



Media One

Facing Ovarian Cancer

Transcript for chapter 2 of 4: Body Image

Lisle (Age 74, diagnosed 10 years ago. Stage 2) - My hair has always been very important to me. Perhaps, in my earlier years, I used to be at the hairdresser three or four times a week. So, the thought of losing my hair was not very palatable. However, it's important that if you get ovarian cancer, that you have your hair cut short. So that when it starts to fall out, it's not too much of a shock. I used to wear factory hygiene caps to bed, so that in the morning I could just remove the cap straight into the kitchen tidy and I wasn't conscious of it. The worst thing is if you let the hair fall out on your pillow. That's very distressing to a lot of women.

Daphne (diagnosed 5 years ago. Stage 3) - Oh, god, this is all mine now. And for all those out there who are bald, look, it will come back. I lost my eyelashes, my eyebrows, all my hair. It was horrific. But then I thought I should have some fun with this. So, I got my wig organised. I had this magnificent Hollywood wig, which was fine for when I was going out, but not for when I was just going down the road. Again, you've just got to try to make the most of... which is hard to do at the time. But it's not a permanent thing. It's a temporary thing. You just deal with it day by day. Each day is closer to you being better. For me, I'd look in the mirror and see the little hairs coming up on my head and that was fantastic. My eyelashes and my eyebrows came back - and they were such gifts that you should take such advantage of.

Veronica (Age 55, diagnosed 8 months ago. Stage 4) - I don't know, I'm not a vain person, but I think if you're losing your hair - I felt miserable. So, I put it on in the shop and I left the shop wearing my wig. Then I was looking around and feeling great. About a week later I bought another wig, exactly the same, so if I go outside and do some lawn mowing or whatever. I thought, 'why should I bother to put a hat on or a scarf? A wig is also something else I put on my head. I feel good. I've never gotten so many compliments about my hair, like now.

Helen (Age 54, diagnosed 5 months ago. Stage 3) - The hair loss didn't bother me nearly as much as I thought it would. I got used to it remarkably quickly. At home I never have it on. I figure, my friends can deal with it. Anyone who comes to the house can deal with it. I just don't necessarily need to walk around the streets with a big sign say, 'look, I have cancer'. It's much easier if you wear a wig, and nobody knows unless you want to tell them. And there are days when you want to tell everybody, and there are days when you don't. But, you know, I need to have control over that. And the wig gives it to me, I guess. But I'm perfectly happy to look like a tortoise [laughs].

Maureen (Age 55, diagnosed 6 months ago. Stage 2) - We tottled off to the wig gallery and I got a wig which looked very much like my own hair, so I was very happy about that. I'll show you my beautiful hair, which is very much like my own hair. I don't know how it looks - it looks a bit yucky, does it? [laughs] Well, when it's all brushed up it looks good. So, that's that one. And when I'm not wearing that, I just wear my hats or my beanies. Beanies keep my head warm at night. You've got to have a warm beanie.



Sharyn (Age 49, diagnosed 1 year ago. Stage 3) - I had planned to get married in April. I cancelled the wedding, for the simple reason that I wanted to get married when I had my own hair and not in a wig. Now that it's 10 months down the track from the chemotherapy, it's time for the wig to come off. So, I just thought I'd show you how much hair you'd have when you get there. It has been coloured, but it's quite long now. So, this is about 6 months from the chemotherapy. I finished in March and this is what I've grown now, in September.