

## More Information

Women of color are diagnosed with breast cancer at a younger age than women of other racial/ethnic groups. As such, they are much more likely to have young children.

A breast cancer diagnosis can be scary, especially for your children.

Talking with your children about your diagnosis can be hard, but not impossible. This brochure offers 10 practical tips to help.

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# SISTA AH Circle

*Talking with your Kids*



**SISTA AH Talk!**

Women of Color Breast Cancer Support Group

## 10 Tips to Talk with your Kids about Breast Cancer

**Plan the conversation in advance:** Decide what you will say and consider practicing it before beginning the conversation.

**Use everyday language:** Make sure to communicate at a level suitable for your children. Define terms (like cancer); avoid using medical language (for example, substitute chemotherapy for medicine); and use a “show” not “tell” approach.

**Speak in a positive, optimistic tone:** If you seem anxious, sad, or fearful, your children maybe overwhelmed with the news of your diagnosis. Set a reassuring tone to help overcome their fears.

**Avoid blame or fault when you talk:** Even very small children may think that something or someone—God, himself or herself, or you—caused your breast cancer. Carefully explain that they are not the cause. They may also believe that breast cancer is catchy. You will need to explain that no one can catch breast cancer from someone else.

**Be honest, but not scary:** Describe the effects of treatment in easy to understand terms. Relay side effects as they relate to your children’s daily activities. For example, “I will not be able to drive you to the game because my medicine makes me tired.”

**Stay the course:** For most children, maintaining a routine will be very important during your breast cancer treatment. Get the help you need to ensure as little disruption takes place in their lives as possible. In your conversation, tell your children what to expect.

**Don’t give into temptation:** Maintain a sense of structure during your treatment and recovery. Keep your usual limits on things like TV, cell phone, games.

**Listen carefully:** Allow your children to ask questions and answer them honestly. Listen not only to what they ask, but how the questions are asked. Use a reassuring, confident tone when you respond.

**Don’t make promises that you cannot keep:** During your conversation, keep to facts as you know them. Give assurances, but avoid platitudes. Be realistic with your children. If you have confidence in your doctors, your children will, too.

**Spend time with your children:** While you may want to avoid difficult periods immediately following chemotherapy or radiation, there will be periods within each treatment cycle where you feel better. Make as special effort to spend time with your children.

