VA San Diego Healthcare System
Breast Cancer Survivor's Newsletter

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Editor:
Robin Moyer, MD
Laureen Pada, RN, MBA, MSN

K.T. McKinsey, RN, MBA (7 yr Survivor),
Kathleen Ober, PhD, FNP-C (3 year survivor)
Veronica Reis, PhD (16 yr Survivor)

For information on local American Cancer survivor meetings please call 1-800 ACS-2345 or check on the web www.**cancer**.org

Cancer*Care*
www.cancercare.org

National Institute of Health
www.nih.gov

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov

The VA does not support or endorse the listed websites.

Support Programs & Services

When you're facing big treatment decisions, knowing all you can about your cancer and treatment options can help you feel more in control.

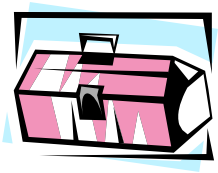
Karen's Survival Tips

Watch your weight

Do you know that weight gain has been linked to increasing your risk for breast cancer? If you put on some extra weight over the holidays, set a goal to get it off. The following are some things that I have found to be helpful:

- Here are a few tips:
  - Drink water instead of soda
  - Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day
  - Keep a food journal. This helps track what you are eating.
  - Keep an exercise journal. This helps you set goals and track your progress.

	- Get a support buddy. This could be someone else that wants to lose a few of those holiday pounds with you, or someone you just like to talk with. • Exercise - Just getting out and taking a walk can be very beneficial. Then start working toward increasing your pace. - Get a walking buddy. This can help you stay motivated. - Exercise at least 2.5 hours per week. - Keep your walking shoes and gym clothes in the car. You will always be ready for a walk if you have your walking gear with you. • Cancer Fighting Foods - Broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower have a chemical component that can combat breast cancer by converting a cancer-promoting estrogen into a more protective variety. - Tomatoes contain lycopene, an antioxidant that attacks bad oxygen molecules known as free radicals that are suspected to trigger cancer. • Multivitamin - I take a women's multivitamin that is designed for breast health. It has the proper levels of B-Complex vitamins, Vitamin D (800 IU -International Units), but not enough calcium so I use a supplement. - Read the label on the bottle and talk with your provider to ensure that you are getting the right amount of calcium and recommended vitamins.
Know Your Benefits	**Did you know that you need to replace your breast prosthesis every 2 years if you have had a mastectomy without reconstruction?** • This is a covered benefit in addition to 2 new mastectomy bras every year. • Talk with your provider to get a referral to a certified fitter. • The new prostheses are lighter in weight and the bras are more feminine looking and comfortable.

Information Breast Cancer Chronicles www.health.yahoo.com/experts/breastcancer Monday, December 28, 2009 Lillie Shockney, RN, M.A.S. and comments by Karen. 	**Breast Cancer Surgery Can Sometimes Cause Chronic, Persistent Pain** If you have had breast cancer surgery it can cause chronic persistent pain. Researchers in Denmark found that 47% of the patients who had either mastectomy without reconstruction or lumpectomy followed by radiation were still reporting pain 2-3 yrs after surgery. Ms. Shockney also reported that the breast pain or sensation is the same phenomenon as the phantom-limb sensation. I had my mastectomy in 2003 and I still get these phantom pains that come and go. I talked with my radiology oncology doctor and he said it was a problem due to the radiation. Radiation can change the sensation in the breasts and can even cause some women problems with breast swelling (lymphedema). He said taking pain medication really doesn't work and that the pain will come and go due to the nerve damage. I have learned to live with it and no longer worry when the pain comes and goes.
www.cancersurvivaltoolbox.org 	**The Cancer Survival Toolbox** The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS). NCCS's mission is to advocate for quality cancer care for all Americans. The Toolbox has been designed to assist those who have been recently diagnosed with cancer, but it can also help anyone facing hard decisions and changes in life because of cancer. The toolbox is a free, award winning audio program that teaches skills that can help people with cancer meet the challenges of their illness. The series has several informative CD's on your rights, what questions to ask your provider, financial information and resources, survivorship tips and care for the caregiver emotional tools.

Recipe Corner

Cream of Broccoli Soup

Cream of Broccoli Soup

Broccoli contains sulforaphane, a powerful antioxidant that has been shown to be particularly beneficial against breast and prostate cancer. New research suggests that the cancer-protective effects of sulforaphane may last for days. This creamy soup is a delicious way to serve broccoli, a nutritional powerhouse, to children, and the addition of garbanzo beans makes it a one-dish meal.

Recipe for Cream of Broccoli Soup

Makes about 6 cups (6 servings)

Ingredients

4 cups water or vegetable broth
1 large potato (preferably russet), unpeeled and scrubbed, cut into chunks
1 onion, diced
3 whole garlic cloves, peeled
1 teaspoon whole celery seeds
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon dried marjoram
1/4 teaspoon turmeric
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 1/2 cups cooked or canned chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup bean cooking liquid, vegetable broth, or water
4 cups broccoli florets
1 1/2 teaspoons salt, as needed

Combine the water, potato, onion, garlic, celery seeds, thyme, marjoram, turmeric, and pepper in a large pot. Place over medium heat, cover, and simmer for about 20 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

Stir in the chickpeas and the bean cooking liquid or broth. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly. Transfer to a blender and process in several batches, filling the blender container no more than half full for each batch. Hold the lid on tightly and start the blender on the lowest speed. Process for 1 to 2 minutes or until the mixture is completely smooth.

	Return the blended soup to the pot and stir in the broccoli and 1 teaspoon of the salt. Cover and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes, or until the broccoli is fork-tender. Taste and add the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt, if desired. Stored in a covered container in the refrigerator, leftover Cream of Broccoli Soup will keep for up to 3 days.