



# TORRANCE MEMORIAL

## CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAM

A PARTNER WITH THE UCLA-LIVESTRONG™ CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

### BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR PROGRAM MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS

- Women who have breast cancer can experience a sudden onset of the symptoms of menopause either because they must stop taking hormone replacement therapy, or, if the woman is pre-menopausal, chemotherapy can cause the ovaries to stop producing estrogen, which results in menopause.
- Although menopausal symptoms can be quite uncomfortable, they usually lessen with time. However, they may never disappear completely.
- Because it is not known if hormone supplementation increases the risk of breast cancer recurrence, most oncologists recommend permanent discontinuation of these medications. Also, certain medications used to reduce the risk of breast cancer recurrence, e. g., tamoxifen, anastrozole, and letrozole, cannot be taken if a woman is using estrogen supplementation.
- Menopausal symptoms include vaginal dryness, hot flashes, insomnia and mood swings. Post-menopausal women are also at risk for development of osteoporosis.
- Regular exercise and avoidance of obesity, smoking, caffeine, overly spicy foods and alcohol have been shown to decrease hot flashes.
- Interventions for vaginal symptoms include: estrogen-free vaginal moisturizers and a low-dose estrogen-containing soft ring or estradiol pellet that are inserted into the vagina.
- Medications that appear effective in reducing hot flashes include Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI), Selective Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRI), gabapentin (an anti-seizure medication), clonidine (an antihypertensive), and megestrol actate (a hormonal agent used to treat advanced breast cancer).
- There is little evidence that vitamin E, soy, red clover or black cohosh are effective in relieving menopausal symptoms. Also, soy and red clover contain plant-derived estrogen and its impact on breast cancer recurrence is not known.

### MY ACTION PLAN

#### MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Keep a journal to help me better understand what symptoms I am experiencing. Include a description of the symptom and any triggers that bring them on.
- Have a discussion with my physician about what I am experiencing and options to control them.
- Confer with my physician before I begin any over-the-counter or complementary therapies

#### QUIT SMOKING

- Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Participate in a stop-smoking program

#### MANAGE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.

- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages to one drink per day.
- Participate in Alcoholics Anonymous or other alcohol dependency program.

NUTRITION

- Talk to my doctor or nurse about my specific calcium requirements
- Maintain a diet high in calcium and vitamin D

EXERCISE

- Make weight-bearing exercise a normal part of my daily routine (minimum 30 minutes three times per week).
- Check with my physician before I start my exercise program.
- Personal goal: \_\_\_\_\_

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

- Weight loss. Personal goal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Weight loss program. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Talk to my doctor or nurse about how I am feeling and interventions that may help

OTHER:

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TO LEARN MORE:

Alcohol Dependency

Torrance Memorial Thelma McMillen Center for Chemical Dependency  
(310) 257-5760

Fitness and Exercise

Torrance Memorial  
[http://torrancememorial.org/Health\\_Education/Fitness\\_Exercise.aspx](http://torrancememorial.org/Health_Education/Fitness_Exercise.aspx)

Menopausal Symptoms

Breastcancer.org: All About Hot Flashes  
[http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/menopausal/facing/hot\\_flashes.jsp](http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/menopausal/facing/hot_flashes.jsp)

Susan G. Komen for the Cure: Alternatives to Postmenopausal hormones  
<http://ww5.komen.org/Content.aspx?id=5526&terms=hot+flashes>

Living Beyond Breast Cancer: Beyond the Basics: Menopausal Symptoms  
<http://www.lbbc.org/Understanding-Breast-Cancer/Beyond-the-Basics/Symptoms-and-Side-Effects/Menopausal-Symptoms>

Smoking Cessation

Torrance Memorial: Breathe Freely – A Stop Smoking Program. (310) 517-4701

American Cancer Society: Guide to Quitting Smoking  
<http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayfromTobacco/GuidetoQuittingSmoking/index>

National Cancer Institute: Smoking Cessation and Continued Risk in Cancer Patients  
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/smokingcessation/Patient>

Weight Management

Torrance Memorial: Scale Down Program (310) 784-4897  
[http://torrancememorial.org/Health\\_Education/Weight\\_Loss.aspx](http://torrancememorial.org/Health_Education/Weight_Loss.aspx)

Torrance YMCA Health and Fitness Program (310) 325-5885  
[www.ymcala.org](http://www.ymcala.org)