



THE UNTOLD COST OF CANCER: CHANGES IN APPEARANCE DUE TO CANCER TREATMENT IMPACT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ACCORDING TO NEW NATIONAL SURVEY OF WOMEN WITH CANCER

New National Survey Reveals Significant Toll of Appearance-Related Side Effects Of Cancer Treatment on Self-Esteem, Personal Control and Relationships

Washington, DC, April 24, 2012 – **look good feel better**[®], the free, global program that helps women address the appearance-related side effects of cancer treatment, today released findings of a new national survey that underscore how these side-effects, while cosmetic in nature, impact self-esteem and confidence, as well as relationships at home and in the workplace. The survey, conducted by Harris Interactive and which polled more than 1,200 women in the United States, also revealed the power of the **look good feel better** program, with past program participants scoring higher than even their cancer-free counterparts on certain aspects of self-confidence and control.

look good feel better offers free workshops and webinars that provide lessons on wigs and turbans, skin and nail care, cosmetics, accessories and personal styling, and has served more than 750,000 people with cancer in the U.S. and more than one million people with cancer around the world since being founded 23 years ago.

Nearly 800,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed with some form of cancer in 2012, according to the American Cancer Society. Many of them will experience side-effects of cancer treatments ranging from hair loss to weight loss (or gain), as well as changes in their skin and nails. Those changes will impact not only how these women feel about themselves, but how others perceive and treat them. According to the new **look good feel better** survey:

- One-third of women with cancer (33%) said that their altered appearance due to cancer treatment had a negative impact on their relationship with their spouse; 25% said that it had a negative impact on their relationship with their children, 24% said it had a negative impact on their relationships with friends.

54% of women with cancer said that people made assumptions about them based on the way they looked during treatment.

- Sixty-three percent of women with cancer (63%) said that people didn't know how to react/respond when they saw them. Only 27% said that their coworkers DID NOT treat them differently.

“look good feel better has always been about more than eyeliner and lipstick,” said Louanne Roark, Executive Director of the Personal Care Products Council Foundation and **look good feel better**. “We

hope that these new survey findings will open the eyes of health care providers and caregivers to the incredible stress that cancer causes beyond the diagnosis: self-esteem, control, relationships and many of the aspects that define normalcy come under attack. **look good feel better** helps women with cancer take back control, regain confidence, and reestablish a sense of normalcy in lives that are by no means normal, so that they can focus on becoming cancer survivors.”

It’s no secret: looking good is important to the vast majority of American women, regardless of whether they have cancer. Nearly every woman surveyed, including 97% of women who have experienced cancer and 95% of those who have not, said that there is a connection between how they look and how they feel. What’s more, prior to undergoing cancer treatment, three out of four (69%) of women with cancer said that their overall physical appearance was important to their self-esteem.

Most telling, however, was the fact that the very aspects of their physical appearance that mattered most to women and had the most impact on their self-esteem before they began cancer treatment are those most commonly associated with and most dramatically impacted by cancer treatment, including changes in their hair, skin and complexion and weight.

“We know there is a cascade of emotions following a cancer diagnosis and cancer treatment,” said Dr. Mary-Jane Massie, a board-certified psychiatrist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York who specializes in the psychological treatment of people with cancer and their families. “Losing one’s hair, changes in weight and complexion, all these outward signs of cancer rob one’s sense of self and self-confidence. The survey data being reported by **look good feel better** shows how these physical changes impact virtually every area of a patient’s life, as well as the importance of taking steps to address those changes and take back control.”

Impact on Confidence, Self Esteem and Control

While the importance of appearance to self-esteem does not diminish during cancer treatment, the **look good feel better** survey found that the side-effects of cancer treatment exact a damaging toll on the confidence and control that women have over their appearance.

- The majority of women with cancer (54%) said that during cancer treatment, their overall physical appearance was very important or important to their self esteem .
- 77% of women with cancer felt confident in how they looked BEFORE cancer treatment, only 55% AFTER cancer treatment.
- After treatment, nearly half of women with cancer (48%) felt uncomfortable when people looked at them, compared to only a third (33%) who felt the same before treatment.
- A full third (37%) of women with cancer surveyed avoided leaving the house because of the way they looked after going through treatment compared to only 14% before.

Addressing Appearance Makes a Difference

There is hope and help for women experiencing the side-effects of cancer treatment. According to the survey findings, women who participated in the **look good feel better** program indicated that they were more content and confident about their physical appearance than other women with cancer, as well as other women in general.

- **look good feel better** participants (76%) and women who have never been diagnosed with cancer (72%) are more confident in the way they look compared to other women who have had cancer but haven't experienced **look good feel better** (59%).
- After addressing their appearance-related side effects, 70% of **look good feel better** participants reported feeling in control of how they looked, compared to just 60% of women who addressed their side effects without **look good feel better**.
- Women with cancer who have not participated in **look good feel better** (28%) are more likely to say they avoid leaving the house because of the way they look, compared to only 17% of **look good feel better** participants and 16% of women who have not been diagnosed with cancer.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Personal Care Products Council Foundation during March, 2012 among 1226 women ages 25+. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Jennifer Burke*.

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About look good feel better

look good feel better is a collaboration of the Personal Care Products Council Foundation, a charitable organization established by the Personal Care Products Council, the leading national trade association representing the global cosmetic and personal care products industry; the American Cancer Society, the nation's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to saving lives from cancer; and the Professional Beauty Association | National Cosmetology Association, a national organization of more than 25,000 cosmetologists, wig experts, aestheticians, makeup artists and nail technicians. For more information about Look Good...Feel Better free workshops and other services available across the country, visit www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org.

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