeat.” There is no greater victory for you than to live eternally along-side Jesus and all the saints of God singing and dancing without disease, pain and side effects.

On the other hand...if you do not know where you will spend eternity...the “agony of *eternal* defeat” (italics mine) could be your fate. I know that it is not politically correct to be adamant about there being one, and only one way to heaven. However, I do not care about being politically correct, and I do not even care that I may offend you – if by that offence I get your attention. I am discussing your eternal fate. This is no time to mince words or water down the salvation message.

I profess Jesus as my Lord and savior, but you may not know what that really means to me. My faith in Jesus is not a list of rules I have to follow to please an ogre God. (God is not an ogre. He is a just, yet merciful God who showed how much He

loved us through Jesus' death and resurrection). Nor is it a "fire insurance policy" just to save me from eternal damnation. It is also important to tell you that my faith in Jesus is not a crutch when faced with the hardships of life.

This is what my faith in Jesus means to me. It means that I have a personal relationship with God: a relationship that brings me joy and peace in the midst of turmoil, strife and pain. As a member of the human race, I am a sinner right along with you. Without the sinless sacrifice of Jesus, you and I are unworthy and unable to save ourselves. I always find it interesting that many say if we just look deep within ourselves, we can find good. If you are a parent, you know that you did not have to teach your child to lie, cheat or be selfish. The Bible says that we are born with a sinful nature. Every day we prove the Bible correct on that statement.

I have the privilege of sharing with you why I believe what I believe in hopes that you too will believe. There really is no other reason for me to live. Each day is a gift from God, and when my life is over here on earth, I want to know that I have shown others how to have the "thrill of victory" for eternity.

I believe that God created everything including humanity. Because each of us has a free will, we can choose whether to follow God or follow our own desires and sin. God is sinless and pure. He cannot overlook sin, so there must be a provision by another in order for you and me to be saved from eternal death.

Do you know that the Bible says that the gospel (which means "good news") is simply the fact that Jesus was born, died and rose again for the sins of everyone..., AND that salvation comes by simply believing the gospel? This is not a nonchalant, superficial belief, but an "I would die for it" belief. I do not base my hope and trust on anything I have done, or will do because there is nothing I can do to impress Him or make Him love me more. We are all just frail human beings that fade and pass away. Our God is all-powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. He is the one who loved you and me enough to send Jesus to die for us. How is it that we as frail humans think we can do something to save ourselves? Christianity is the only belief system that says, "It is all about grace – not merit". Salvation is a gift offered to anyone and everyone who believes they are in need of a savior and then accepts Jesus as that savior.

Does the fact that I know Jesus is my savior and that I have an eternal destiny with Him make me immune from human trials. No, and it does not make me fearless! I am very aware that my life journey will eventually end. I have often said that I am not afraid of dying. I know where I am going and am at peace with that. However, I must admit I am somewhat afraid of the dying process because I do not know what that will

mean in terms of pain and suffering. Yet, it gives me peace and hope to know that I can trust in God because He will see me through to eternity.

You understand pain, suffering and the fear that comes with the unknown far more than I do because you have already begun the final journey. Eternity may come soon for you. Do you know that you are ready? If not, please contact me and I will show you how to be prepared. I would encourage you to find a Bible and start by reading the book of John and Philippians. Please do not delay! When you contact me, I will try to find someone in your area that can be there for you spiritually.

Chapter Twelve: Your Personal Journey

Your personal journey through cancer will not look like anyone else's. Yes, there will be some similarities...but this journey will be uniquely yours. Your response to treatment, potential changes in skin tone, level of energy, tolerance to certain foods, and many other "bunny trails" will make your journey exactly that: YOUR journey!

Glean what you can from this information, and know that there is much more knowledge than I have written in this book available to you. I have some great organizations listed on our Cancer Support page at www.bridges2beauty.net. Additionally, there are many local support groups you can join that may help you cope with emotional, physical and mental challenges.

When you travel through a great trial in your life, you have three choices for how to walk through it.

The first is to deny that life has taken you down a path you did not choose. Yes, it is important to keep a semblance of ordinary life during the journey, but be honest...life has changed! You do yourself a great disservice if you do not recognize and accept this fact.

The second is to be angry and bitter because life has taken you down this road. This approach to the journey will not allow you to heal emotionally when your journey ends. It may also cause other health issues that you will have to address.

The third is to respond with acceptance and expectation when directed down an unexpected path. Each day of our lives is a gift from our creator. As long as we are here on planet earth, we have the opportunity to grow, change and touch lives around us. The journey that you have embarked on will stretch you in ways you never would have wished for or believed you were capable to handle. Yet when the journey is completed, you will be able to touch people's lives in ways you could not have, had you not taken this journey.

I have often put it this way: had God asked me if I wanted breast cancer so I could grow, I would have answered, "Absolutely NOT!". However, He did not ask. I went through breast cancer and grew immensely. I grew in so many ways that were not even a possibility before cancer. I became so much more aware of suffering around me and had the compassion and a desire to help. Praying for others became a privilege – not a last resort. Encouragement and guidance, based on my own experiences, became

commonplace. What wonderful rewards I experienced at the end of a hard, tearful and sometimes fearful journey.

You may not comprehend and embrace this wholeheartedly, for your journey may look much different than mine. What I am confident of is this; that you are uniquely gifted and equipped to take this journey. If you allow it, this journey will reveal your gifted endowment. Through pain and suffering, sickness, healing and, I pray, eventually recovered health, you can touch others to show them the importance of celebrating life.

COMPLEMENTARY TREATMENT OPTIONS

Here are some things you should consider when researching an alternative, natural or complementary treatment.

1. The kind of cancer you have: Look for treatment that has shown positive results with your particular kind of cancer.
2. The environmental, dietary and familial factors you have: You will want to search out information and treatment that addresses these factors.
3. What kinds of programs and/or treatment have shown success in your body in the past when you have had health issues to address? Do dietary changes generally work for you? Have detoxification programs and exercise proved beneficial? Because God created each one of us so unique, most likely you have found that certain types of programs and treatment are not beneficial to you. If they have not been beneficial during healthier times, then they are probably NOT avenues you should pursue during your cancer journey. For example, if you have not found digestive benefit from enema's and/or colonics prior to cancer, most likely neither of these will be the best treatment options now.

Please note: I have only included complementary treatment options with which I am personally familiar. Hospitals and centers such as MD Anderson Cancer Center, John Wayne Cancer Institute, John Hopkins University and the Mayo Clinic are all viable cancer treatment options; I just do not have any personal experience with them.

HOSPITALS AND CENTERS

Cancer Treatment Centers of America

Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) offers patients the most sophisticated forms of surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy in combination with complementary medicine therapies, including nutrition therapy, naturopathic medicine, mind-body medicine, and spiritual support. Their personal care and concern makes Cancer Treatment Centers of America a home away from home. Call them at **1-800-615-3055** or check them out online at www.cancercenters.com. Their specialists are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Envita Medical Centers of America

Envita provides state-of-the-art research and treatment for several debilitating and sometimes terminal diseases. Envita is results-driven, striving to improve clinical outcomes, speed healing time, raise the quality of life and minimize the recurrence of these diseases. You can find out more about Envita Medical Center of America on their website at www.envita.com. Call them at 1-866-830-4576

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

The Gonzales Regimen

This is a cutting-edge cancer protocol, developed by Dr Nicholas J Gonzalez, MD. Dr Gonzalez is a graduate of Cornell University Medical School and a famous cancer researcher and clinician at New York's Memorial Sloan Kettering Institute. At present, the Gonzalez regimen is being investigated on a large scale using randomized clinical trials at New York's Columbia University – funded by the National Cancer Institute. The main parts of this program are diet and supplements, pancreatic enzymes and detoxification. Dr Gonzalez has seen remarkable results treating pancreatic cancer with his regimen. Visit his site at www.dr-gonzalez.com. You can contact him by phone at 212-213-3337 or fax him at 212-213-3414. Because of strict patient privacy regulations, Dr Gonzalez does not respond to email communication until a relationship has been established.

Complementary and Alternative Practitioners including acupuncturists, naturopaths, massage therapists, nutritionists, chiropractors, holistic practitioners and homeopathic practitioners offer many optional therapies to traditional Western medicine. The NHS Directory of Complementary and Alternative Practitioners is a wonderful resource. Check it out online at www.nhsdirectory.org for a very comprehensive list of complementary and alternative treatments and protocols. Also check out www.alternative-cancer.net. Click on the FREE list of 78 cancer therapies. Be sure to use the criteria at the beginning of this section and research any you are interested in thoroughly. Talk to as many practitioners and patients as possible.

BOOKS

Beating Cancer With Nutrition by Dr Patrick Quillin

“A well written and thoroughly researched book that provides easy strategies to help the cancer patient get well.” - Michael T Murray, ND, author of Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine.

“The prevention and cure of any disease, including cancer, is through proper applications of nutrition. Dr. Quillin makes a very complex subject simple and understandable. This book is a ‘must read’ by anyone interested in cancer.” - Charles Farr, MD, PhD, nominee for Nobel Prize in medicine.

The Breast Cancer Prevention Diet by Dr Bob Arnot

“A must-read book on diet and breast cancer for those concerned with how best to prevent breast cancer, as well as those with the disease who want to improve their chances of survival.” – Ernst Wynder, MD, President and Medical Director, American Health Foundation.

Contact Information

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I trust that the information in this book has been helpful, informative and encouraging. I would consider it a privilege to care for you in any way I can on your journey.

To contact me simply visit my website and put in a request for an email response, a phone call or a copy of the monthly newsletter *Cancer Answers*.

Sincerely,

Carin g Hansen