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Media Release

Getting a Headstart on cancer recovery

Hair loss is one of the most well known side effects of cancer treatment. The RUH is now introducing a new service for women undergoing chemotherapy and, as a result, are suffering from hair loss.

Headstart is a free service to teach ladies how to tie headscarves for both day-to-day wear and special occasions. The service, funded by a grant from the Bath Cancer Unit Support Group, also offers a variety of headscarves available for a small donation, or free for people on low incomes.

Trudy Sheen, Macmillan Cancer Information Specialist says "Hair loss and hair thinning can be very stressful and some people find it the hardest part of having cancer and its treatment. This is understandable because our appearance is closely linked to our feelings of self esteem. Ladies may worry about how their friends and family see them, and may be concerned that they are no longer as physically attractive to their partners.

"Not all cancer treatment causes hair loss, but the drugs that do can cause anything from making your hair get thinner and, to it falling out completely. If a lady's hair falls out due to chemotherapy treatment, it almost always grows back once the treatment has finished, although this may take several months."

Trudy adds "We have trained a number of volunteers to run this service and to give demonstrations and advice on how to tie scarves. We hope to show ladies how they can be stylish with scarves as well as helping with the practical problems of protecting the sensitive scalp from the sun, and keeping the head warm in cold weather."

This free service runs two days a week and is open to any lady currently undergoing cancer treatment and who would like some advice and support.

The Headstart volunteers are also asking any local shops or suppliers who might be willing to support the service to see if they could providing a small number of attractive scarves for the ladies to use during the sessions and take home with them afterwards to practice so they can feel confident going out wearing a headscarf.

A very small donation of scarves could make a very large difference to a patients' confidence and self esteem as they undergo this distressing and painful cancer treatment.

Notes

Headstart sessions are held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am-12 noon in the Hairdressers room in the Oncology Dept.

There is more information about chemotherapy and hair loss in the chemotherapy section of CancerHelp UK.

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