



TRANSCRIPT:

The emotional impact of finishing womb cancer treatment

In this video, members of our Peaches' community share how they felt when their treatment for womb cancer finished.

I think I had a rollercoaster of emotions really. Once my treatment was finished, I felt relieved that it was finished and that I didn't need any more treatment after the surgery. I felt lucky that it had been caught early, and I felt grateful that I'd had the surgery really quickly, and I hadn't had a long wait for it.

But at the same time, I was also gripped by fear, worrying about the 'what ifs', and the after-effects of surgery. I had no idea if and when the menopause would kick in, and how I'd manage the symptoms without HRT, and other things like the risk of osteoporosis.

One of the things that surprised me most was the mental and emotional impact that diagnosis and recovery took on me, in some ways more than the physical side of things.

I felt it was quite an emotional time for me because I'd not only gone through hysterectomy and all that entails, then brachytherapy, and I felt a little bit emotional about the whole process. And it didn't really hit me until well after the brachytherapy finished.

My treatment was essentially my surgery. And because of the early stage at which my cancer was found, the surgery was enough, and it turned out that I didn't need to have chemotherapy or radiotherapy. And so, I had my follow-up appointment a month after surgery, and received the great news that I didn't need any more treatment. And that I should just get on with life, I guess.

And it was wonderful. Under the circumstances it was the best news that anyone could hope to have. At the same time, I felt quite bereft, because the previous six weeks had been a bit of a whirlwind, with the diagnosis, and then preparing for surgery. I did find myself standing on the steps of the hospital after that appointment, thinking — now what? It was like everything suddenly stopped.

And so, physically, though I was a bit tired and recovering, everything seemed to be okay. Emotionally, it was difficult. So, I felt happy, and confused. I felt guilty that I wasn't having to have more treatment like so many other people do. And I'd kind of "escaped" that.

And, I think then I had time to realise what had happened, because the six weeks before had been such a whirlwind. And suddenly, it began to properly hit me about the

seriousness of my diagnosis, and the seriousness of the operation I'd had. And I did feel very, very lost.

I think there was a follow-up phone call from one of the nurses, just to see how things were, how I was getting on, and I did say, physically fine, but, I do feel a bit emotionally lost. It's kind of like, because I was physically okay now and able to get on and do things, everybody else presumed everything was back to normal.

But my head was not back to normal. My head was dealing with something quite serious. But it was really difficult to talk about that with people who hadn't been through it.

I actually felt really, really strange, in that I'd been going since diagnosis. I'd had regular appointments, obviously surgery, follow-up appointments, the chemotherapy, going every three weeks, having phone calls in between, possibly with the team, and lots of appointments with the oncologists. It may have just been on the phone — then obviously radiotherapy where you go in every day for five weeks, seeing your oncologist again probably once a week while you are having radiotherapy. So quite full on really.

Finishing treatment then, you felt like you were just left alone. I felt a feeling of abandonment.

When I first finished my treatment, it was a very strange feeling, a bit like 'so what do I do now?'. Having had my life structured for the previous eight months by hospital appointments and being told what to do, when, and where I needed to be, by when. Now, I had complete freedom, and I wasn't sure what to do with it. But I soon got over that, using the time to focus on recovering from all my treatment.

It's really normal to feel like this, and you are not alone. There are people out there to talk to, so please reach out to organisations such as Peaches and your local cancer support centre. They are just wonderful.

And remember, these feelings will not last forever. You have just been through something quite traumatic, and it's a natural response.

[Where can I find further information and support?]

It can be difficult finding and accessing support for ongoing physical or mental health problems once your treatment has finished. To find out more about the different types of support available, you can go to our video titled, 'Accessing support and information'. You can also find a list of organisations on our website that provide helpful support and information.