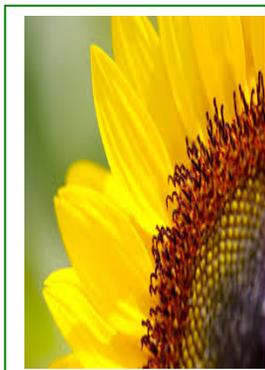


Stafford Pharmacy and Home Healthcare Centre

The Mortar and Pestle

Volume 5, Issue 10 (October 2014)



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your life.*

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Second Chances- Life After Mastectomy

If you are a woman who has received a diagnosis of breast cancer, you have experienced a significant change in your life. Initial reaction is denial or disbelief. Our response is “not me”, this happens to someone else. Anger, bargaining, denial and acceptance are all stages of grief. Whether you are ready or not, you begin a journey through treatment and survivorship. This is the time most individuals start to take stock of their life, and vow to do things differently. This is your time for a second chance.

Here are ten tips to get you started on the path to your second chance. 1. You choose how you react to any situation-even a diagnosis of breast cancer. 2. Ask for help when you need it and accept it when it comes. 3. Decide you're going to be a thriver not just a survivor. 4. Take stock-if you could wave a magic wand what would your life be like? How could you make that a reality? 5. Just wanting to change does not mean you will. Give yourself permission to take a risk. 6. Don't put things off. Life is too short to waste doing something you do not enjoy. 7. Tell those close to you that you are going to need their support in the next phase of your life. 8. Listen to all the advice from friends and family, but know you're going to do what you believe is best. 9. Be prepared to stand your ground if necessary. 10. If you feel you want to make a change but somehow you can't get started consider working with a life coach to clarify your desires and work out how to achieve them.

You almost have to shift the way your brain works. Accept help when it is offered. The “I can do it all myself attitude” is not going to work during those low days. Those days when you are feeling weak, tired and you have a list of things to do. Call a friend, sister, mother, they truly want to help.

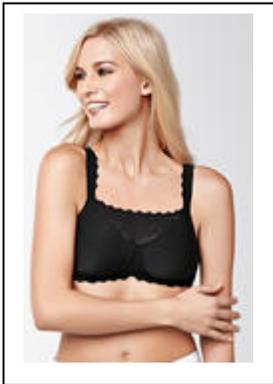
The helper needs to understand that sometimes you are overwhelmed with everything. You need help but can not even form the words or thoughts needed to ask. As a helper, be visible and present. Look for clues in the home of how you can be helpful. If there are dishes in the sink, wash them.

If the bathroom sink is messy, clean it. If the garbage is full, remove it. Try to do all the things that are obvious.

As you go thru treatment and recovery remember to only cope with what you can handle. Try not to get into the “what if” mind set or future trip as this will only add to your anxiety.

Take one day at a time. Sometimes it may be one minute at a time. Give yourself permission to cope with what you can cope with. If you are an overachiever take a breath. Allow yourself to not be perfect.

Excerpts taken from article Second Chances written by Christina Reif



After Mastectomy it is advised to wait **four to six weeks** postoperatively before being fit with a breast prosthesis. Longer if there are complications like infection.

How To Be Happy With Your Brassiere

Your bra is your constant companion. Is it your friend or foe? Most women will say it is their least favorite thing to shop for. Here are some tools to make your next bra shopping experience less tedious.

The bra is sized by the band and the cup. The band is the size of the bra and is determined by taking a measurement around the chest, under the breasts and adding 5. For example: If you measure 35" around add 5" and your bra size is 40". The band should be snug but not tight. The measurement needed to determine the cup size is done over the breasts with the bra on. The difference between this measurement and the band measurement determines the cup size. Zero difference is A, +1 is B, +2 is C, +3 is D. For example: If you measure 41", the difference between 41-40=+1, your bra size is 40B. Bras do tend to fit differently depending on the brand.

A cup should hold all of the breast tissue and there should be no puckering. If too small there will be spillage and too big will pucker. The centre of the bra should be situated mid sternum and should lay flat against the chest.

The straps should be adjusted to lift the cups slightly but not so much that the back band goes up. If you are a larger cup size, straps that are not elastic reduces bounce and is more supportive. Wider straps provide added comfort and are available particularly in a larger cup size bra.

Hand or delicate cycle wash and air dry only. Replace bras every 6 months. Worn out bras are not comfortable. Next time your bra is making you frown, you may need to go shopping.

The Fitting of a Breast Prosthesis

The goal of a post mastectomy fitting is to match the silicone breast prosthesis to the existing breast. The fitter will try to mimic the existing breast thru the appropriate prosthesis. A successful outcome is when fully dressed, it is difficult to determine which side is the mastectomy side.

With bilateral (both sides removed) the size of prosthesis is personal choice. The fitter will advise as far as what looks appropriate for your body build. Often if a woman has been larger busted prior to surgery, after surgery they prefer to be much smaller. The fitter can provide guidance thru this process.

The silicone breast prosthesis is best because it adds some weight to the chest wall. The extra weight will help to balance posture. Silicone breast prosthesis is 30% lighter than their predecessors.

A good fitting bra is needed to ensure a satisfactory fit of the prosthesis. Post mastectomy bras have a pocketed cup so the prosthesis sits securely in place. If you choose to wear your own bra, the prosthesis will simply sit in the cup. It may shift with movement but the silicone does provide some weight.

The cost of the breast prosthesis ranges from \$340 to \$500. There is subsidy available thru the Alberta government and we are happy to discuss this option with you. If you have private insurance, check your coverage. This is usually a reimbursement to you.

Call us for your private fitting.



Lymphedema-Early Management, Better Outcomes

Lymphedema is swelling that develops due to a problem with the lymphatic system in the body. Although lymphedema can involve the lower extremities, it can affect the arm and hand following a mastectomy. It can develop if lymph nodes have been removed or damaged during surgery.

When lymphedema first presents it is important to be diligent. Long term outcome is statistically much better if managed aggressively. Lymphedema is managed thru manual lymphatic drainage and compression garments.

Manual lymphatic drainage is a technique (MLD) that works to gently move fluid out of the limb and back to the lymphatic circulation. This should be done by a trained therapist although you can be taught some techniques for self care.

A measured and fit compression garment will manage the edema and maintain the size of the arm. These are measured in the morning when the arm is at its smallest. A fitter will accurately match you with an appropriate garment.

A prescription from your physician is needed. Government subsidy may be available. Call and book a private fitting.



A fun alternative for the women with lymphedema. Lots of colors and styles to choose from. Our certified fitters would love to show you this whimsical medical grade line of arm sleeves and gauntlets.

25th Annual Fall Post-Mastectomy Promotion 2014

Runs from Wednesday, October 15 to Wednesday, October 29

Free Gift!



With the purchase of a selected breast prosthesis.
Call today for your private individual fitting.

B.O.G.O

Bra Sale

Buy One Bra
Get Second 50% Off



25%Off



Valetta Tops
"No bra required!"
(Available in black, white,



A "Big Thank You" to all our customers that patronized our Alzheimer's Bake Sale. It was a huge success this year, larger due to your support. We are happy to make a donation of over \$1075 to the Alzheimer Society as a result of the combined efforts of the Alzheimer Society's 'Coffee Break' fundraising campaign, our bake sale and matching contributions made by Stafford Pharmacy & Home Healthcare.

Flu Vaccination Reminder

The 2014/14 vaccination program against **influenza (flu)** will begin October 21st starting with our walk-in clinics **Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30pm to 4:30pm** again available for any Albertan who holds a valid personal healthcare card.

The clinics are walk-in, with no appointments necessary.

If you cannot attend these clinics you can call to make an appointment (403) 320-6500. We are able to vaccinate anyone **9 years of age and older**. There is **NO CHARGE** for this vaccination.

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