



# Thunder Bay Breast Cancer Support Group



Newsletter November Issue 2014

## Green in 2016 Newsletter Moves To Electronic Distribution

In January 2016, the BCSG newsletter will be distributed primarily through email. If you want to continue to receive a printed copy, please leave a message on the support group voicemail. You can also sign up on our e-list or download the newsletter from our website [breastcancersupporttb.com](http://breastcancersupporttb.com)

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Thunder Bay Breast  
Cancer Survivors Forum



## What You Can Do to Manage Bone Loss Caused By Breast Cancer: University Health Network - Resource Material

Having and keeping bones healthy is very important for all breast cancer survivors. Here are some suggestions to help you keep your bones healthy: Check to see how much Calcium and Vitamin D you are already getting from dietary sources (the food and beverages that you eat/drink every day). If you are getting lower than the amounts listed below, take Calcium and Vitamin D to make sure that you get enough each day: Calcium – 1,200,500mg/day  
Vitamin D – 800,1,000 IU/day

Please see your doctor or registered dietitian for help finding out if you should be taking Calcium and Vitamin D pills and if so, how much you should be taking. Bottles of Calcium and Vitamin D that you can buy in a pharmacy will have the amount of Milligrams or International Units contained in each pill listed on the label.

**Make Smart Food Choices.** Eat the right foods to provide your body with Calcium, Vitamin D, and other important bone-building nutrients. Here is a short list of foods and the amount of Calcium and Vitamin D that they contain.

Calcium:

- 1 cup of milk (skim, 1%, 2%) = 300mg of Calcium
- ¾ cup of plain yogurt = 295mg of Calcium
- ½ cup of cottage cheese (1%, 2%)

**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR!**

**DECEMBER 9  
BCSG ANNUAL  
CHRISTMAS  
PARTY**

= 75mg of Calcium

- ¾ cup of cooked broccoli = 50mg of Calcium

Vitamin D:

- 1 cup of milk (skim, 1%, 2%) = 100 IU Vitamin D
- 75g of canned or cooked salmon = 600 IU Vitamin D
- 1 egg yolk = 20 IU Vitamin D

**Exercise.** Weight-bearing and strengthening / resistance activities are great for your bones as they increase bone strength. This includes walking, hiking, dancing, climbing stairs, weight lifting, playing tennis, and many other fun activities.

Anything you do on your feet helps to strengthen your bones and slows down bone loss. Try 30 minutes of weight bearing exercise 34 times per week.

If your risk for breaking your bones has been assessed as being high, you must ask your doctor if it is ok for you to run, skip, jump, or do other high impact exercises or activities.

**Do not smoke.** Smoking is associated with bone loss in women who have gone through menopause. Quitting smoking can limit this loss.

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### Limit the amount of alcohol and caffeine that you drink.

Too much alcohol (consistently more than 2 drinks per day) or caffeine (consistently more than 4 cups of coffee, tea, or cola per day) can lower bone mass and increase your risk of fractures.

### Talk to your doctor about your Bone Mineral Density (BMD).

A bone mineral density test, and other aspects of your medical history, such as previous fracture after age 40 or risk of falling, age, and corticosteroid use, tell you if your bones have more risk of breaking. It is important to monitor the health of your bones during and after completing your breast cancer treatment. Remember, osteoporosis is the "silent thief!"

### Diet and exercise can lower, but not stop accelerated bone loss associated with cancer therapies.

Depending on the health of your bones

and your rate of accelerated bone loss, you may need to take medications (like bisphosphonates, which are used to prevent or treat osteoporosis) to stabilize your bone mass and to stop further bone loss. Ask your doctor – he/she will tell you if you need to take medication to stop further bone loss.

### Key Points and Recommendations

- Bone loss is a common longterm side effect of breast cancer treatment.
- Bone loss caused by breast cancer treatment increases the risk of osteoporosis and related fractures.
- Make sure you are getting enough Calcium and Vitamin D in your diet.
- Talk to your doctor about getting a bone mineral density test. Depending on the results of the test and your treatment plan, annual bone mineral tests may be scheduled to monitor the health of your bones.
- You can keep your bones healthy!!



## Taking Flight and Inspiring Hope

The Butterfly Story Gala took flight on September 25, 2015. For all those involved, this was a night that we will never forget. Images of 20 individual women plus a dragon boat team were revealed for the first time that night. As the co-founder of this project it all seemed so very surreal. As I walked around the room I was struck by the beauty of these women who had shared so much of themselves in the hopes to inspire others.

The evening was an overwhelming success. Thanks for all of the support received, and we hope to be able to provide a final count of the funds raised in our December newsletter.

The book containing our stories and beautiful images can be purchased for \$95. The next order of books will be available by the end of the month. Send an email to [butterflystory@hotmail.com](mailto:butterflystory@hotmail.com) if you would like to purchase a copy. For more information please visit our facebook page.



## The Lump in My Life: A Breast Cancer Patient's View on Cancer

By Sara Chow

If you've had the opportunity to meet Gail Brescia, 53, then you know that she is a focused, spunky and dedicated woman ready to take on the world. In fact, the way in which Gail approaches her life, with a positive attitude, confident smile and fashionable high heels, would make anybody second guess that Gail is currently receiving treatment for breast cancer.

As a healthy woman, going about her day-to-day life that included a full-time job, her family and her dog, Gail was shocked when she was diagnosed with cancer in January of 2015 after a routine screening mammogram in December. "I was totally shocked when I found out that I had breast cancer," said Gail. "Prior to my diagnosis, I was the healthiest I have been my whole life. Then, boom! I have a screening mammogram in December and was diagnosed with cancer in January. It all happened so fast."

**I found my breast cancer through a mammogram. It's the fear of the unknown. But through a mammogram, you'll discover the known. This is why breast cancer will just be this lump in my life, and not take my life.**

Despite knowing that her life would be different for the remainder of the year while she received treatment, Gail was determined to get through this stage in her life. "This is just a lump in my life. Cancer will not beat me. I am going to do everything I can now because I don't want to worry about cancer for the next 10 years," explained Gail. What's even more admirable about Gail's determination is that she has taken on cancer on her own terms. "I want to feel like myself. I'm going to put my face on and get dressed every day. I have only missed one day of walking my dogs since my diagnosis. This is who I am. I still allow myself to feel all of the feelings that you have when you have cancer, but I think about the positive. You can't tell me that there isn't anything that I can't do."



Gail hopes that her treatments continue to go well and expects to pick back up where she left off. "53 isn't what it used to be. I have so much more life ahead of me and I know that 2016 will be a better year." One of the main reasons that this will be possible is because Gail's cancer was found early through cancer screening. She had been going for regular mammograms and her cancer was one that developed within her two year screening interval. This speaks to the importance of regular cancer screening.

In Ontario, women aged 50 to 54 years are the highest number of screen-eligible women who have not had a mammogram. "This surprises me, given the knowledge we have about health and how involved we are in our care," said Gail, who has always been a health advocate. "I can't say that it [getting screened for breast cancer] isn't scary - it is. I found my breast cancer through a mammogram. It's the fear of the unknown. But through a mammogram, you'll discover the known. This is why breast cancer will just be this lump in my life, and not take my life."

Cancer Care Ontario encourages all women aged 50 to 74 years to get screened for breast cancer with a mammogram. It takes 5 minutes to book your appointment and 10 minutes to do the mammogram – 15 minutes could save your life. Just book it. Call 1-800-461-7031 to book your appointment today. For more information visit [www.tbrhsc.net/cancerscreening](http://www.tbrhsc.net/cancerscreening)

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## The BCSG Annual Christmas Party



Our Christmas party will be held on December 9 at St. Michael's Church where we hold our monthly meetings. The meal will be catered for those attending. If you haven't attended a support group meeting, this is a great opportunity to come out and socialize. We hope you can join us! There will be a gift exchange for those that want to participate. Please keep gifts under \$15.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP by December 5th by email ([bcs@tbaytel.net](mailto:bcs@tbaytel.net)), phone 475-0025 or sign up at the November meeting. We will also be collecting canned goods which will be donated to the Current River Food Bank. Please note, this year we will be holding the party in our sacred meeting space, thus the party will be just for survivors.

## A Look Ahead

### BCSG November Meeting November 11

Theme: Remembering the Positive

### BCSG Christmas Party December 9

Tickets: \$20 per person  
RSVP to [bcsbg@tbaytel.net](mailto:bcsbg@tbaytel.net)  
or call 475-0025

### BCSG New Year Meeting January 13, 2016

The meeting will include a 30 minute yoga and meditation session starting at 8 pm.

### Bearskin Airlines Hope Classic Curling Fundraiser

Fort William Curling Club  
February 5 - 7, 2016  
Registration forms available online  
at [www.bearskinairlineshopeclassic.com](http://www.bearskinairlineshopeclassic.com)



## Sharing the Journey

Along your journey you have found support and encouragement from our support group. If you have two hours to spare a month, we encourage you to consider becoming a Steering Committee Member. The wisdom gained from your experience can help us strengthen the group and will help to ensure the continued success of the Breast Cancer Support Group. Call a Steering Committee Member at 475-0025 to learn how you can take part or email [bcsbg@tbaytel.net](mailto:bcsbg@tbaytel.net).



Thunder Bay Regional  
Health Sciences  
Foundation

The Thunder Bay Breast Cancer Support Group gratefully acknowledges the funding support of the Northern Cancer Fund of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation. All gifts made to the Foundation stay in Northwestern Ontario to benefit its residents.

[healthsciencesfoundation.ca](http://healthsciencesfoundation.ca)

## Community Events

### Artisans Northwest Art and Fine Craft Show 40th Anniversary November 14 - 15

Valhalla Inn - 1 Valhalla Inn Rd

Artisans Northwest Art and Fine Craft show, has the highest quality making it the premier art and fine craft show in the city.

### What Cancer Cannot Do . Cancer is so limited...

It cannot cripple love,  
It cannot shatter hope,  
It cannot corrode faith  
It cannot destroy peace,  
It cannot kill friendship,  
It cannot suppress memories,  
It cannot silence courage,  
It cannot invade the soul,  
It cannot steal eternal life,

It cannot  
conquer the spirit.

## For Support and Encouragement



Thunder Bay  
Breast Cancer  
Support Group

As fellow support group members, we would be happy to hear from you.

394 Cougar Crescent  
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 0B3

(807) 475-0025 (Voice Mail)  
[bcsbg@tbaytel.net](mailto:bcsbg@tbaytel.net)  
[breastcancersupporttb.com](http://breastcancersupporttb.com)



Canadian Breast Cancer Network  
Réseau canadien du cancer du sein

[www.cbcn.ca](http://www.cbcn.ca)



Breast & Hereditary  
Cancer Support

[www.willow.org](http://www.willow.org)  
1-888-778-3100



Supportive Care  
(807) 684-7310  
Toll Free  
(877) 696-7223  
No Referral Needed