

March  
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# BCAK NEWS



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## Membership Update

As of February 28th, we have 85 paid members; 17 of whom are new members this year. If you haven't already done so, print out the attached membership application, fill it in and return it to BCAK by mail or email, or drop it off at the BCAK office during its office hours. Payment can be made by e-transfer or by credit card by calling the office (613-531-7912). Alternatively, you can join up or renew your membership online at [Membership Online | BCAK \(bcakingston.ca\)](#)

## Hands-On Initiative – Volunteers Urgently Required

BCAK very much wants to re-vitalize the “Hands-On” program that was provided previously in the Kingston area. It is our intention and hope to extend the program to the entire Cancer Care South East region. Many thanks to Aidee Nunez for volunteering to head this initiative. But to bring it to life, we desperately need volunteers to work with Aidee.

The Hands-On program involves volunteers providing information to groups on: the fundamentals of breast cancer; the importance of breast self-examination and having regular mammograms; and instruction on how to perform the self-examination. Using specialized “breast self-examination kits” the volunteers demonstrate the proper breast self-examination technique and encourage participants to practice the technique using the kits. We also provide a kit to the organization, if it wants one, for members to practice with and to teach others the technique. BCAK currently has 24 breast kits in stock for practice and to donate.

The first step in this initiative is to recruit and train volunteers. We require 4 to 6 volunteers to take the training and present the program to community groups. The technique is simple – most of you probably know how to perform a self-examination already. BCAK will provide the training and all supplies required - kits, visual arts presentations and handouts.

This is our second call for participants - **without volunteers we will not be able to offer this worthwhile and potentially life-saving program** and it will once again have to be shelved. If you are interested in volunteering or finding out more about the program, send an email to [bcak@gmail.com](mailto:bcak@gmail.com) or call the office at 613-531-7912.

## Peer Support Program

It is our hope to make peer support an integral part of our services to breast cancer patients throughout our mandated region. To date, 7 volunteers have completed the peer support course run through Breast Cancer Action Ottawa (BCAO), with another two courses scheduled in the next few weeks. If you are interested in taking the course, call the office (613-531-5912).

Prior to Covid-19 lockdowns, peer support groups were hosted at the BCAA offices in Kingston. In addition to rejuvenating the program in Kingston, an important part of our goal in providing the peer support course is to better meet the needs of those in our outlying areas, particularly in Belleville and Brockville.

## BCAK Awareness

Key to the success of our programs, including the peer support program, is awareness of BCAA and what we have to offer. We hear many stories of women who fell through the cracks – for example, were not given any information on BCAA or didn't get a puffy pillow after surgery. Our aim is to make sure EVERY breast cancer patient in the Cancer Care South East region has heard of us even if they choose not to follow up. We are approaching this with a 3-step plan:

- Firstly, we are working hard to get information about BCAA and its programs into the new Breast Imaging Centre that will be opening soon at 820 John Marks Avenue (just off Highway 15 in east Kingston). This will be the first time many women will see our information.
- Our next hope is to get our brochures into every doctor's office and medical clinic in the southeastern Ontario health region. The doctor's office is generally where most people receive the first notice of a cancer diagnosis and might wish to seek out support and information. We especially want to let them know about our peer support program. In the next month, we will begin contacting doctors in our catchment area to tell them about our organization and the programs and services that we offer.
- The third step is to increase our presence and awareness at the Cancer Centre, and at the KGH and Hotel Dieu hospitals.

## February Donors

Sincere thanks to our generous donors to Breast Cancer Action Kingston in the month of February:

Willie Kyer  
Willi Clark – Fabricland  
Benevity Community Impact Fund  
Lafarge Canada Inc.  
Sarah Arowsmith  
Bev Martin  
Paypal Giving Fund Canada

*Honouring Deena Rasky's Birthday*  
Gary Armstrong  
Rosa Aria Demello  
Deena Rasky

*CDA Helps*  
Ryan Hobart  
John Dipaolo  
Lynda Keeler

## Meet BCAA Member, Sarah Hillcoat



Sarah Hillcoat has been volunteering as our Instagram administrator for the past three years.

Sarah is a member of the TaTas, our young breast cancer survivor group. She is BRCA1 and about the time she was starting her routine screening and planning her preventative double mastectomy, Sarah was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer. She was 31.

Sarah is now engaged, although because of Covid she and Nate have not yet set a date. Nate has a 5-year old daughter named Zoe. He and Zoe lost their wife/mother to colorectal cancer. The couple also have two cats!

We all send our best wishes to Sarah and want to know when that wedding date is set so we can send our congratulations.



## Treating Metastatic Breast Cancer

Last month the newsletter provided some basic information about metastatic breast cancer (mBC)\*, also referred to as Stage IV cancer, and how it differs from earlier stage breast cancers. Treating mBC may include surgery to remove the initial tumour, initial chemotherapy to kill or slow the growth of cancer cells throughout the body, follow-up chemotherapy and non- chemotherapy medications and radiation. Research is ongoing and new medications and treatments are being tested and approved every year.

### Chemotherapy and Non-Chemotherapy Drugs

Breast cancer is not a single disease – it takes many shapes and forms. Consequently, the chemotherapies and drugs used to treat mBC are dependent on the type and nature of the breast cancer. The aspects of breast cancer that can affect treatment include:

- the appearance of the cells under the microscope and the extent to which they differ from normal breast cells
- the hormones fueling cancer cell growth and
- the genetic make-up of the cancer cells.

An excerpt from [Breast cancer types: What your type means - Mayo Clinic](#) (attached at the end of the newsletter) describes some of the factors that determine the treatment used to fight mBC as well as earlier stage cancers.

## Radiation

Unlike earlier stage breast cancers where radiation is commonly performed early in treatment to prevent spread, in mBC, the cancer cells have already left the breast area and therefore initial treatment commonly does not include radiation. In addition, radiation affects the entire area radiated. Because mBC lesions are generally widespread, they cannot be treated with widespread radiation without harming surrounding tissues. Instead, radiation is typically used to treat specific localized problems as they arise. For example, targeted radiation can be used to shrink a tumour that is growing on the spine and causing back pain, or tumours growing on the liver or lungs that are impairing organ function. Radiation used in this way has proved very successful at healing the targeted area and improving the patient's life.

More information on mBC and its treatment is available in the Canadian Breast Cancer Network's [Metastatic Breast Cancer Handbook](#) which can be downloaded free of charge from its website.

\* *Metastatic breast cancer occurs when the cancer cells inside the breast spread through the lymphatic system or bloodstream to other organs in the body. The most common places for breast cancer to metastasize is to the bones, liver, lungs, or brain.*

## BCAK in the Community

### BCAK Walk for Awareness

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk for Awareness will be held Saturday Sept 10th at Lake Ontario Park Covid permitting, it will be a full, in-person walk, kicking off at 1:00 with the victory lap. There will be vendor displays, music, our legendary "Pink Table, fun and camaraderie.

Mark the date on your calendar...more information will be available soon.

### Kingston Frontenacs Hockey – BCAK Awareness Night

**Please Note:** there's been a change in the date - **Saturday April 16, 2022 at the Leon's Centre**

BCAK will be on hand for the Frontenacs versus Ottawa 67s hockey game April 16th. Similar to previous years. we will have a booth in the concourse with our "Pink" items and information packages on display and for sale.

Tickets for the game are only \$19.50. As a bonus, BCAK will receive \$2.00 back for tickets purchased through the following link - <https://frontenacs.isportstix.com/order/group/BCAK/>.

This link is also available on our website at [BCAK in the Community](#)

Please use this link to purchase tickets as BCAK will only receive the kickback for tickets purchased through the link.



2022 BREAST CANCER ACTION KINGSTON  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**MEMBERSHIP** is renewable on an annual basis (January to December) for a fee of:

- Basic: \$35.00 for an individual (survivor or supporter), family of a survivor (at the same address) or a charitable organization
- Gold: \$55.00 includes Exercise classes, Yoga, Aqua Activities and Chestmates (A Chestmate must be a breast cancer survivor). Tax receipt provided for \$35.00 membership fee but not Activity fee of \$20.00
- Corporate: \$55.00 for agencies and corporations/organizations.

Membership payments are deemed donations and a charitable tax receipt will be issued.

Charity number:89056 7241 RR0001

Please complete the form below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment can be made at the office with cash, cheque, credit card or Interac or by mail to Breast Cancer Action Kingston 110 – 650 Dalton Avenue, Kingston K7M 8N7. We also accept e-transfers at: [donations@bcakingston.ca](mailto:donations@bcakingston.ca) (please be sure to give us your phone # or email address in the comment line of your bank’s e-transfer form).

Would you like to volunteer? Yes \_\_\_\_ NOTE: Do you wish a monthly newsletter sent via email? Yes \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

If you have no email address and wish your newsletter mailed to you, please check here \_\_\_\_\_

In order to direct information to specific groups, we would like the following information.

IT IS NOT MANDATORY TO FILL OUT THIS SECTION. All personal information collected remains confidential.

Age Category	UNDER 40	OVER 40	OVER 65
Physical Activity Level	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Your Interest in Group Outings, Retreats, Events, etc. (circle interest)	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Suffer from lymphedema	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Suggestions for new programs/activities:			

For more information call (613) 531-7912, email [admin@bcakingston.ca](mailto:admin@bcakingston.ca) or visit our website at <http://bcakingston.ca>

# Factors that Can Affect Cancer Treatment

(excerpt taken from [Breast cancer types: What your type means - Mayo Clinic](#) )

When a sample of your breast cancer is examined under a microscope, here's what the pathologist looks for:

- **Cancer cells with unique appearances.** Some subtypes of breast cancer are named for the way they appear under the microscope. Subtypes include tubular, mucinous, medullary and papillary. Your subtype gives your doctor some clues about your prognosis and how your cells may respond to treatment.
- **The degree of difference between the cancer cells and normal cells.** How different your cancer cells look from normal cells is called your cancer's grade. Breast cancers are graded on a 1 to 3 scale, with grade 3 cancers being the most different looking and considered the most aggressive.

## Are your cancer cells fueled by hormones?

Some breast cancers are sensitive to your body's naturally occurring female hormones — estrogen and progesterone. The breast cancer cells have receptors on the outside of their walls that can catch specific hormones that circulate through your body.

Knowing your breast cancer is sensitive to hormones gives your doctor a better idea of how best to treat the cancer or prevent cancer from recurring.

Hormone status of breast cancers includes:

- **Estrogen receptor (ER) positive.** The cells of this type of breast cancer have receptors that allow them to use the hormone estrogen to grow. Treatment with anti-estrogen hormone (endocrine) therapy can block the growth of the cancer cells.
- **Progesterone receptor (PR) positive.** This type of breast cancer is sensitive to progesterone, and the cells have receptors that allow them to use this hormone to grow. Treatment with endocrine therapy blocks the growth of the cancer cells.
- **Hormone receptor (HR) negative.** This type of cancer doesn't have hormone receptors, so it won't be affected by endocrine treatments aimed at blocking hormones in the body.

## What is the genetic makeup of your breast cancer cells?

Doctors are just beginning to understand how the individual DNA changes within cancer cells might one day be used to determine treatment options. By analyzing the genes of cancer cells, doctors hope to find ways to target specific aspects of the cancer cells to kill them.

A sample of your tumor tissue from a biopsy procedure may be tested in a laboratory to look for:

- **HER2 gene.** Cancer cells that have too many copies of the *HER2* gene (HER2-positive cancers) produce too much of the growth-promoting protein called HER2. Targeted therapy drugs are available to shut down the HER2 protein, thus slowing the growth and killing these cancer cells.
- **Other tumor markers.** Researchers are studying ways to interpret the genetic makeup of tumor cells. Doctors hope this information can be used to predict which cancers will spread and which may need aggressive treatments. That way, women with relatively low-risk breast cancers may avoid aggressive treatments.

Tests that analyze the genetic makeup of breast cancers are available but aren't recommended in all situations. Ask your doctor whether this type of test might be helpful in your case.

Doctors are increasingly using genetic information about breast cancer cells to categorize breast cancers. These groups help guide decisions about which treatments are best. Breast cancer groups include:

- **Group 1 (luminal A).** This group includes tumors that are ER positive and PR positive, but negative for HER2. Luminal A breast cancers are likely to benefit from hormone therapy and may also benefit from chemotherapy.
- **Group 2 (luminal B).** This type includes tumors that are ER positive, PR negative and HER2 positive. Luminal B breast cancers are likely to benefit from chemotherapy and may benefit from hormone therapy and treatment targeted to HER2.
- **Group 3 (HER2 positive).** This type includes tumors that are ER negative and PR negative, but HER2 positive. HER2 breast cancers are likely to benefit from chemotherapy and treatment targeted to HER2.
- **Group 4 (basal-like).** This type, which is also called triple-negative breast cancer, includes tumors that are ER negative, PR negative and HER2 negative. Basal-like breast cancers are likely to benefit from chemotherapy.