

HOW TO SUPPORT A LOVED ONE WITH BREAST CANCER



ly half of all breast cancers occur in women with no specific identifiable risk factors beyond age and sex, so there may be no warning signs that a cancer diagnosis is coming. Chances are a newly diagnosed breast cancer patient will need some measure of help and support but may not feel comfortable asking for assistance. Getting help also can be overwhelming for certain individuals. But supportive friends or loved ones can step up

Someone is diagnosed with breast cancer every day. The World Health Organization says breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women around the world, as well as a leading cause of cancer death. Unfortunately, rough-

- to the plate and offer support in various ways.
- **Provide meals.** Take turns with other friends and family members to prepare and deliver meals. If you don't cook, arrange to have take-out delivered.
- **Go grocery shopping.** Help stock the refrigerator with plenty of healthy and convenient foods. While the person battling cancer may experience various degrees of hunger, keeping food available helps other members of the household.
- **Straighten up.** Take care of cleaning around the house. You may wash some loads of laundry, vacuum and iron clothes. If budget allows, you can hire a cleaning service to come in once or twice a month for a deep cleaning.

- **Care for the dog.** If fatigue makes it challenging for the person battling cancer to take the dog on walks, you can step up and handle dog walking or trips to a dog park.
- **Provide caregivers a break.** The primary caregiver will be working overtime to offer support, and you can give that person a much-needed break. Step in to go to doctors' appointments or watch a young child so the caregiver gets a day or two off.
- **Take on chauffeur duty.** Take on the task of driving the patient to and from checkups or scans. A friendly face can make a big difference in taming anxiety.
- **Make home more comfortable.** Transform any living spaces, whether they are home or temporary apartments or

- hotels, with creature comforts. This can include high thread count sheets, newly framed family photos, comfortable pillows and blankets, and more.
- **Sit and listen.** Sometimes the greatest

comfort can be sitting with and listening to the person who is fighting cancer. Don't offer advice or recommendations unless prompted, but listen to any concerns and offer time and support.

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