

# Michelle's Guide

How to talk to your young daughter & other young women about breast cancer diagnosis & breast health

1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with cancer in her lifetime. Diagnosis can present an opportunity to have important conversations about health with those you love. In order to help women engage in dialogue, this conversation guide was developed in partnership with Michelle, a woman diagnosed with breast cancer who shares how she decided to approach having conversations with her daughter about her diagnosis and the importance of breast health.

## Michelle's Story

Almost 6 and a half years ago, I heard four dreaded words: "You have breast cancer." I was 36 at the time with no family history of breast cancer. The news was intimidating, overwhelming, and the ultimate curveball. I immediately thought of my children—about being there to take them to school, to cheer for them at a baseball game, to tuck them in at night, and to support them by being their strong, brave mom who could do anything.

My daughter was only eight years old when I was diagnosed. Her future was always on my mind throughout my journey. I made a commitment to her in those moments to be open and honest about what was happening to me and what it may mean for her. As she has gotten older, the conversations between us continue to mature, but what has remained constant is the underlying message of being proactive.

## Here are my tips for talking to your daughter or another young woman about breast health:

### BE HONEST AND OPEN



This comes first and foremost and needs to be reciprocal. Explaining what was happening to me helped alleviate my daughter's fears. I am dedicated to letting her know that she can come to me with any question or concern and that I will listen and help her. Having a family-wide open-door policy is important.



### EDUCATE HER ON THE VALUE OF ADVOCATING FOR HERSELF

My daughter has heard about breast self-awareness her whole life. As she matures, it's important that she understands her changing body and what "normal" is for her. I strive to give her a sense of empowerment so that she can be proactive and take control of her health. I want her to understand what I have gone through and how it has changed me for the better. I also want her to know that I will be there for her when life doesn't go exactly as she had planned.

### ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES



In our home, we talk about how nutrition, exercise, diet, and lifestyle impact our risk. I do my best to model a healthy lifestyle because I feel my best when I am making healthy choices, but also because I know that my choices affect other people in my life.

These conversations aren't always perfect, and often times aren't easy, but open dialogue is critical to establishing healthy relationships with each other and our bodies. These tough conversations will lead to brighter futures.

Bright Pink is here to support you on your journey towards personalized prevention. Once you've discussed your health with the women you love, put your awareness into action with [AssessYourRisk.org](https://www.assessyourrisk.org).