

## 10 THINGS

## To Actively Manage MBC

Being diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer (MBC) can come as a shock and be frightening, and often results in questions such as “How will I manage a cancer, I will have for the rest of my life?” While this question can be difficult to answer, it is important to know that you are not alone in answering it.

## BELOW ARE 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW TO HELP ACTIVELY MANAGE YOUR MBC

- 1 Actively participate in treatment discussions** and ask your doctor to explain anything you do not understand or information with which you are not comfortable.
- 2 Involve your full treatment team.** Your healthcare team is made up of various healthcare professionals. Be open and honest about your symptoms and treatment side effects. Cancer affects people differently, and no one can predict your individual experience.
- 3 Know your tumor’s biomarker status and ask what it means for your treatment plan.** Breast cancer can be hormone driven—and the progression of MBC can be directly related to the types of hormones. Knowing what drives tumor growth allows you and your medical team to make informed treatment decisions. You may also want to speak to your doctor about having a re-biopsy done periodically to see if your tumor’s hormone receptor status has changed.
- 4 Consider taking a family member or a friend to your appointments** to offer support, to help you remember questions you want to ask and/or to take notes for you to review at a later time.
- 5 Share feelings of anxiety and distress with your healthcare team and loved ones.** This is not the time to hide concerns or try to see if feelings of anxiety and distress will pass. Talk with your medical team and loved ones about ways you can relieve your stress and reduce your fears.
- 6 Learn how sexual desire or activity may be impacted.** Breast cancer and treatments may cause fatigue, discomfort, pain, and other side effects—all of which may decrease sexual desire. Talk with your healthcare team about what to expect and how to handle these side effects, and be open and honest with your partner about what you’re feeling and what you need from them.
- 7 Stay active and exercise when you can.** Take walks as you feel up to it and/or seek an exercise program designed for cancer patients within your community. Staying physically active can help you to keep your body strong and may improve your sense of well-being; be sure to talk to your doctor before you begin an exercise program.
- 8 Maintain a healthy diet.** Consider speaking with a nutritionist to find a diet that works for you. Good nutrition may help you keep up your strength and handle the side effects of treatment.
- 9 Talk to others going through similar journeys.** Dealing with cancer can be emotionally and physically draining. Connecting with others living with MBC in person or online can be extraordinarily meaningful for both those who are just beginning their MBC journey and for those who have experience and insights to share.
- 10 Continue to participate in activities you enjoy.** Having a routine can help you focus on activities that bring you joy. Whether it is a daily routine or something you do only once a week, a routine can help you maintain good habits and provide structure during times of uncertainty when so many other aspects of life may seem out of control.