

*A Survivor's
Guide*
for the
Breast Cancer Journey

A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey: An Organizer and Handbook for the Newly Diagnosed™

By Kim Regenhard

Frequently Asked Questions

- Is the **Guide** a journal or an organizer/planner?
- Does the **Guide** contain all the information I need to make it through my breast cancer treatment?
- How do I begin to use *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey*?
- How do I use the Calendar section?
- How do I use the Directory?
- How do I use the Thank You section?
- How do I use the Research section?
- What should I do with the Caregivers Guide?
- Would the **Guide** be helpful for my spouse or caregiver to use?
- Is the **Guide** useful for women who are well into their breast cancer treatment or who have completed their treatments?
- Are the photos included in the **Guide** of actual breast cancer survivors?
- Does a percentage of the purchase price of the **Guide** go to organizations that are working to prevent or cure breast cancer or other related organizations?
- Would the **Guide** be appropriate to give as a gift to someone diagnosed with breast cancer?



Q: Is the Guide a journal or an organizer/planner?

A: It is both, and more. Unlike any other breast cancer book on the market, *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* offers women a planner that is inspirational, educational, useful, and practical – and includes ample space to record events, emotions, memories, medical information, insurance information, key dates, helpful resources, and much more.

The unique features of the *Guide* will help women newly diagnosed with breast cancer understand, organize, plan, and record their journey from cancer diagnosis to recovery so that they are well-organized, well-informed, and better able to make critical decisions that can affect their chances of survival. The *Guide* is intended to help women diagnosed with breast cancer *Plan to live.*™

Q: Does the *Guide* contain all the information I need to make it through my breast cancer treatment?

A: *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* is not intended to replace the information and advice you receive from your medical providers, but it can help you wade through and understand that information, and more proactively seek treatment that is well-suited to you, your family, and your unique type of breast cancer. *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* includes information that helps breast cancer patients and their caregivers understand diagnostic tests and the prognosis to make better informed decisions; know what questions to ask medical providers; explore the various treatment options; manage treatment as comfortably as possible; and prepare for life after cancer.

Q: How do I begin to use the *Survivor's Guide*?

A: If you've recently been diagnosed with breast cancer, you are most likely overwhelmed not only by your diagnosis, but also by the information you've received from your doctors and medical providers. *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* is intended to reduce your anxiety and confusion. Don't feel you have to work your way through the *Guide* from front cover to back cover in any particular order. Take a few minutes to peruse the Table of Contents and section introductions and use only the sections that will be helpful for you. *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* was created to make your journey through breast cancer more organized and less cumbersome so that you have time and energy after your appointments and treatments to focus on those you love and becoming well.

Q: How do I use the Calendar section?

A: The Calendar is intended to help you keep track of doctor appointments, treatment dates, medicine doses, work schedules, business meetings, social activities, and family events. Record the information that will be most useful for you. In addition to recording upcoming appointments, you may also want to describe how you feel from one day to the next. A useful model to describe how you feel is known as the EAT scale: "excellent," "average," or "terrible." This information will help you and your doctor make changes in medications or treatments to control any unfavorable symptoms you experience. By recording the effects of the disease on your body and emotions, you will also begin to see trends so that you can more easily predict the "good" and "not so good" days and plan activities accordingly.

Q: How do I use the Directory?

A: The *Guide's* Directory is designed to help you keep in touch with friends, family, and your care providers during your cancer treatment. The Directory serves as an address book with ample space for you to maintain personal and medical team information so that it will be handy when needed. The Directory can be a good way to organize information such as names and numbers for oncologist, radiologist, physicians' assistants; office addresses; and email addresses for people you need to contact for treatment or in an emergency. You can also use this section to record important insurance information, such as policy number and phone number.

Q: How do I use the Thank You section?

A: The Thank You section of *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* provides an easy way for you to track gifts and support you receive from family, friends, neighbors, church members, or care givers. Use this section to record what you have received (gifts, meals, cleaning, rides to appointments) and who provided it. When you feel up to it, you can use the Thank You section to record when and how you have acknowledged the kindnesses you've received (e.g., verbal acknowledgement, note, email, phone call).

Q: How do I use the Research section?

A: The Research section is a place to store clinical information, personal medical records, and research results. Use the pocket folders in the Research section to collect laboratory tests, pathology reports, breast cancer staging information, pre-test instructions, etc. You will find it helpful to have this information on hand during your various appointments.

Q: What should I do with the Caregivers Guide?

A: Supporting a person with cancer can be almost as stressful as having cancer yourself. Providing care for a person with cancer can be very demanding in terms of time and responsibility – and it is never easy to watch someone you care about suffer from a serious disease and the side effects and stresses of treatment. The Caregivers Guide is intended to help those supporting breast cancer patients understand their role, emotions, demands, and stresses so that they can remain healthy, organized, and well while caring for you.

Q: Would the Guide be helpful for my spouse or caregiver to use?

A: Yes. Many breast cancer survivors encourage newly diagnosed breast cancer patients to bring a spouse, friend, or caregiver along to medical appointments to assist you in recording and remembering all the information and instructions given by your care providers. *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* is a perfect tool for them to use for this.

Some women find they are too sick or overwhelmed to grasp or track the many aspects of breast cancer treatment, such as diagnoses, appointments, prescription schedules, treatment options, and so forth. In such a case, *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* is extremely helpful for the caregiver, spouse, or family member.

Q: Is the Guide useful for women who are well into their breast cancer treatment or who have completed their treatments?

A: Absolutely. Whether you're just beginning the breast cancer journey, mid-way through your treatments, or celebrating the completion of chemotherapy and radiation, you are undergoing or have undergone a life-changing event that you will carry with you the rest of your life – hopefully as an experience that has given you new strength, new goals, and a new appreciation of the life you've been given.

If you are at all disposed toward writing, it will be well worth your while to record aspects of your journey that will aid doctors in diagnosing and adjusting your treatments; help you remember the positive things you've learned about yourself and those you love along the way; and record what advice you would give to a friend or loved one should she be diagnosed with breast cancer in the future. You might not think you'll forget the details of your diagnosis, treatment, and recovery, but unless you write them down, you most likely will.

Many breast cancer patients continue to take various medications and undergo screenings for cancer and other breast-cancer-related conditions well after the initial cancer treatment is complete. The *Guide* is a useful place to store tests, reports, and medication regimens for future reference, as well as to schedule upcoming appointments and screenings.

Q: Are the photos included in the Guide of actual breast cancer survivors?

A: Yes. Each woman featured in *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* was diagnosed with breast cancer and has successfully walked through the many demands and decisions required by breast cancer treatment. The quotes dispersed throughout the *Guide* are from these and other women who have survived breast cancer and want to offer hope and encouragement to those who have been newly diagnosed.

Q: Does a percentage of the purchase price of the Guide go to organizations that are working to prevent or cure breast cancer or other related organizations?

A: Yes. Kim Regenhard, author of *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey*, is committed to supporting organizations that are dedicated to women's health and well being – and in particular, those working to prevent, manage, and cure breast cancer. As part of this commitment, a portion of the proceeds from the *Guide* will be donated to cancer research.

Q: Would the Guide be appropriate to give as a gift to someone diagnosed with breast cancer?

A: Absolutely. Breast cancer survivors have shared that aside from purchasing a copy of *Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book*, they were not motivated to shop for other books or resources related to breast cancer when they are newly diagnosed. Even so, most women we've spoken with wish they had had something like *A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey* to help them through their breast cancer journey.

A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey was designed to be both practical and beautiful in order to be wonderfully gift-worthy. In fact, it was created to be a gift from those who have walked and survived the breast cancer journey to those who find themselves taking the very first steps.

