

THE HEALTH CLINIC

Taking care of the physical health and mental wellness of all your family members

THE BIG QUESTION

Q. I have been given the all clear following treatment for breast cancer, yet I feel very low and apathetic, is this normal?



A: The short answer is yes, it's completely normal to feel the way you do.

It can come as a shock because it's not talked about much, but is something that a lot of breast cancer survivors experience. You've been focused on your physical recovery, endless appointments and a very intense time with a medical team supporting you. So when it all suddenly stops, you can feel alone and unprepared for moving forward, mentally and emotionally. You might be struggling with your new body and image with survivor's guilt, crippled with fear that the cancer will come back, or a whole lot of other emotions.

It's common, and you need to give yourself time now to work on your mental and emotional recovery.

Here are the first three steps:

1) Don't feel ashamed

I can't say this often enough. It's completely normal to be anxious, guilty and frightened. There's no right or wrong way you should be feeling. Everyone needs help to heal the emotional side effects of their experiences.

2) Speak to family and friends

The truth is, they have no idea how you're feeling if you don't tell them. If it was a shock to yourself to discover you're not ready to



ABOVE: It's normal to not feel normal after breast cancer treatment ends, but telling your family will help

celebrate, it's understandable that your loved ones aren't expecting it either. They may be surprised initially, but it's best to explain – it will go a long way to reducing the pressure you're under to pretend that you're back to normal.

3) If your anxiety becomes unmanageable, speak to your GP

Your emotional recovery is as important as your physical recovery. If your anxiety about cancer returning is becoming unmanageable, don't be afraid to speak to your GP. With a little help to get it under control you'll be able to move on more quickly.

When my breast cancer treatment ended I felt exactly the same way – and I felt guilty, because I didn't realise it was normal. But after a lot of

research I discovered a huge number of people struggle with exactly the same feelings. I realised there was a lack of support, which is why I developed a programme specifically to help people to move forward after breast cancer, embrace their new selves and live more fully than before.

Cancer ONYIGO is a 12-week counselling programme, a chance to meet others experiencing the same feelings, and get professional help to let go of them for good.

Kim Forbes is a Cheshire-based psychotherapist specialising in the emotional and mental well-being of breast cancer survivors after their medical treatment has ended.

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ASK GOOGLE



what is **microdermabrasion**

Microdermabrasion is the most Googled non-invasive skin treatment in the UK. The treatment is promoted as the go-to for addressing acne scarring, sun-related pigmentation and even fine lines, but what it's really good at is dull skin. The treatment involves microscopic medical-grade crystals being blasted at the skin via a tiny hand-held device. As the device is passed over the skin, the crystals effectively lift off the topmost layers of dead skin cells. This form of exfoliation happens naturally, of course: as the skin regenerates constantly, new cells push

old, dead cells up to the surface and away. As we age however, the process slows and dead cells can build up, creating that dull and dry skin we so loathe. Microdermabrasion not only lifts away all the dead skin cells, revealing new, plump and glowy ones beneath, but is great for blackheads and blocked pores too. It's not the most soothing of skin treatments, as you can imagine, and it's not a one-time-fixes-all option either, but it's quick and effective and accessibly priced.

So, where can you have this treatment in Cheshire? Google knows...



ALTERNATIVE VIEW NUTRITIONAL THERAPY

The links between the food you eat and your health are irrefutable, and getting your diet right could affect a great deal more than just your waistline. Nutritional therapist Dr Amanda Ellwood, who has a practice in Altrincham, says: "We all know that a good diet is fundamental to wellbeing. Unfortunately, your GP simply doesn't have the time and resources, or training, to understand your diet and your lifestyle and how these might be impacting your health. The time-saving default is to prescribe you a pill, with limited long-term benefits to your health. My approach uses what is called a functional medicine model, to dive deeper. For people suffering from IBS, hormonal issues or more serious autoimmune disease, I look in detail at how their bodies function, what they eat, and how they live. I then work with them to make the appropriate changes, often with quite dramatic results. eatyourselfwell.co.uk

Don't stress about... BEING YOUR 'IDEAL WEIGHT'



Laura and Katy from The Vibrancy Hub

We promote an 'anti-diet' lifestyle here at The Vibrancy Hub because we see so many women spending way too much time and energy trying to chase down that 'half a stone'. Sadly, this holds them back from using their beautiful brains to bring their big and purposeful dreams to life.

Remember that society has a very narrow version of what beauty looks like – an almost impossible standard that has been fed to us. You are beautiful. It is up to you to rewrite your beauty standard. Happiness is an inside job. Achieving your goal weight may give you a little pick-me-up initially but it doesn't lead to long-lasting happiness and fulfilment.

What to do instead: focus your efforts on building confidence from within – what are your unique strengths, skills, personality traits? What makes you who you are? Pay attention to your body's physical cues and your energy levels, as opposed to counting calories. Slow down and consider what kind of foods make you feel great – your body will not let you become unhealthy if you listen to it. We do not for one minute claim that changing mindset is easy but we do promise that it will have a profound impact on the quality of your life. **Laura Bamber and Katy Brown are co-founders of life and career coaching company, thevibrancyhub.co.uk**