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Breast Cancer Menu

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Overview

Breast Cancer Menu forms part of the Cancerhelp UK website, which is a free information service based at the University of Birmingham. It is primarily for use by cancer patients. This site was officially launched in April 1996 in conjunction with the organisation Cancer BACUP.

Content

'About breast cancer' is an extensive section divided into several categories offering cancer patients the opportunity to gain an insight into the clinical aspects of the disease, as well as serving as a good reference point for further information about breast cancer. This section is appropriately subdivided into the following categories: breast and lymph glands, symptoms, detection, risks and causes, diet and prevention, stages and types of breast cancer. With numerous subsections providing elaborate details about risk factors and possible preventative measures, this part of the site alone provides a plethora of information on all aspects of breast cancer.

The 'diagnosing breast cancer' section offers helpful advice in an informative step-by-step manner and gives details about the various screening and biopsy procedures breast cancer patients can expect to undergo. The 'treating breast cancer' section presents extensive information not just on surgical approaches to treating breast cancer but also on mammography, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and hormone treatments. With direct links to relevant parts of the site such as the types of breast reconstructive surgery available to patients, coupled with suggestion boxes delivering advice in a very compassionate and encouraging manner, this site really does cater for the cancer patient.

Other comments

The section on 'secondary breast cancer' elegantly describes the process of cancer metastasis. Moreover this section provides useful information for cancer patients, highlighting the symptoms and diagnosis of secondary breast cancers, with details about surgical procedures such as lumpectomies and mastectomies. This information is illustrated with colourful schematic diagrams and includes links to various 'help and support' organisations and charity helplines. Constructive advice is provided within the 'who can help' category.

Cancerhelp UK is further enhanced by the information displayed in the 'breast cancer research' component. Details about ongoing clinical trials and drugs currently used in breast cancer treatment,

such as tamoxifen, are provided. Explanations about the side effects of these drugs, together with a patient information sheet, comprise a comprehensive guide to the clinical advances into the research aspects of breast cancer. Links to other online support and national cancer services are supplied and an extensive reading list of both general and specific information in the form of books, biographies and organisation establishments is given.

All pages contain a 'back to' link and navigation is made simple by the clear layout of all the pages. There were no broken links when I visited, and each page is easy accessible and fully searchable.

Registration is not required and the page loading times are very quick. How often the site is updated is displayed; most breast cancer sections within the site were last revised in March 1999, but the menu page was updated more recently in May 1999.

Evaluation

This extremely well organised website is an excellent resource catering for both breast cancer patients and clinicians. A particularly nice touch is obtained by visiting the various 'questions for your doctor' sections, which address the queries a cancer patient would ask. Overall this site provides an invaluable resource which would be foolish to ignore.

References

1. Cancerhelp UK. [<http://medweb.bham.ac.uk/cancerhelp/indexg.html>]