

Pointers For Parents

Making It A Family Discussion: Breast Cancer Awareness

(NAPSA)—From math homework to boyfriend dilemmas, there are many things mothers and daughters regularly talk about. But what happens when life strays from the ordinary and you find yourself forced to start a conversation you hoped to never have. This is a challenge more than 211,000 women will face this year when they are diagnosed with breast cancer.

These are mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, teachers, coaches and neighbors—all of whom have family, friends and a network of people who care about them. Developing breast cancer is undoubtedly difficult for those diagnosed but many times can be just as daunting for the people who love them.

Many women note that approaching the issue in a place where the child deems safe makes the disease appear more manageable and less overwhelming. Some companies create special pink ribbon products designed specifically to help open the lines of communication with children about the disease while offering support, hope and comfort. One such company is toy manufacturer Mattel, which has recently partnered with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation to create the Pink Ribbon™ Barbie® doll.

Barbie has traditionally provided a great way for mothers—and even grandmothers—to connect with their daughters. Pink Ribbon Barbie doll affords an opportunity to begin a dialogue



about breast cancer among the thousands of families faced with this emotionally challenging situation. Pink Ribbon Barbie doll was created by designer Robert Best and sales of each doll will contribute toward a \$100,000 minimum donation going directly to the Komen Foundation.

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation offers the following tips on sharing news of a breast cancer diagnosis with children and family members:

Be Honest: When speaking with children about your diagnosis, try to be as honest, truthful and open as possible—no matter how difficult it may seem. You decide how much you want to say.

Remember that children, just like adults, will fill in their own interpretations wherever you leave big gaps. And, because children may not know as much as adults, it is more likely that what they fill in will be wrong.

Encourage Discussion and Questions: Anything that changes your child's daily routine needs to be explained and discussed. If you are going to be gone for a few days, are getting sick from treatment, losing hair or a breast, let your child know why this is happening.

Inform Other Important Caregivers: It is a good idea to let your children's teachers, coaches and caregivers know about what is going on so that they are aware and may help children cope if they are in their presence for most of the day.

Accept Support: Your children depend on you for support and love but remember that they can be a source of support for you, too. Most likely they will want to spend more time with you, listening, playing and just talking.

Get Inspired: The Komen Foundation is comprised of more than 100 affiliates nationwide, with more than 75,000 volunteers dedicated to fighting breast cancer. Use these volunteer opportunities to involve your family members in the fight against breast cancer.

For more information and resources on breast cancer, visit www.komen.org or call (800) I'M-AWARE® (1-800-462-9273).