

Resources for parents diagnosed with breast cancer.

Parenting is hard. Being diagnosed with breast cancer is harder. Parenting with cancer feels impossible!

It doesn't matter what age your children are, one of your first thoughts will be how do I tell them?

Being honest about a breast cancer diagnosis with children of any age can be extremely difficult. Your first thought is to protect them from anxiety and distress. However, keeping information from them can do more harm than good, leaving them feeling more vulnerable. Children can sense when something is wrong and if they hear whispered conversations behind closed doors they will only fill in the gaps with far worse information. Imagination is often far worse than reality.

- It is always best to be honest with them at an age appropriate level, using age appropriate language. Children younger than 9 don't typically need as much detail as older children and teenagers.
- Only you know your child best, it is important to aim any conversation about cancer at their age range and level of understanding.
- Plan what you are going to say and set a time aside when you know you won't get disturbed.
- Use the word cancer. Don't use words like "sick" or "a baddie". Children have these words applied to themselves when they are poorly or have a scrape. This can cause confusion for them and they may worry they won't recover quickly.

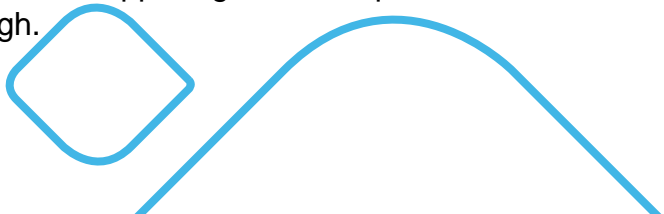
Online resources to access

Breast Cancer Now and Macmillan have pages dedicated to talking to your children about breast cancer and cancer in general.

www.breastcancernow.org/about-breast-cancer/primary-breast-cancer/talking-with-children-about-breast-cancer/

www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/diagnosis/talking-about-cancer/talking-to-children-and-teenagers

Parenting with cancer is a UK website where you can find support, guidance, tips and advice and the recognition that parenting with cancer is tough.



www.parentingwithcancer.org

The Fruitfly collective also have a wealth of information in the help section under parents and carers.

www.fruitflycollective.com/help-for-adults

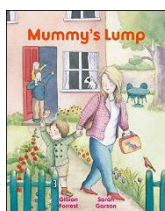
Podcasts to listen too.

BBC Podcast - You, Me and the Big C – About the kids

Breast Cancer Now podcast - S1:Ep15 – My Story: Anita on talking to children

Macmillan – Talking cancer podcast S3:Ep1 – Talking to children about cancer.

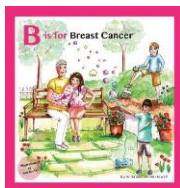
Books available to buy or download.



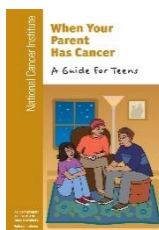
Mummy's lump by Gillian Forrest. Available for Kindle download on Amazon and available as a downloadable PDF file



Is it ok to have cuddles? Explaining breast cancer in words very young children can understand by Elke Thompson is available to buy on Amazon



B is for Breast Cancer by Anita Howell and Dr Simon Howell is also available to buy on Amazon



When your parent has cancer: A guide for teens by the National Cancer Institute. Available as download on Kindle from Amazon.

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG

01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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