

#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 1000th participant
- Stretching after surgery

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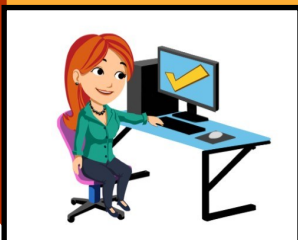
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# The AMBER Report

ISSUE 6

APRIL 2017

## Message from the Investigators

Spring is here! Hope you survived the cold and somewhat long winter! In this edition we highlight some new developments within the study and provide helpful tips for stretching after surgery.

In December we welcomed our 1000th participant between Edmonton and Calgary sites. This recruitment is a major milestone as we work toward our goal of 1500 participants



AMBER Executive Team (L to R): Dr. Margaret McNeely, Dr. Jeff Vallance, Dr. Christine Friedenreich, Dr. Kerry Courneya & Dr. Nicole Culos-Reed.

by mid 2018! Currently the study has enrolled 72% of the 1,500 participants that we hope to

recruit. As of March 2017 we have enrolled 571 participants in Calgary and 503 in Edmonton. To date, 660 participants have completed their YR1 assessments and 212 participants have completed their YR3 assessments.

As always, thank you again for your ongoing commitment to the study. We welcome any suggestions for future newsletters.

## What's New with AMBER?

It is often asked if we have started analyzing the data for the AMBER study. Because we need to recruit everyone before we can begin analyzing the data, it is still too early to publish any significant results.

However, as we start the 5 year assessments this summer, we want to focus on how to engage and best inform participants and the general public about the outcomes from the study.

Within Alberta Health Services, the Alberta Strategy for Patient Orientated Research (SPOR) SUPPORT Unit offers services to support patient-oriented research.

A couple of key concepts related to the AMBER Study are: knowledge translation and patient engagement. Knowledge translation involves developing ways for communicating and applying results found from research studies into general health practice. Patient engagement looks at ways to keep participants invested in the research being conducted with hopes of enhancing retention over the length of a study.

As part of this process we want to interact with you! We will be conducting focus groups in Summer 2017 in the hopes of gaining useful insight with respect to participation in the

AMBER study and how we can work towards successful knowledge translation and patient engagement.

If you are interested in lending your voice to our discussions, contact us for more information. Help us inform our decisions as we move forward!



# AMBER Study's 1000th Participant!

To highlight reaching the 1000th participant on the AMBER study we profiled two new recruits from Calgary and Edmonton.

## Calgary Participant

**Louise Lavoie is a baseline participant from Calgary.**

**Why did you decide to take part in the AMBER Study?** I strongly believe in research and only with us "volunteers" can these studies move forward and make head way. It feels good to be part of that.

**What was your favourite part of the testing experience?** My favourite would be the information, knowledge and all the stats about myself. Looking forward to seeing where I will improve come re-testing time.

**What advice would you give ladies newly diagnosed with breast cancer?** Stay positive and surround yourself with as many positive friends, family and/or groups to help you through this personal journey.

**What motivates you to be physically active?** My fit bit! My scale!

**What is your favourite thing about Calgary?** Calgary has been my home for 35 years now and I love the many pathways and mountains.

**What kept you motivated during your treatment?** I started my chemotherapy in January and I am motivated by the fact that I now see an end to my journey and a new chapter in my life.



**Calgary participant Louise Lavoie with study staff (L to R): Megan Farris, Heather Boersma and Lauren Voss.**

## Edmonton Participant

**Janelle Dane is a baseline participant from Edmonton.**

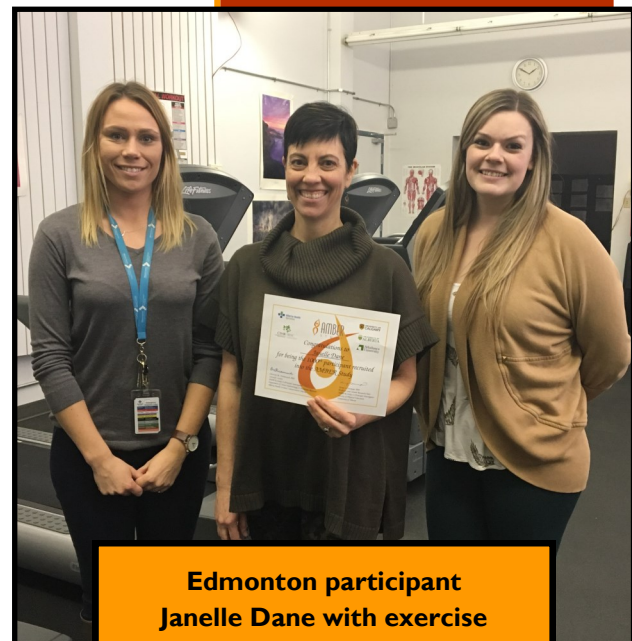
**Why did you decide to take part in the AMBER study?** I have always been interested in healthy eating and exercise and how they affect my body. I have seen an herbalist for years. While the interest is there, consistency is hard. I thought the study may provide motivation and down the road, good information about healthy eating, exercise and their relationship with cancer.

**What advice would you give to ladies newly diagnosed with breast cancer?** Focus on mental, physical, emotional and spiritual balance. You need all four. Learn as much as you can and don't be afraid to ask questions. And, surround

yourself with people who offer strength, laughter, positivity and HOPE! I have an incredibly network of family and friends who help to drive me forwards. Collectively, they are my rock!

**What advice would you give to other ladies who are thinking about joining the study?** Join! Give this journey purpose. Learn about yourself, make changes where necessary and let others learn too!

**How was your breast cancer discovered?** I discovered it myself. My maternal grandmother had breast cancer. My mom had breast cancer. I knew it was important to be aware and to be proactive.



**Edmonton participant Janelle Dane with exercise testers Katy Koots (L) and Stephanie Voaklander (R).**

# Movement After Surgery

Breast cancer surgery often causes a decrease in chest and shoulder range of motion. Incorporating stretching into your daily routine can help:

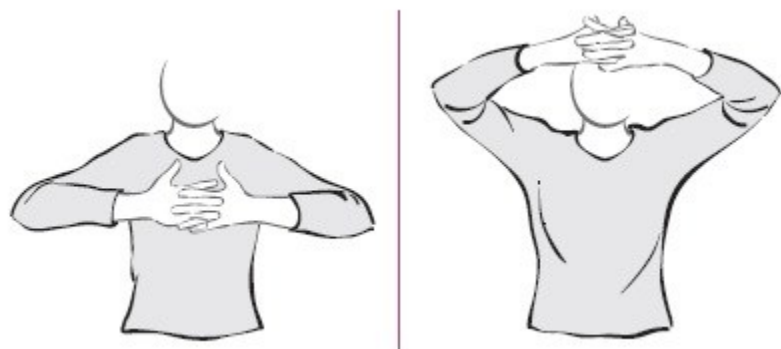
- Keep movement in your arms and shoulders
- Reduce stiffness in your joints
- Reduce pain in your neck and back
- Improve your overall well-being

It is important to remember that everyone is different and heals at their own pace. When completing the stretches, a few guidelines to follow are:

- Breathe deeply and often as you complete the exercise
- Do exercise until you feel a gentle stretch, not pain

- Do not bounce or make any quick, jerky movements while stretching
- Contact a doctor if you have any unusual swelling or pain.

Stretches listed below are referenced from: *Exercises after Breast Surgery*. Canadian Cancer Society 2015.



## Arm Lifts

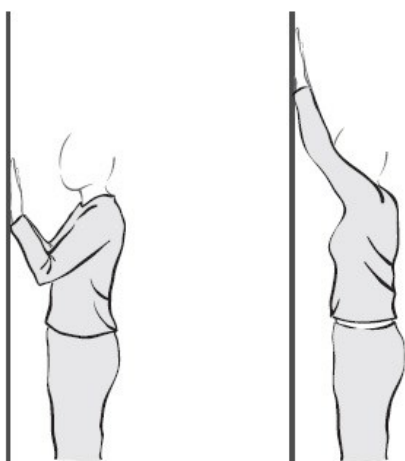
1. Clasp your hands together in front of your chest. Point your elbows out.
2. Slowly lift your arms upward until you feel a gentle stretch
3. Hold for 1 to 2 seconds and then slowly return to starting position. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Note: If you need more support, grab your wrists with your hands instead of clasping your fingers.

## Winging it

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Touch your fingertips to your ears with your elbows pointed to the ceiling. (If it is more comfortable, place your fingers on your forehead, palms facing each other.)
2. Move your elbows apart and down to the floor. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

Note: If you feel pain or pinching, place a small pillow behind your head, above your affected shoulder. Use a folded towel under one or both elbows for support if it is too painful to move your elbows down.



## Wall Climbing

1. Stand facing the wall, about 30 cm (12 in) away, placing both hands on the wall at shoulder level.
2. Use your fingers of your affected arm to climb up or slide as high as you can until you feel a stretch.
3. Return to starting position and Repeat 5 to 10 times.
4. Switch arms and repeat.

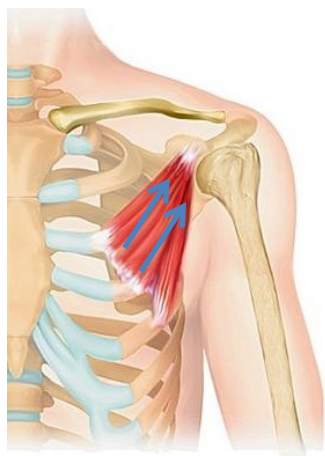
Note: Avoid this exercise if you feel a pinch in the top of your shoulder when walking your fingers up the wall.



# Rolling with Jenna: Pectoralis Minor Release

In the upper part of the chest you will find a thin, triangular muscle called the pectoralis minor. This muscle will often shorten due to rounded shoulder and forward head posture.

You can target this muscle by standing and placing the ball between you and a wall or laying down on the floor.



1. Place the ball on the outside of the ribs level with the bottom of the breast bone. You may have to move aside breast tissue with hand on opposite side.
2. Slowly roll the ball upwards and outwards towards the shoulder joint.
3. Repeat this movement by slowly moving inwards across your chest as close to the breast tissue as you comfortably can. Always starting from the bottom and rolling upwards.
4. Switch sides and repeat movement.



*Note:* When rolling over scars there should be no redness, stitches or open wounds. Rolling can be slightly uncomfortable but should not be overly painful. Make sure to back off pressure if this occurs.

*Everyone is different and heals at their own pace. Talk to your doctor or another health professional before starting any new exercises.*



As we work towards our goal of 1500 participants, we are reaching out to businesses in the Edmonton and Calgary area for deals/discounts that we can pass on to you!

Swimco offers a variety of products including swimsuits and inserts designed for ladies post-mastectomy.

## 10% off

**swimco.**

Receive 10% off all regular priced items. **Online only.**

Cannot be combine with other coupon codes.

Use code: **AMBER10** at checkout

Valid March 30 - December 25th, 2017

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