

The Fight Pink Report™

February's Fight Pink Report Poor Marriage Can Hinder Breast Cancer Recovery

February 2009

An intimate relationship is not the first thing women worry about when they are diagnosed with breast cancer, but it has a significant influence on how they cope emotionally and physically. In a recent study, researchers studied women with newly diagnosed breast cancer to determine whether relationship distress contributed to poor health behaviors and slowed recovery. This study was conducted by research associate in psychology Hae-Chung Yahng, PhD and doctoral student Tammy A. Schuler of Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. The 100 women who participated were married or cohabiting at the beginning of the study and throughout the following five years. These women were assessed after diagnosis and surgery and then every 4 or 6 months for stress, physical activity, symptoms and signs of illness.

The results showed that:

- Relationship distress was linked to slower recovery and poorer outcomes.

- Both distressed and stable relationship groups had equivalent high levels of stress, but this diverged afterwards.
- Stress went down more slowly for the women in distressed relationships, and after 5 years it remained significantly higher than for the women in stable and non-distressed relationships.
- There were also differences in the extent to which physical activity diminished.
- The distressed relationship group had a slower recovery in health performance and showed more signs and symptoms of illness and treatment side effects for three years after diagnosis.
- All the effects were unchanged after accounting for symptoms of depression, which were also significantly higher among the women in the distressed relationship group.



Women experiencing poor relationships with their spouse or live-in partner had higher levels of stress, lower levels of physical activity, recovered more slowly, and had more symptoms of illness than women reporting to having good relationships. The quality of the relationship has a big influence on recovery from cancer. "Clearly, relationship distress is a risk factor for numerous poorer outcomes and it is never late to work to improve your marriage, not only for your emotional well-being but also for your health," said Yang.

Twelve Ways to Improve Your Marriage

1. Be honest.
2. Support one another's goals and achievements.
3. Respect each other.
4. Take time to share dreams and goals on a regular basis with your spouse.
5. Consider daily dialogue as a means of improving your communication.
6. Laugh together at least once a day.
7. Fight fair.
8. Be willing to forgive.
9. Remember kindness towards each other is a great gift.
10. Share your daily expectations.
11. Make decisions about finances, disciplining the children, chores, etc. Together.
12. Take time to be alone together working on your intimacy. Schedule dates or romantic getaways.

Support Resources

- Cancer Hope Network www.cancerhopenetwork.org 1.877.467.3638
- American Cancer Society www.cancer.org 1.800.227.2345
- PatchWorx Inc. www.patchworx.org 650.859.3382
- Onconurse.com www.onconurse.com
- National Cancer Institute www.cancer.gov 1.800.422.6237
- AMC Cancer Information and Counseling Line 1.800.525.3777
- ACOR.org www.acor.org Association of Cancer Online Resources
- Cancer Care www.cancercare.org 1.800.813.4673



Your Personal Promise™

**Getting the most out of making a Difference,
Ordinary people doing extraordinary things!**

Mitchell

Mitchell Ashley is the founder and principal consultant of Converging Network LLC. He's a technologist, product creator, entrepreneur and podcaster. He enjoys writing and blogging; but there is one topic that he has sparingly and cautiously blogged about. *Breast Cancer*. Mitchell's wonderful wife of 26 years, Mary Ellen, has breast cancer. Out of fear, he was not ready to share and deal openly with the events that were unfolding in their life. When he realized breast cancer happens and you don't have control over it, he launched the website www.breastcancerforhusbands.com and started blogging about his experiences. He found that blogging helped him to overcome his fear so that he could become a stronger and more caring husband to support his wife. He also knew there were other husbands who were going through the same situations. With his blog he gives other husbands a place to reach out and help support

each other. On his blog they can talk about relevant breast cancer news, research, treatment, and faith. He welcomes everyone to share experiences, information, and questions.

"Everyone has their own way of dealing with things. Some are more private and others are more public about it. However you chose to handle life, I'd encourage you to let others know that it's okay to inquire, offer help, or just check in and tell you they're thinking about you. I think you'll appreciate the strength and encouragement that comes from it. Here's my encouragement. Don't ever get tired of telling your story. You have an important story to tell, because others care about you both very deeply."

– Mitchell Ashley

Mitchell

Your Personal Promise™

Whether a survivor or an activist, contact Fight Pink™ for details on how to submit "Your Personal Promise™" on how **you** are saving lives and helping to end breast cancer forever!

We are looking for real women and men who are survivors, activists, and want to contribute to the Fight Pink™ cause. We will post Your Personal Promise™ story; tell us how you are getting the most out of making a difference!

We take the stories put into our hands and from them build a bridge into other less informed lives, so that daily we pass over it on errands of education and awareness for the purpose of saving lives!

Stacy

Fight Pink™



Dr. Bowden's 11 Best Healthy Foods

- Beets
- Cabbage
- Swiss Chard
- Cinnamon
- Pomegranate Juice
- Dried Plums
- Pumpkin Seeds
- Sardines
- Turmeric
- Frozen Blueberries
- Canned Pumpkin

Make Healthy Choices

**Early Detection
Is the Key to Saving
Lives**

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