

Support After a **BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS**

Social support

Social support is the emotional support, practical help, advice and other benefits you get from interacting with people in your life including:

- Family members
- Friends
- Spiritual advisors
- Co-workers
- Medical team members
- Other cancer survivors

Benefits of social support

- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Reduced depression and emotional distress
- Reduced perception of pain
- Improved mood and/or self-image
- Improved ability to cope
- Improved feelings of control
- Improved sexual health and enjoyment

What do I do now?

Anyone who's ever had breast cancer knows what it feels like to hear, "You have cancer." You may feel angry, afraid, overwhelmed and unsure about the future. These feelings are normal. Don't let them keep you from getting the support you need.

Learn all you can

Knowing what to expect can help. Learn about your [breast cancer](#). Get information about treatment options, side effects and clinical trials. Doctors can guide you on your options, but you will make the final decision about what's best for you.



Coping

Though it may be hard at times, allow yourself to express your emotions. It can help you cope. This is a time for you to take care of yourself. [Coping](#) with breast cancer requires time, acceptance and support. You may need different kinds of support at different points. Your medical team, family and friends can help.

Why you need social support

No one should face breast cancer alone. Getting [support](#) is important to your well-being and can help you cope. If you can, surround yourself with people who care about you. It can be hard to ask for help, even when you really need it. Your friends and family often want to help but may not know how. It's OK to let them know what you need.

[Social support](#) can take many forms. Here are some examples of how you may receive social support:

- Sharing your cares and concerns with someone close to you
- Joining a support group or seeing a counselor or therapist
- Getting rides to and from treatment from a family member or friend
- Getting help with cleaning, cooking, grocery shopping or childcare
- Getting help from a social worker if you have concerns about finances, transportation or caring for yourself or a loved one
- Learning more about your type of breast cancer and treatment options
- Building a relationship with your doctor and talking openly

For more information, visit komen.org or call Susan G. Komen's breast care helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 10 PM ET.

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Resources

Susan G. Komen®

1-877 GO KOMEN
(1-877-465-6636)
komen.org

American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345
cancer.org

CancerCare®

1-800-813-HOPE
cancercares.org

Related online resources:

- [Talking With Your Doctor](#)
- [Talking With Your Children](#)
- [Talking With Your Partner](#)
- [What's Happening to Me?](#)

Ways to find support

Support groups are a good resource. If you choose to join a support group, find one that's right for you. Some groups provide information and education, while others focus on emotional support. There are groups for people in different stages of an illness or recovery.

Support groups may be held by professionals, while others are led by peers. Some support groups meet in person at cancer centers or churches and others are online.

If you're not interested in a support group, you could consider connecting one-on-one with another person living with breast cancer through a [peer mentoring program](#). You could also consider joining a Komen Facebook group.

The [Komen Breast Cancer](#) and [Komen Metastatic \(Stage IV\) Breast Cancer](#) Facebook groups are places where those with breast cancer and their family and friends can talk with others for friendship and support.

Some people are more comfortable talking one-on-one with a counselor or therapist. There may be a mental health provider such as a clinical social worker, counselor or psychologist at your doctor's office. Or you can ask for a referral to one in your community.

Others prefer to keep their feelings to themselves or to share them only with close family and friends. Everyone has different needs. It's important to find the support system that works best for you.

To learn more about support that is available to you, call Komen's [Patient Care Center](#) at 1-877 GO KOMEN (465-6636) or email helpline@komen.org.



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