

COPING WITH CANCER

Cancer can give rise to various emotions, which may be difficult for you to cope with alone. It is important to realize that it is not the end of the world. It depends on the stage of presentation. If your disease is detected at an early stage, you can be cured. Even if it is not cured, modern treatment can definitely control it for years.

After you learn that you have cancer, you may first not like to believe it. There may be episodes of anger, shock or depression. Do not try to suppress your emotions. If you feel comfortable by talking it out to the closest of your friends, go ahead, but if you feel you should be left alone tell it to your friends and relatives politely.

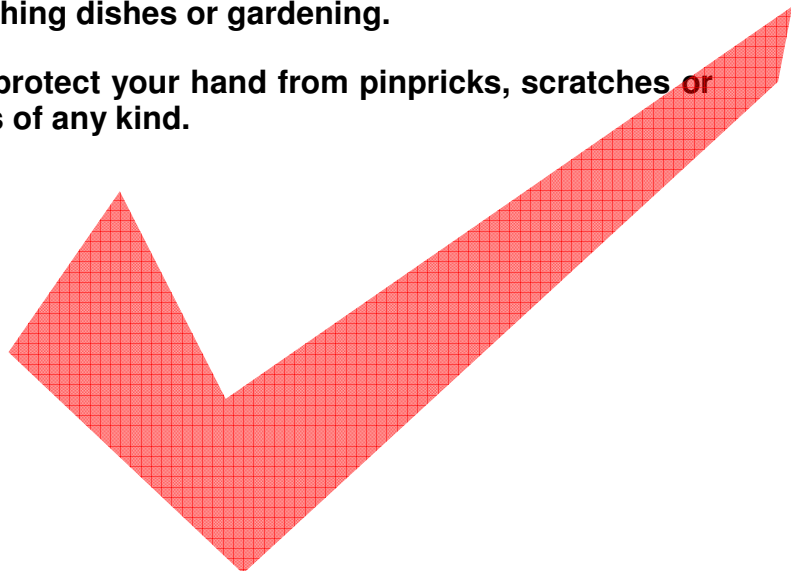
There may be a feeling of anger, resentment, denial, blame, guilt, withdrawal, isolation etc. Do not try to suppress them. But there is no need to blame your self or anybody for it. Further, the experience of surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy may itself make you depressed or irritable. There is not a single way of coping with it but one thing is sure, the more optimistic you are about the whole thing, the better are the results of treatment. So do not just succumb—**fight!**

Dos and Don'ts : Please follow these rules

DOs

Do wear a loose rubber glove on your hand when washing dishes or gardening.

Do protect your hand from pinpricks, scratches or cuts of any kind.



Use an electric razor with a narrow head for underarms shaving to reduce the risk of nicks and scratches.

Use a thimble while stitching.

Use loose clothing.

Use insect repellent to avoid bites.

DON'TS

Do not allow injections of any kind on the affected arm.

Do not allow your blood to be drawn from the affected arm.

Do not take blood pressure on the affected arm.

Do not cut or prick at the cuticles or nails on the affected arm.

Do not wear tight clothing or jewelry on the affected arm.

Do not expose the affected arm or hand to excessive temperature.

Appendix 3

Your own check list

- 1 **Have you been explained the nature of your disease?**
- 2 **Have you been told about the type of surgery you will undergo?**
- 3 **Do you know how to take care of your drainage bottle once discharged from the hospital?**
- 4 **Do you know what medicine to take at home?**

- 5 Have you been taught postoperative exercises?
- 6 Have you been thoroughly counseled about chemotherapy?
- 7 Have you been counseled about radiotherapy?
- 8 Are you aware of the precautions that you have to take at home?
- 9 Are you aware of the *Breast Support Groups*?
- 10 Have you received breast prosthesis?
- 11 Have you visited our 'V' care group?
- 12 Do you know about your next follow-up visit?
- 13 Are you aware of problems that warrant your treating doctor's attention?
- 14 Do you know what *Breast Self Examination* is?

If you feel that you have not been explained about any of the above or you wish to know more then do not hesitate to discuss with your doctor.

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Are you interested in joining our fight against breast cancer?

- You can become a volunteer and help us in counseling our patients.
- You can donate to breast unit 'Research Fund'.