



Sensuality, Sexuality, Survival

WWW.PUREROMANCE.COM/SSS

JANUARY 2007



Current SSS Events

Our SSS Consultants have been continuing the fight against breast cancer and its debilitating effects on female sexuality. With 25 Certified Consultants nationwide, our SSS Consultants are scheduling presentations in an area near you! To view an extensive list of our Certified SSS Consultants, please visit www.pureromance.com/sss. To book an intimacy after breast cancer presentation for your support organization in your area please contact us at sss@pureromance.com.

Our Expert Bio

Jennifer (Jan) Simpson is a registered nurse, who currently works at the Franklin Square Medical Center as the Clinical Coordinator for Breast Services. Jan is currently pursuing a Master of Liberal Arts degree in Ethics from Johns Hopkins University. She graduated with Honors in 1997 with a degree in Psychology, also from Johns Hopkins University. Jan has worked as an operating room nurse since 1986 and was the Clinical Coordinator for the Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery of the Breast Center at Mercy Medical Center from 2001 to 2003. Jan has also published many articles on breast surgery as well as speaking for such organizations as the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Jan is also a Certified Breast Health Specialist.

We are thrilled to have Jan as our featured "expert." Her over 30 years of experience as a nurse and her work as a breast health specialist makes her a wonderful addition to Sensuality, Sexuality, Survival.

Featured Article: Adjusting to Body Changes and Intimacy

Some body changes following cancer treatment are short-term, and others will last forever. Either way, one's looks may be a big concern after treatment. For example, people with ostomies after colon or rectal surgery are sometimes afraid to go out. They may feel ashamed or afraid that others will reject them. They may worry about the idea of having an "accident" in social situations.

Others do not like when treatment effects such as scars, skin changes, loss of limbs, and changes in weight are able to be seen. Even if your treatment doesn't show, body changes that you see may still trouble you. Feelings of anger and grief are natural. Feeling bad about your body can also lower your sex drive. This loss of or reduction in your sex life may make you feel even worse about yourself.



Changes in the way you look can also be hard for your loved ones, which can be hard on you. Parents and grandparents often worry about how they look to a child or grandchild. They fear that changes in their appearance may scare the child or get in the way of their staying close. People in a relationship may fear that they are no longer attractive to their partner.

Getting Help

How then do you cope with body changes?

- Mourn your losses. They are real, and you have a right to grieve.
- Try to focus on the ways that coping with cancer has made you stronger, wiser, and more realistic.
- If you find that your skin has changed from radiation, ask your doctor about ways you can care for it.
- Look for new ways to enhance your appearance. A new haircut, hair color, makeup, or clothing may give you a lift.
- If you choose to wear a breast form (prosthesis), make sure it fits you well. Your health insurance plan may pay for it.
- Try to recognize that you are more than your cancer. Know that you have worth - no matter how you look or what happens to you in life!

Changes in Sex Life

Like many people, you may have changes in your sex life after cancer treatment. Depending on the cancer you had, these problems may be short-term or long-term. For example, about half of women who have had long-term treatment for breast and reproductive organ cancers and more than half of men treated for prostate cancer report long-term sexual problems. Many cancer survivors say they were not prepared for the changes in their sex lives.

Sexual problems after cancer treatment are often caused by changes to your body - from surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation, or by the effects of certain medicines. Sometimes emotional issues can be the cause of sexual problems. Some examples include anxiety, depression, feelings of guilt about how you got cancer, changes in body image after surgery, and stress between you and your partner. Your past sex life is not related to your current sexual problems.

What types of problems occur? People report these main concerns:

Worrying about intimacy after treatment. Some may struggle with their body image after treatment. Even thinking about being seen without clothes may be stressful. People may worry that having sex will hurt or that they won't be able to perform or will feel less attractive. Pain, loss of interest, depression, or cancer medicines can also affect sex drive.

Not being able to have sex as you did before. Some cancer treatments cause changes in sex organs that also change your sex life.

- Some men can no longer get or keep an erection after treatment for prostate cancer, cancer of the penis, or cancer of the testes. Some treatments can also weaken a man's orgasm or make it dry.



- Some women find it harder, or even painful, to have sex after cancer treatment. Some cancer treatments can cause these problems; sometimes, there is no clear cause. Some women also have a loss of sensation in their genital area.

Having menopause symptoms. When women stop getting their periods, they can get hot flashes, dryness or tightness in the vagina, and/or other problems that can affect their desire to have sex.

Losing the ability to have children. Some cancer treatments can cause infertility, making it impossible for cancer survivors to have children. Depending on type of treatment, age, and length of time since treatment, you may still be able to have children.

Getting Help

Your doctor may be able to help you deal with these problems, but he or she may not bring up the subject. You may have to mention it yourself. If you think you might have trouble getting started, gather information (from trusted websites, brochures, etc.) and bring it with you.

Often, sexual problems will not get better on their own. To get help with many of these problems, it is important to tell your doctor about any changes in your sex life. Sometimes there can be an underlying medical problem that causes changes, such as:

- **Erection problems.** Medicine, assistive devices, counseling, surgery, or other approaches may help.
- **Vaginal dryness.** Dryness or tightness in the vagina can be caused by menopause. Ask whether using a water-based lubricant during sex, using vaginal dilators before sex, and/or taking hormones or using a hormone cream are options.

- **Muscle weakness.** You can help strengthen muscles in your genital area by doing Kegel exercises. Practice by controlling your muscles to stop the flow of urine. You can do these exercises even when you are not urinating. Just tighten and relax the muscles as you sit, stand, or go about your day.

If you have non-medical concerns, it may also be helpful to talk with a counselor, psychologist or sex therapist. You may feel that some of your sexual problems are due to your emotions, like stress about body image. Some people find that sexual problems related to cancer start to strain their relationship with their partner. If this is the case, ask a nurse or social worker if you can talk to a counselor. Talking to someone alone, or with your partner, may help.

Talking With Your Partner

Even for a couple that has been together a long time, staying connected can be a major challenge at first. It may be comforting to learn though that very few committed relationships end because of ostomies, scars, or other body changes. Divorce rates are about the same for people with and without a cancer history.

Tell your partner how you feel about your sex life and what you would like to change. You might want to talk about your concerns, your beliefs about why your sex life is the way it is, your feelings, and what would make you feel better. Approaching it openly avoids blame, stays positive, and gives your partner a better sense of how you are feeling. Try to be open-minded as you listen to your partner's point of view:

Feeling Intimate After Treatment

- **Be proud of your body.** It got you through treatment!
- **Think of things that help you feel more attractive and confident.**
- **Focus on the positive.** Try to be aware of your thoughts, since they can affect your sex life.
- **Touch each other.** Kiss, hug, and cuddle, even if you cannot have the kind of sex that you used to have.
- **Be open to change.** You may find new ways to enjoy intimacy.



Featured Product: Lucky Lady Cami & Tap Pant

Sexuality and intimacy can be difficult after cancer treatments, not only physically, but emotionally as well. The changes that a woman faces due to cancer treatments can have a profound effect on her desire to be intimate with her partner.

The keys to feeling good about yourself after breast cancer treatment is to focus on your positive features and limit the damage cancer can do to your appearance, your energy, and your sense of well-being. When you are going through cancer treatment, you can feel more attractive by drawing attention away from the changes cancer has made and focusing attention on your best points. Most changes are not nearly as unattractive as they first seem.

Women should not forget the many other ways to enhance sexuality, including creating a relaxed comfortable environment with soft music, lighting, candles, food, and other erotic atmospheres that encourage intimacy and sensuality. The Lucky Lady cami and tap pants can add to your feelings of comfort and enhance how good you feel about yourself, which will benefit both you and your partner!

Price: \$29.50
Available in sizes: S,M,L



My Story

The Greatest Gift of All

Dear Patty,

With my three year anniversary coming up, I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for everything Pure Romance has done for me. Three years ago, I had a boring, monotonous job and I just felt like I wasn't doing anything valuable with my life. Then, after being diagnosed with breast cancer, I knew I wanted to make a change.

Pure Romance started as a hobby for me, a way to socialize and put a few extra dollars in my pocket. Becoming a Consultant was also my way of facing one of my biggest fears, speaking in front of crowds. It wasn't easy at first, but it has now become second nature for me. I am proud to say that I am now a volunteer speaker for the Susan G. Komen foundation, something I would never have dreamed of doing a few years ago.

Also, all of my life I have wanted to travel around the world, and thanks to your company, this dream has come true. Over the past three years, I have been fortunate enough to travel with Pure Romance to Puerto Rico, Cincinnati, Orlando, St. Maarten, Jamaica, and New York!

After my recurrence of cancer last year, I have come to realize that more important than the money and trips and prizes, Pure Romance has given me the greatest gift of all...time. I always dreamed of being able to drop off my children at school and pick them up at the end of the day, and never miss a baseball game or dance recital; and, as of May of this year, I was able to stay home and spend the summer with my children.

Patty, I know it is your vision to improve the lives of everyone you touch, and for this I am truly thankful.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Siegel
Pure Romance Consultant

Hearing a personal account of someone going through a similar experience can be very helpful and reassuring. If you would like to share your personal experience with breast cancer please submit your story to sss@pureromance.com.