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HOPE

HAPPINESS

MOVING ON...

POORTI-12: Moving Forward: for people living with and beyond breast cancer

Breast cancer treatment would cause changes in your physical appearance. After surgery, you might be left with visible scars on your body, little or no hair and extreme fatigue and loss of working efficiency. These physical scars are often associated with losing confidence on oneself.

But, you should remember that this is not the end of the world for you. Most of the side effects of cancer will be temporary. There is always hope; you will get better with time at your own pace.

ACCEPTING CHANGES TO YOUR BODY AFTER SURGERY

Most women have surgery as the first step towards breast cancer treatment. This means losing one or both breasts. After surgery, the chest area is swollen, bruised and has prominent scar marks. These signs will slowly reduce with time.



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For some women, losing breast is alright as they feel relieved that their cancer has been treated. There are many who do not even make it till here.



For some women, losing a breast is very difficult to accept. It makes them feel less feminine and lowers their self esteem. Moreover, losing a breast might make them feel overly self conscious. They try to avoid hugs, physical intimacy and socialization, lest someone should discover that they have lost a breast.

Confronting the changes in your body is the best way to accept the changes that have happened during the surgery. You can take a look at your naked body in front of a full length mirror everyday. Initially you may feel shocked at the first glance, but with regular viewing, this feeling of uneasiness and discomfort will reduce. You may touch your scars, or allow your partner to touch them too. These little acts of intimacy will help restore your confidence, and bring you closer to your partner.



Some women continue to feel uncomfortable about their physical appearance. Regular sessions with your psycho oncologist will reduce your stress and uneasiness. Each person's schedule is different. Allow yourself ample me-time to recover completely .



USING BREAST RECONSTRUCTION OR PROSTHESIS

Most women want to restore their looks after breast cancer surgery.

Some women feel that breast reconstruction surgery would bring back their confidence and quality of life. Many women opt for immediate reconstruction. Breast reconstruction involves using healthy tissues from another part of the body in the chest area to give a breast form. However, breast reconstruction only restores the shape and form of the breast; it does not bring back the sensations of the breast.

The second option is to use a breast prosthesis. A breast prosthesis is an artificial breast form that fits in the cup of the breast area, supported by a pocketed brassiere, to replace all or part of the breast that has been removed in mastectomy. **Choosing breast prosthesis gives the option to go for breast reconstruction later.**

Poorti, the flagship product of Aarna Biomedical Products, offers high quality breast prosthesis at a very affordable price. Poorti has been built with love with a vision to restore



the confidence, dignity and femininity of female breast cancer survivors. To know more, you can contact us at info@aarnabiomed.in.

The choice of having breast reconstruction or choosing prosthesis is completely personal and you can also choose to do neither.



GOING THROUGH OTHER DIFFICULT MOMENTS

With time as you recover, you may have to cope up with other side effects of breast cancer treatment :

- **Menopausal Symptoms** - Breast cancer treatments interfere with the production of female hormones, or stop their production altogether.

This can lead to menopausal symptoms like hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal dryness and pain. Using a handy cool pack may help you .

- **Hair Loss** - Cancer treatment is usually followed by complete hair loss. Most women will have their hair grow back after treatment. Till then, you may choose to wear a wig, hair scarf or any other head attire to keep your head protected against the Sun.

- **Weight Gain** - Breast cancer treatments can lead to weight gain, especially around the waist. Putting on weight causes changes in the physical appearance of the body. This can lead to lowering of self-esteem. Simple exercises after surgery will help you regain your strength and confidence with time. You can read more about the



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exercises prescribed after breast cancer here:

www.aarnabiomed.in/exercises-after-undergoing-breast-cancer-surgery/

Fatigue may persist for a few months or years after treatment. Keeping a healthy diet and regular exercise would help you cope up with it and move on beyond breast cancer.

With time, your scars will heal, you will get used to the changed physical appearance of yours and you will be able to lead a normal life once again.

If you feel you need help, you may seek assistance from a counsellor or credible breast cancer survivor support group. You may keep a diary to note down changes in your body as and when you recover. This shall boost your confidence and in turn, you may share an inspiring story to many other breast cancer survivors .

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