

# **Tips for Organizing Your Breast Cancer Information**

**by Kim Regenhard**

*The breast cancer journey is filled with decisions, doctor visits, tests, treatments, medications, side effects, and stress. Below are some tips to help a woman newly diagnosed with breast cancer **take control** of this overwhelming experience.*

## **Four Tips for Organizing Your Journey**

1. *Request copies of all your cancer treatment records and set up a **personal medical file**. Your file may include lab tests, pathology reports, x-ray results, prescription regimen, and follow-up care instructions. Over time, it's easy to forget when you were treated, who treated you, and what kind of drugs you were given.*
2. *Buy a **journal** to organize your thoughts, take notes, and document your experience. Some days you may feel like writing in your journal and other days you won't. Don't worry about the entries being sparse; even a few notes can help you remember important emotions or milestones. Keeping a journal can be a great defense against feeling overwhelmed or afraid.*
3. *Use a **directory** to maintain personal and medical team information so it will be handy when needed. A directory is a good place to organize information such as physician names, office addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses for people you need to call in an emergency. You can also use the directory to record insurance policy information, contact names, and numbers.*
4. *Keep track of all of your doctor's appointments, treatment dates, medicine doses, work schedule, and social activities in **one calendar**. In addition to recording your upcoming appointments, you may want to describe how you feel from one day to the next. This information will help you and your doctor find ways to make you more comfortable.*

*Staying organized during your cancer experience will help you stay calm and in control and will give you the order needed to focus your energy on **becoming well**.*

*More about Kim Regenhard, RiverStone Journals, and Kim's first book, A Survivor's Guide for the Breast Cancer Journey, can be found at [www.riverstonejournals.com](http://www.riverstonejournals.com).*