



PATHWAYS

A Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship

A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS

SUMMER/FALL 2022

Thanks to You!

Thanks to you and your continued participation in the Pathways Study, women are getting better breast cancer care and we are learning how to improve life after treatment. You are part of more than 15 years of effort to answer some of the hardest questions about how to live longer and better after a diagnosis of breast cancer.

This newsletter is dedicated to you and your important contribution to this study and breast cancer research. We asked some Pathways Study members why they keep answering the calls from study staff. The overwhelming answer is that by taking part, they can help others, those who are diagnosed with cancer. And this could benefit their sisters, daughters, nieces and friends!



"I want to contribute to cancer research for other women, to help women in the future when they are diagnosed."

– L.F.M., Pathways participant

Some of the dozens of scientists who have and are looking at Pathways data also shared how unique and significant this study is for their research into important questions about breast cancer. They shared how your participation is helping find ways that doctors, medical systems like Kaiser Permanente, and current and former patients can improve cancer outcomes, including quality of life.

Everybody Counts!

For scientists to get reliable results, they need a large enough number of people. With more than 4,500 women, Pathways is a very large study and has the power to provide important insights.

It also takes time. For more than a decade, your answers to questions that Virginia, Elinette, Lila, and other interviewers ask are combined with your medical information in a secure dataset. Because Pathways is such a long, ongoing research study, researchers can look at how many different things impact survival and other outcomes.



"We know so little about steps people may take after a breast cancer diagnosis to improve their health and quality of life. This study is one of a kind in the US and with so many women participating, will likely give us some clear answers to these questions."

– Dr. Christine Ambrosone,
Pathways Study co-Principal Investigator

Another reason the Pathways Study is unique is the diversity of the members. Many breast cancer studies only or mostly include white women. With enough Black, Latina and Asian American participants, our study has the power to look at differences between



racial and ethnic groups, to identify what works and doesn't work for each group.

"This Study can only be done with the active participation of people like us."

– P.C., Pathways participant

Did you know?

Our researchers at University of California, San Francisco have used databases and satellite imaging to evaluate food availability, parks and other neighborhood conditions that affect health.

Continued inside



With your participation, the Pathways Study has led to important new findings. They have also confirmed what other, smaller studies have found, providing better evidence for what you and your doctors can do for your health and wellness. Here are some highlights.

- Pathways data led scientists to identify a new gene that will help to target future breast cancer treatment.
- Hormone therapy for breast cancer can help prevent cancer recurrence in some women. However, due to the side effects, some women stop taking these medications without consulting their doctors. The Pathways Study identified the need for cancer care providers to talk with patients about side effects, to adjust the dose and take other actions to improve their quality and length of life.



“Our study found lower vitamin D levels at the time of cancer diagnosis were associated with poorer survival outcomes, highlighting the importance for breast cancer survivors to maintain sufficient vitamin D levels, for bone health and also possible survival benefits.”

– Dr. Song Yao, Pathways Study Investigator



“Using valuable data from Pathways, we’ve been able to study heart health and other important outcomes to help inform patients and clinicians on how women can live longer and healthier lives after a breast cancer diagnosis.”

– Dr. Marilyn Kwan,
Pathways Study Investigator



“Your participation has contributed to these findings. We wouldn’t learn anything without you.”

– Stacey Tinianov,
Breast Care Advocate

Expanding Breast Cancer Research

Since it began, the Pathways Study has been funded by the National Cancer Institute. Over the past decade, many other grants have been awarded to allow researchers from Kaiser Permanente, Roswell Park and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, UCSE, and many other places to work with Pathways data. Collaborating and providing access to the data is a priority, always very carefully and without personal identifiers, to protect your identity and health information.



Pathways is ‘the’ breast cancer study that the National Cancer Institute funds. We are their flagship study in breast cancer.

– Dr. Larry Kushi,
Principal Investigator of the
Pathways Study

By early 2022, 68 papers have been published in peer-reviewed journals, with more in the pipeline! Researchers have also shared results in 44 abstracts presented at internationally renowned conferences. In addition to sharing results, Pathways is also helping to train new investigators, another way of advancing research to improve breast cancer treatment and survivorship.



“Prospective cohort studies like Pathways take years to develop, I cannot emphasize enough how important these types of studies are to our collective understanding on how to survive breast cancer.”

– Dr. Isaac Ergas,
Pathways Study Staff Scientist

Pathways researchers have involved the community from the beginning of this Study, through partnerships with the KP Breast Care Coordinators and also with Zero Breast Cancer (ZBC), and later convening a Community Advisory Board. We continue to ask about



the topics that are most important to Study members. Vitamins, dietary supplements and the kinds of foods you eat are being analyzed now. You can share your thoughts any time: during a survey, by leaving a message on our toll-free number **1-866-206-2979** or emailing us at **DOR-pathways@kp.org**.



“Don’t think you are not important, and your input is not of great value. You can have an impact.”

– P.H., Pathways participant

We feature your stories in this newsletter, to provide a real face for the issues face by survivors and how they deal with life after breast cancer. ZBC then adapts the English and Spanish Pathways newsletter articles into factsheets to share online and in print with KP and other medical facilities and with organizations that serve people diagnosed with cancer.

Catherine Thomsen of ZBC said, “Working with Pathways research results and participants’ stories, I help translate the best and latest evidence into actions so that those newly diagnosed, living with cancer, and post-treatment can be as healthy and live as well as possible.”

Even if you’ve missed a follow-up survey, you can come back and continue helping others! If you opted out of Pathways, you can rejoin.



“There are lots of different ways to participate [in breast cancer research]. Some people give money, others do walkathons. This is a very specific thing that we can do in the comfort of our own homes. The amount of time, over time, is really very small!”

– M.T., Pathways participant



PATHWAYS UPDATE

During this 4th funding cycle, we will continue to contact all of you to complete our yearly follow-up surveys. These questionnaires take on average about 15 minutes to complete.

Every survey question you answer goes to the data we analyze that make our findings possible. We are working on streamlining our next survey to make it easier and quicker to complete.

We always try to accommodate everyone’s schedule; we hope you will work with us to find a little time to complete these surveys. As you can see, it is critical to have as many participants as possible complete each survey to learn more about the breast cancer survivorship and how we can help others.

THANK YOU for your continued participation! If you missed our call and would like to complete your survey please email or give us a call. ☒

UPCOMING NEWSLETTER

Do you have an idea or a story to share about how your cancer or treatment has caused you a problem that continued at least 2 years later? Please send a summary via email to **DOR-pathways@kp.org** and we may contact you for an interview in the future. Thank you! ☒

For the most up to date information on the Pathways study, please visit our website:

<http://pathways.kaiser.org> ☒

NEW CONTACT INFORMATION?

To keep in touch with you we must have your latest contact information. Please let us know if your phone number or home address has changed. You can reach us by calling our toll-free number: **1-866-206-2979** or email us: **DOR-pathways@kp.org** ☒



Return Service Requested

*"It is because of
women like you
generously giving of
your time that
advances are being
made in cancer research."*

*— Dr. Christine Ambrosone,
Pathways Study co-Principal Investigator*

