Breast Unit

Breast Buddies

Having a diagnosis of breast cancer and having to go through the recommended treatments can be very daunting. You will be experiencing many emotions from fear and anger to sadness and depression. Your family and friends will want to offer support and help but most may not completely understand what it is like to have cancer. Talking about your cancer to someone who has never had the disease can be difficult. At this time, it is often helpful to be able to speak with someone who has faced the same issues you are facing and has been along the same journey as you are going to follow.

At the Cambridge Breast Unit we now run a buddy system for those newly diagnosed with breast cancer, providing one-to-one support for you throughout your cancer treatment. Many other hospitals and other departments within Addenbrooke’s already run such a system and patients have found it very supportive.

How does the buddy system work?

We will pair you up with a patient volunteer who is further down the line with their treatment than you are. Your buddy is someone who will be able to give you a first-hand account of what your treatment will be like and how to cope with it. You will get an idea of what the treatment involves, how the surgery might affect you and ideas on how to deal with the side effects of chemotherapy or medication. We will aim to try and match you to a buddy who has had the same treatment as you are to have - surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy or hormonal therapy - and who is similar in age.

You and your buddy can contact each other by telephone or email or even face to face, whichever feels most comfortable for you both. This will allow you an open and safe way to share what you are thinking and feeling with someone who understands cancer from the inside, as few people can.

Interested in finding a breast buddy?

If you are interested in being put in touch with a breast buddy, please speak with your nurse at a clinic visit or telephone one of the specialist nurses on the numbers below. We will then provide the buddy with your contact information, either a telephone number or an email address, and the two of you can then connect.
Volunteering as a breast buddy

To volunteer as a buddy, you will need to have gone through treatment for breast cancer either at Addenbrooke’s or elsewhere and to be in the Addenbrooke’s follow-up system. It would also involve giving consent to have your information stored on a secure computer database. The information we would need would be age, the type of treatment you have been through, and contact telephone phone number and/or email address. The contact would then be between you and the new patient by telephone, email or face to face. The amount and type of contact would be entirely up to you and your buddy partner. If you wish to leave the buddy list, you can do so at any time.

You will be asked if you would like to be a buddy at your holistic, patient-led follow-up appointment with our specialist nurses about six months after your last main treatment which may be surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy. You can also volunteer at any time after your treatment has finished, when you feel ready to do so.

This buddy system would be complementary to the support provided by the Maggie Wallace Centre, the David Rayner Centre and the Macmillan support services.

Contacts

Breast specialist nurses telephone number 01223 245151 or use the telephone extensions below

- Joanne Rowley – Ext 6960
- Sian Goodwin - Ext 6573
- Lisa Jordan – Ext 6573
- Heather Jarvis – Ext 58272
- Nicola Jones – Ext 6291
- Sharon Saunders – Ext 6093
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team:
patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.
Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

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