



WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVIVORSHIP CARE PLAN FOR YOUNG BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS

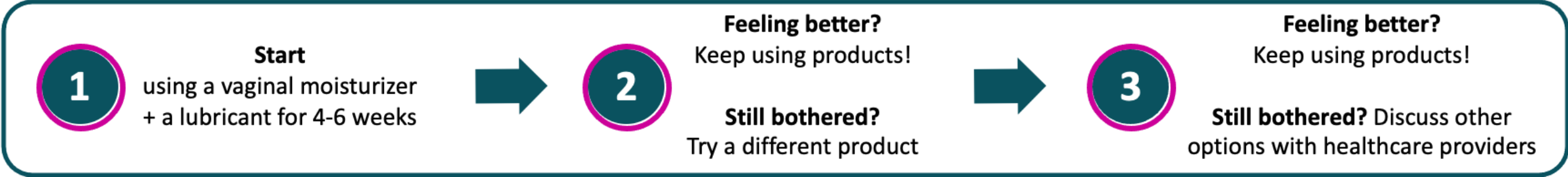
TAKING CARE OF SEXUAL HEALTH

WHAT TYPES OF SEXUAL AND/OR VAGINAL HEALTH ISSUES CAN BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS FACE?

- Physical and emotional changes affect body image, intimacy and sex in most young breast cancer survivors. These changes can happen because of breast surgery, chemotherapy, radiation or endocrine therapy.
- Vaginal dryness, discomfort during sex and not achieving orgasms are the most common physical changes.
- In survivors who are not having sex, vaginal dryness and atrophy (thinning and drying of vaginal walls) also cause discomfort.
- Emotional changes can include not feeling desire, not feeling aroused, worry about body image, and concern about partners' perceptions.



STRATEGY TO IMPROVE VAGINAL DRYNESS OR COMFORT DURING SEX = VAGINAL MOISTURIZER + VAGINAL LUBRICANT



	VAGINAL MOISTURIZER	+		VAGINAL LUBRICANT
What is it? Examples of product	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Replens, RepHresh: gels with polycarbophil baseK-Y Liquibeads: bead with silicone base			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Good Clean LoveAstroglideK-Y LiquidAqueous lidocaine <ul style="list-style-type: none">K-Y Intriguepjur OriginalWET
How does it work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improves vaginal moisture and pHLasts 1-3 days			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lubricating fluidsUse during sex to decrease vaginal dryness & discomfort
How do you use it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use applicator to place product in vagina 2-3 times each week			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Place topically on genitalia like the vagina, vulva and penis
Cost	\$5-\$20 per bottle			<div>\$8-\$15 per tube</div> <div>\$10-\$15 per tube</div>
How do you use it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use regularlyBest used not at the time of intercourseMany will report vaginal irritation in the first 4 weeksCheck package for use with condoms			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Okay to use with latex condomsDries out with extended activityEasy to wash offLess skin irritation than other lubricants <ul style="list-style-type: none">Check package for use with condomsLess likely to dry out with extended activity

WHAT TYPES OF HORMONE-FREE TREATMENTS IMPROVE SEXUAL HEALTH IN BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS?

- Using vaginal moisturizers and lubricants is the recommended and safe treatment for vaginal discomfort.
 - Try different lubricants and moisturizers to find the best products for you (see Table).
 - Moisturizers take time to work whether women are having sex or not (recommend 1-2 months of regular use).
 - Products with warming agents, bactericides, microbicides, perfumes, artificial colors and flavors may cause vaginal irritation.
 - The amount of parabens and/or silicone in lubricants are not considered to cause cancer as per the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
 - Products are available without prescription at grocery stores, drug stores and online sites.
- Counseling for both survivors and their partners can improve sexual health.
 - Examples: sex therapy/counseling to learn techniques such as sensate focus exercises, couple-based therapy to promote mutual support and coping, and individual therapy on issues such as body image
 - Marriage and family therapists, sex therapists/counselors and psychologists offer these treatments.





WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVIVORSHIP CARE PLAN FOR YOUNG BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS TAKING CARE OF SEXUAL HEALTH: CONTINUED

WHAT TYPES OF HORMONE-BASED TREATMENTS IMPROVE SEXUAL HEALTH IN BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS?

Hormone medications below are not routinely used, because long-term safety in breast cancer survivors has not been shown. Hormone treatments improve vaginal dryness and quality of life and can be considered in women who do not respond to moisturizers and lubricants.

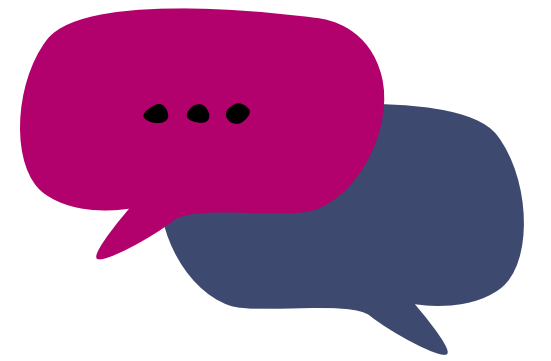
Talk with your healthcare providers about the risks and benefits of the hormone treatments below.

- Vaginal hormone treatments:
 - Prescription medicines that deliver estrogen to the vagina improve vaginal dryness. Very low amounts of estrogen are absorbed.
 - DHEA vaginal ovules and vaginal testosterone gel/cream can improve vaginal dryness and discomfort during sex. These hormones may be converted to estrogen and absorbed.
- Systemic estrogen or progesterone hormone therapy (HRT) are not routinely recommended, regardless of hormone receptor status of the breast cancer.
- Topical testosterone and ospemifene (a selective estrogen receptor modulator) have been shown to improve sexual function in postmenopausal women, but they have not been studied in breast cancer survivors.

PEER AND PROVIDER TIPS

Many treatments for vaginal and sexual concerns have not been studied in breast cancer survivors and their partners. Here are common tips from peers and sexual health providers.

- Sex matters!
- Start the conversation with your healthcare providers!
- Vaginal dilators or pelvic floor therapy may be needed to stretch tightened vaginal tissues.
- Get to know your vibrator.
- Stay tuned for more data on FDA-approved medication for libido.



KEY ONLINE RESOURCES

- American Cancer Society:
<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatmentsandsideeffects/physicalsideeffects/sexualsideeffects/women/sexualityforthewoman/index>
- American Association of Sexuality Educators Counselors and Therapists (AASECT, find a sexual health provider):
<http://www.aasect.org/referral-directory>

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