



Breast Cancer: A Clinical Guide

When a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer, her world is irreversibly changed in a single moment. She is confronted with the possibility of losing her breasts, her hair – and potentially, her life. While she tries to cope with her diagnosis and treatment, she will need the support of her family, her friends and most of all her healthcare providers. As a clinician, your involvement can affect how your patient and her family accept and cope with her diagnosis and treatment. Your role will evolve to encompass not only the physical treatment of the disease, but the emotional and social aspects as well.

We'd like to help you make the experience as positive as it can be for your patient and her family.

We hope this information helps to provide breast cancer patients with a healthy and supportive environment as they enter into their treatment process.

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Here are a few ideas:

- Remember the diagnosis is not just a statement – it is a defining moment in a patient's life and that of her family. As expected, they will experience emotions such as shock, anger, fear and despair. It will take time to adjust to the diagnosis, and your support and understanding during this time is crucial.
- Be patient and empathetic.
- Walk them through what they can expect in different stages of both the disease and treatment.
- Fully explain their options.
- Use simple language.
- Assist them in locating social workers, professional counselors, support groups/sites, registered dieticians, wig makers, etc. It might be helpful to keep a running list of contacts to hand out to patients.
- Listen to their concerns. If they are concerned, they want you to be concerned as well – or to tell them why they shouldn't be. If they would like a second opinion, provide a reference to a respected colleague.
- When patients feel defeated, they will need you to lean on.
- Joining in humor and laughter can relieve patient stress and provide a needed break in a serious situation. Let the patient take the lead.
- Provide transportation service information to patients who may not have private transportation.
- If patients or their families need assistance after hours, provide alternate contact details.



A question of compassion

How a little empathy goes a long way with cancer patients

Call it bedside manner, call it a few kind words – a recent article in *The New York Times* reported that no matter what it's called, patients respond well to emotional support from their oncologists. It may even help them fare better medically.

The January 8, 2008 article by Denise Grady cited a study published by the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* that found doctors and patients aren't communicating very well about the emotional aspects of their cancer diagnosis. The good news is that doctors can be coached to be more helpful and empathetic, which can help patients better understand their treatment, stick with it, and cope with their illness.

To read the article in its entirety, go to www.ansell.com/powerofpink/empathy. Or call your Ansell representative to email you a copy.

Ansell is a proud supporter of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, a leader of the fight against breast cancer.†



Susan G. Komen for the Cure®

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Ansell Healthcare Products LLC | ansellhealthcare.com
200 Schulz Drive | Red Bank, NJ 07701 U.S.A. | Phone: (800) 952-9916 (U.S.A. only)

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† In 2010, Ansell will donate \$2 per case sold of the Micro-Touch® NitraFree™ to Susan G. Komen for the Cure® in support of research and community outreach, with a guaranteed minimum donation of \$25,000.

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