

A program just for you

Established in 2005, Young and Strong, the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer at Dana-Farber's Susan F. Smith Center for Women's Cancers, provides comprehensive care and support to young women confronting the challenges of living with and beyond breast cancer. Our mission is to enhance care and education for patients and their families, as well as to advance understanding of the biology of breast cancer and the experience of the disease through ongoing research focused on younger women. More than 2,600 young women have been enrolled to date.

For more information about Young and Strong, please contact Jenn McNutt at 617-632-3916, or visit www.danafarber.org/YoungWomenBreastCancer. You can also follow us on Twitter @Young-StrongDFCI.

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Can ovarian suppression prevent relapse?

IS OVARIAN SUPPRESSION EFFECTIVE IN preventing breast cancer relapse? Study results say yes — in some cases.

An international study — the Suppression of Ovarian Function Trial (SOFT Trial) — addressed this question in premenopausal women with hormone-receptor positive, early stage breast cancer. The study was published in a January 2015 edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.



Ann Partridge, MD, MPH, director of the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer

The purpose was to find out if ovarian function suppression [OS], combined with hormonal therapy, may fight breast cancer by reducing the production of estrogen. Combined with OS were tamoxifen, a drug that blocks the effects of estrogen, and exemestane, an aromatase inhibitor that blocks the action of the enzyme aromatase, thereby lowering estrogen.

The study compared three groups of women with early breast cancer over the course of five years: women treated with tamoxifen, women treated with tamoxifen plus OS either as a monthly shot or surgery to remove the ovaries, and women treated with exemestane plus OS.

The results showed that overall, ovarian

suppression did not reduce the risk of breast cancer recurrence compared to tamoxifen alone in the whole population. However, women who received chemotherapy had a substantial reduction in the risk of breast cancer recurrence when OS was added to tamoxifen. Risks were lowered even further in the group that received OS with an aromatase inhibitor. The benefits were particularly evident in women younger than 35.

In the women who did not receive chemotherapy, the risk of cancer recurrence was quite low overall and not substantially improved with OS. Thus, tamoxifen alone remains a good choice for women with lower risk.

Side effects were also studied and women who were treated with OS reported substantially more menopausal symptoms including vaginal dryness and hot flashes, although overall quality of life was similar in all the treatment groups. After a few years, symptoms became less burdensome for women receiving OS.

What do these results mean for you?

If you are a premenopausal woman just starting hormonal therapy and you are not at high risk, you can consider tamoxifen alone. If you are receiving or have received chemotherapy, have higher-risk disease, or are under 35, you may consider adding OS to either tamoxifen or an aromatase inhibitor.

If you are already taking hormonal therapy, whether or not you should change your treatment will depend on the original risk of your disease, how far out you are from diagnosis, how well you have tolerated therapy so far, and your own preferences.

Any woman considering OS should talk with her doctor. **YES**

Listen to a podcast or watch a presentation on SOFT, featuring Dr. Partridge, at www.lbcc.org. Type SOFT into the search tool.

Resources can help ease your experience

FINDING RESOURCES TO EASE YOUR CANCER EXPERIENCE can be challenging, especially if you are unaware of the resources a hospital has to offer. If you are a patient at Dana-Farber, you can learn about our many resources – including Integrative Therapies, nutrition, and spiritual care – by visiting www.dana-farber.org and searching under “Patient and Family Support.” You can also drop by the Shapiro Center for Patients and Families on the first floor of the Yawkey Center or call **617-632-3750**.

In addition, there are many external resources in your own community to help address your transportation, housing, or financial needs.

Short-term accommodations

A number of hotels in the greater Boston area offer a discount for patients being seen at any hospital. Be sure to see if the facility offers a medical rate. Booking as early as possible is best way to ensure a discounted rate.

Longer-term accommodations

If you are staying longer than a month, a short-term apartment rental might be the way to go. If you are coming into the Longwood Medical Area, contact Dana-Farber to get a list of suggested accommodations close by. You can also visit www.danafarber.org and search “places to stay” or call **617-632-3750**.

Transportation

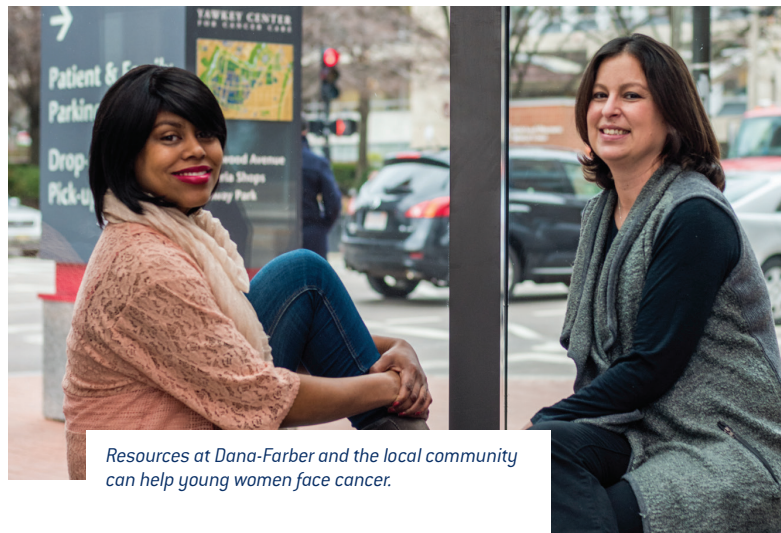
Especially in a busy city like Boston, transportation can often be a difficult task and a dreaded experience – from getting lost in the city, braving public transportation, and trying to figure out if there are any shuttles for in your area. Here are some resources that might help:

- **American Cancer Society** provides a free nationwide transportation service that requires 4-5 business days notice. Contact **1-800-227-2345** to see if they have a volunteer driver near you.
- **Angel Wheels** is a long distance transport service for patients with financial need. To see if you qualify, call them at **1-800-768-0238**.
- **Angel Flight** is a non-profit organization that arranges air transportation for patients who are financially distressed, or who are in a time-critical, non-emergency situation due to their medical condition. To contact Angel Flight, call **918-745-0879**.
- **Neighbor Brigade** is a local transportation service supporting a variety of neighborhoods, free of charge. To see if your neighborhood has a chapter, call **781-325-8580**.
- **Prescription Transportation (PT-1)** offers free transportation through your insurance, if you are Mass Health eligible. To access, contact your local hospital or call Mass Health at **1-800-841-2900**.

Contact your hospital for a list of local shuttles or discounted parking options. For DFCI shuttle information, contact our concierge at **617-632-3750**, and for parking assistance, contact our Patient Parking Program at **617-632-5110**.

Food assistance

- **Meal Train** is a free nationwide service that simplifies giving and receiving meals. For more information, visit www.mealtrain.com.
- **FoodSource Hotline** provides comprehensive statewide information and referral service in Massachusetts for people facing hunger. Call 1-800-645-8333.
- **Community Servings** is based in Boston, MA and is a volunteer-based home delivery service of hot meals that are available to anyone living with a life-threatening disease. To see if they service your area, contact **617-522-7777**.



Resources at Dana-Farber and the local community can help young women face cancer.

Fuel assistance

Low Income Home Energy Assistance, otherwise known as the ABCD Energy Department, offers financial assistance to qualifying low-income MA households who require support in paying their home heating bills. To apply, call **617-357-6012**. If you are not a MA resident, contact your local government office to see if they have a fuel assistance program.

Patient assistance programs

A number of financial assistance programs and grants can help supplement the cost of treatment co-pays and daily living expenses. By visiting www.needymeds.org, you can search for diagnosis-based assistance. If you need help navigating the website, you can call their helpline at **1-800-503-6897**.

For other resource and patient assistance programs, contact your local hospital. For Dana-Farber patients, contact the Shapiro Center for Patients and Families at **617-632-3301**. **Y&S**

Gala raises funds for Young and Strong

Last October, a committee of survivors and supporters joined forces to raise funds for the Young and Strong program. They hosted an evening gala with a sell-out crowd. It was a truly touching celebration of every woman who has been affected by the disease and her family.

Thanks to hard work, dedication, and planning expertise, the night was a major success and raised critical funds for the program. We cannot express how grateful we are for those who continue to support the program and the work we do to support young women.

If you'd like to learn more about the event or get involved, visit www.CelebratingYoungandStrong.weebly.com.

Meet Jennifer McNutt, Program Coordinator



Jennifer McNutt is the new program coordinator for the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer. Some of you may already know her from her previous role as a resource specialist, in which she helped patients and family members find resources such as transportation, housing, financial support, and much more. Jenn has always enjoyed helping patients and their families, and is excited to be working on behalf of young women with breast cancer.

Jenn is available to answer questions about the program and all the resources available to you. You can contact her at 617-632-3916 or jennifer_mcnutt@dfci.harvard.edu.

Recent grant allows Young and Strong to expand

THE YOUNG AND STRONG PROGRAM RECENTLY RECEIVED A FIVE-YEAR GRANT from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This funding will allow us to expand our program, currently available only at the Longwood campus of Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center in Boston, to our satellites, affiliate sites, and physician practices in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

We aim to personally connect with younger women being treated for breast cancer at these locations, and inform them of resources that are available to them throughout their cancer journey and beyond. We will help make direct, rapid referrals to psychologists or social workers, fertility specialists and survivorship experts. Much like we do at the main campus, we will provide educational and psychosocial support directly to women through our biannual newsletter, workshops, seminars and support groups.

The facilities include:

- Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center at Milford Regional Medical Center
- Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center in clinical affiliation with South Shore Hospital
- Dana-Farber/New Hampshire Hematology-Oncology
- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center
- Lawrence + Memorial Cancer Center
- Dana-Farber Community Cancer Care

We will be working with partnering organizations and other grantees, such as the Young Survival Coalition, Living Beyond Breast Cancer, Sharsheret, and others to offer a Young Women's Lecture Series so women across the country can hear from leaders in the field through regular nationwide webinars.

Under a proactive approach to survivorship care, each patient will receive optimal survivorship care and planning. This will include a visit to a survivorship provider and receipt of a personalized treatment summary and survivorship care plan as a road map for future health and well-being.

We will also offer continuing education for physicians, nurse practitioners, and other providers at each location. We aim to ensure that local providers are updated on the latest developments in breast cancer treatment in young women. This support will include educational presentations and writings, clinical checklists, and continuing medical education. Local physicians will also have access to the Dana-Farber main campus tumor boards, so that patient cases can be discussed with a wealth of specialists in their field.

To stay in the loop about programming in your area, or that you can access remotely, call Jennifer McNutt at 617-632-3916. [Y&S](#)

SPOTLIGHT: Young survivor team launches Long Walk Sundays

We are excited to announce that Erin H. and other young survivors are offering an opportunity for you to get moving with other young women. Their **LONG WALK SUNDAYS** in Boston and beyond will begin in June and are open to all Young & Strong members and their loved ones. Erin and her teammates started these walks last year as a way to train for the Jimmy Fund Walk, but would like to open them up as a way for young survivors meet each other and to get exercise. You do not need to be part of the Walk Team to join.

For more information, email teamyoungandstrong@gmail.com. For more information on the Y&S Walk Team that will be participating in the Jimmy Fund Walk on September 20, 2015, visit www.jimmyfundwalk.org/2015/youngandstrong or follow them on Twitter @TeamYoungandStrong.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION



Susan G. Komen
www.komen.org

Susan G. Komen for the Cure is the world's largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists working together to save lives.



Young Survival Coalition
www.youngsurvival.org

The Young Survival Coalition (YSC) is an international, nonprofit network of breast cancer survivors and supporters dedicated to the issues unique to young women with breast cancer.



Living Beyond Breast Cancer
www.lbbc.org

Living Beyond Breast Cancer (LBBC) is a national organization whose goal is to improve quality of life and help women in their recovery or management of the disease.



LIVESTRONG Fertility
www.livestrong.org

LIVESTRONG Fertility, a program of the LIVESTRONG Foundation, provides information and support to cancer patients and survivors whose medical treatments present the risk of infertility.



Bright Pink
www.brightpink.org

Bright Pink is the only national non-profit organization focusing on the prevention and early detection of breast and ovarian cancer in young women, while providing support for high-risk individuals.



FORCE
www.facingourrisk.org

Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE) is the only national nonprofit organization devoted to hereditary breast and ovarian cancer. Programs serve anyone with a BRCA mutation or a family history of cancer.

Support and education

SoulMates

A peer mentor support program to provide guidance and support. If you are newly diagnosed and would like to be matched to a survivor, or if you are a survivor looking to be a mentor, please call **617-632-6501**.

Young Women's Telephone Support Group

Irene Goss-Werner, MSW, LICSW

For young women who are within the first year of diagnosis looking to connect with others who are of living with and beyond breast cancer. For more information, please contact Jennifer McNutt at **617-632-3916** or youngandstrong@partners.org.

Facing Forward

Julie Salinger, LICSW

A six-session series held twice yearly for patients who have recently completed treatment for early stage breast cancer. For more information, please call Julie Salinger at **617-582-8081**.

Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group

Liz Farrell, LICSW, and Fremonta Meyer, MD | Monthly, 11 a.m. to noon

For women of all ages with metastatic breast cancer. For more information or to register, please call Liz Farrell at **617-632-5606**.

Cancer and Careers

A program sponsored by Cosmetic Executive Women, Inc. a non-profit based in New York.

Listen to webinars on changing careers, managing finances, working through treatment, and more. To learn more or register, visit www.cancerandcareers.org.

Upcoming events

Sexual Health Workshop

Sharon Bober, PhD | Wednesday, May 6, 2015, 5:30–7:30pm

Join Dr. Bober as she discusses common challenges after treatment, including decreased sexual desire, body image concerns, menopausal symptoms, and communication difficulties with your partner. To register, contact Jennifer McNutt at **617-632-3916** or youngandstrong@partners.org.

Breast Cancer in Younger Women: A Forum for Patients and Survivors

Friday, October 16, 2015 | Joseph B. Martin Conference Center, Harvard Medical School

Don't miss the Annual Young Women's Forum! This full-day event includes a Patient and Survivor panel, an Ask the Experts panel including many of the most prominent providers from the Susan F. Smith Center for Women's Cancer, and small group sessions with our breast oncology social workers. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer McNutt.

Sexual Health and Intimacy: Couples Workshop

Sharon Bober, PhD | Thursday, November 12, 2015, 5:30–7 p.m.

Join Dr. Bober as she discusses common sexual challenges after treatment including decreased sexual desire, body image concerns, and communication difficulties with your partner. To register, contact Jennifer McNutt.

Parenting Workshop

Anna Muriel, MD, MPH | December 2015, date TBA

Join us for an informational session and discussion about parenting before, during, and after breast cancer treatment. For more information, contact Jennifer McNutt.