



FAMILY-FOCUSED CARE:

HOW TO TALK ABOUT BREAST CANCER WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

Confronting breast cancer can be one of the hardest things you can face. Add in the burden of talking to your family about your disease – especially children – and it can often be overwhelming. But effectively communicating with loved ones is critical in managing your cancer and overall health.

According to an *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* study, connections “help improve the life and health of cancer patients.” Planning daily social interactions like 15-minute phone calls, living with family, friends, or roommates, and being involved with others are all meaningful connections that can promote and protect your health.

To communicate and stay connected, consider these suggestions when talking to family or children about your breast cancer, and how you can ask for help when you need it.



HOW TO TALK TO FAMILY

- **Plan ahead.** Anticipate questions or reactions that might upset you and plan responses for them ahead of time.
- **Set boundaries.** If something makes you uncomfortable, respond with, “I’m not ready to talk about that right now.”
- **Lean on a good listener.** Find a close family member or friend or consider seeing a therapist to discuss your feelings.



HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN

- **Keep age in mind.** When bringing up your cancer, tailor your conversation based on their age or maturity level.
- **Be honest.** Staying open from the beginning ensures children have enough time to react, ask questions, and express their feelings.
- **Offer support.** Consider enrolling children in a support group so they can talk to others they relate to and who can empathize with their situation.



HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

- **Let others help you.** Remember, asking for help is not a sign of weakness – it lets family, friends, and your support system know what you need in your breast cancer journey.
- **Be specific.** Ask if others can take care of specific tasks, such as picking up your medication from the pharmacy or other simple errands.
- **Connect through communities.** Keep family and friends updated on your breast cancer and what you need through online tools like Careopolis.

Sources: American Cancer Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine



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