

Fertility issues

Regardless of whether you already have children, or whether you wanted children, to be told that you will lose your fertility (your ability to have children) can be devastating. The idea of having children, or having more children to love and nurture, may have been a long-held dream. The loss of this dream can be felt as a deep grief. Even if having children was not in your plans, loss of fertility can be very distressing. Motherhood and fertility are strongly tied to our sense of ourselves as women. For some women, losing their fertility can be as difficult to accept as their cancer diagnosis. For others there may be a sense of regret, but also of acceptance. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

Women facing infertility often say they feel that “life is not fair”. As if being diagnosed with cancer is not bad enough, the loss of fertility, as well, can feel overwhelming. Women often feel angry and cheated. Symptoms of such grief may include a preoccupation with your own thoughts, teariness, emptiness and a desire to withdraw from others, especially friends and family members who have children. While such feelings may not go away completely, they usually lessen over time and become easier to recognize and handle. As with other emotional distress, it is important that you talk about your feelings. If you need support beyond your family, speak to members of your treatment team.