

FEMALE BREAST CANCER

Information and Management



WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?

Cancer is the abnormal or uncontrollable cell growth of cells. The most common type of breast cancer is invasive ductal carcinoma which means the cancer (or abnormal cell growth) begins in the tissues of the milk ducts of the breast. Invasive lobular carcinoma is the second most common type and this is where the cancer begins in the lobules that empty breast milk into the milk ducts. If the cancer has metastasised, it means the cancer has spread to other tissues within the body. Treatments for breast cancer include chemo or radiotherapy or surgery, to remove the lump or the entire breast.

EXERCISING WITH BREAST CANCER

Being active with cancer is safe has many, far reaching benefits. It helps to reduce the severity of treatment side effects such as fatigue and nausea; it helps to improve and maintain good bone health which can be additionally affected due to treatment; it helps to improve mental wellbeing by reducing depression and anxiety and it has the potential to improve overall disease prognosis.

EXERCISE RECOMMENDATIONS

Any increase in physical activity will provide benefits. For optimal benefits include:

- 30 minutes of aerobic exercise on 3 days per week
- At a pace where you are slightly out of breath but still able to hold a conversation
- 2 resistance exercise sessions per week such as gardening, weights or banded exercises to keep those muscles and bones strong
- For resistance exercises, work all major muscle groups for 2 sets of 12-15 repetitions

EXERCISE DURING CHEMO OR RADIOTHERAPY

Most importantly, listen to your body, adjust activity and rest when you need to. During treatment however, exercise can continue to help to reduce symptom severity. You may find little and often helps here or any adjustment to your activity you feel it suitable for you at that moment.. Using a pedometer, tracking your steps and setting small goals can be a motivating way to keep moving when you feel more tired.

EXERCISE AFTER SURGERY

You may need to alter your exercise program for up to 6 weeks after surgery. Particularly avoiding heavy lifting after surgery is recommended. Lymphedema is a common after surgery effect, affecting 1 in 6. It is safe to exercise with Lymphedema although you may need to wear a compression garment to help with fluid circulation. Speak to your physiotherapist who will advise you.

WHEN TO RE-CHECK WITH YOUR GP

If you experience any new pain such as joint pain, bone pain or chest pain, be sure to get a check up with your GP.

REFERENCES

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