



# 101 THINGS

**YOU SHOULD KNOW  
ABOUT BREAST CANCER**



**Pam Schmid**

A health and fitness expert who never  
thought cancer would happen to her

### **Synopsis:**

**101 Things You Should Know About Breast Cancer:** There are a million and one things to know about breast cancer, but at least 101 things you *should* know about breast cancer, to understand your own risk, learn about early detection and understand and support the journey of someone you care about. Reviewed for accuracy by nationally recognized experts in the field, the book answers the questions, “Could breast cancer happen to me?”, “How can you detect cancer at its earliest stages?”, “What is it like to be treated for breast cancer?”, and “What can someone do to achieve optimal well-being during and after treatment?” and more. Learn why the five-year mark isn't the same for breast cancer survivors as it is for other types of cancer, what living with the risk of recurrence is like, and why the world of "survivorship" has come to be so important. Personal anecdotes and stories by Pam Schmid, a seven year breast cancer survivor, are shared alongside the facts from the perspective of a health and fitness professional who never thought cancer would happen to her and what she has learned on her journey.

### **Key Endorsements:**

This book is a must for anyone whose life has been affected by breast cancer. Pam Schmid nails it with simple, easy to digest facts and figures providing an invaluable blueprint for not just surviving, but thriving through diagnosis, treatment, and embracing life beyond. **Pam Peeke MD, MPH, FACP, Chief Medical Correspondent Discovery Health TV, WebMD Chief Lifestyle Expert, ACSM Exercise IS Medicine National Spokesperson**

Pam Schmid is a tireless advocate for cancer survivors who truly embodies LIVESTRONG's mission of inspiration and empowerment. She has faced cancer head-on and understands first-hand the unique challenges that women encounter after a breast cancer diagnosis. By sharing her story, she is helping others navigate the cancer experience and serving as a valuable resource to breast cancer survivors.

**Doug Ulman, LIVESTRONG President and CEO**

Love it, double love it...a quality work that is welcoming to all comers and affirming for so many. I will recommend it to every breast cancer survivor and family member because it is a useable, workable manual for people who need to get up to speed quickly and become informed to get their best outcomes. Pam's insights of her personal journey are validating and inspiring. **Sharon Bigelow, RN MSN ANP-BC, AOCNP®, Oncology nurse practitioner for 30 years, Founder and Executive Director Navigate Cancer Foundation, sole provider of clinical navigation services for LIVESTRONG**

Pam Schmid brings clarity and common sense to the most important issues in breast cancer today, from the perspective of patient and educator. **Wendie Berg, M.D., Ph.D, FACR, Diagnostic radiologist specializing in breast imaging, Internationally renowned radiology researcher-Voted Most Influential Radiology Researcher of the year in 2010 by her peers, Professor of Radiology at University of Pittsburg Medical Center**

When you learn that you or a loved one has cancer; life suddenly stands still, questions surface, and reassurance is needed. Between the pages of this book, Pam provides a guiding light with her voice and intermingling of personal experience. She gives courage to a fearful mind, rescues the reader who is lost, and brings hope to the hopeless. Pam has touched my life and journey with cancer in a profound and powerful way and now with her incredible words of wisdom in print, she will do the same for you. Everyone, regardless of how cancer has touched their life, should read this masterpiece.

**Suzanne Lindley, MSW, Survivor, Co-Founder YES! Beat Liver Tumors, LIVESTRONG Leader, International advocate and speaker**

The book is beautifully written, informative, moving, and very accessible... an extremely valuable guide for women. Her perspectives and thoughts are valuable for advocates and physicians as well. **Victoria Seewaldt, M.D., Professor of medical oncology Duke University Cancer Institute, Internationally recognized breast cancer researcher, Director Duke Breast Cancer Prevention Program and Women's Wellness Clinic**

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### **About the author**

Pam Schmid received her BS in Education and Special Education from the University of Texas at Austin with a Psychology minor. She has been a health and fitness professional in the area of health promotion and disease prevention since 1981 holding numerous positions and certifications, including ACSM Health Fitness Specialist, ACSM's Cancer Exercise Trainer, and Wellcoaches® Wellness Coaching certification.

After her diagnosis of breast cancer in 2004, Pam began speaking and writing to educate and empower patients. Her business *Priorities Simplified* provides wellness services

including wellness coaching, speaking and consulting to individuals, businesses, and organizations. She has served as teaching faculty at Wellcoaches Corporation since 2003.

She is the creator of Healthy and Fit After Cancer® programs which were established to give survivors a pathway to feeling their best with powerful, yet practical steps, that inspire hope, possibility, and strength to follow their vision of health and well-being after a diagnosis of cancer.

Pam is an international speaker, coach, and writer who has been interviewed and quoted by local, national and international media, including USA Today, US News and World Report, USA Today, CBN, and ABC and CBS local. She has been a patient advocate at the local, state, and national level for several organizations, was a founding member of the Duke Patient Advocacy Council, co-chair for the NC Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship workgroup, and three time Lance Armstrong Foundation LIVESTRONG national delegate, Global Summit volunteer, and LIVESTRONG leader. She also was the recipient of the Jonquil Award in 2005, from the Duke University Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Pam and her husband Jerry, of over 30 years, have two grown boys, Jeremy and Dustin, and a new daughter-in-law, Caroline. She enjoys acting and has been in numerous commercials, films, and corporate videos.

## **Inside the book...**

### **Introduction**

Before my own breast cancer, I wonder if I would have picked up a book like this?

“Cancer Will Never Happen To Me” was the title of an article I wrote within months of my diagnosis in 2004, and may come close to what you might be thinking right now. “It’s not in my family,” you might say, or “I have a very healthy lifestyle, doing all the ‘right’ things.” The idea of cancer isn’t on your radar and doesn’t even seem like a remote possibility. I understand. It wasn’t on mine, either.

My greatest wish is that you will continue reading through the first sections, so you can learn more about your risk and what you can do to detect cancer at its earliest stages, never finding yourself in my shoes! Stay with me.

If you’ve been diagnosed with cancer, I hope you will read the book in full, so you will be informed, validated, supported, empowered, inspired, hopeful, and able to share important information with those around you to better support you, make your journey easier, and help dispel misinformation and myths.

If you picked up the book to learn more about what a friend or loved one is going through, bless you. Understanding the scope of what they may be experiencing will be invaluable for them. Cancer doesn’t just happen to the person who has it; it touches

everyone within reach. The more you know, the more you can be a part of their healing and support.

If you are thinking about reading this book to learn more about your patients or clients who have been diagnosed, even more blessings to you. We need professionals who “get” what our experience has been.

Before 2004, breast cancer was something that happened to other, unfortunate souls. As a healthy and fit 46-year-old, I thought I was impervious to disease. After all, I had spent a career teaching people how to live healthy lives and prevent disease, *and* was walking the walk, as you will see in the book. I was never going to have to worry about breast cancer, or so I thought.

Before I was diagnosed, I knew a few things for sure: annual mammograms starting at age 40 were important and that women sometimes died of breast cancer. I knew their treatment often included surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, but that was the extent of it. I did have some crazy ideas about people I knew who had the disease and what they had done to cause it. So much so, that I remember watching a friend who used to wash her dishes by hand with soapy water and never rinsed them, letting it drain off, thinking this might have played a role in her developing breast cancer! Secretly hypothesizing why someone *else* (or you) got cancer, is common, but I encourage you to arm yourself with information with the facts.

As you will learn, we don't have many clear answers on how and why people get breast cancer, other than the “risks” of being a woman and getting older. The majority of the time, no identifiable risk factors are present. We have much to learn.

Just being around someone who has breast cancer will not mean you understand what there is to know. Having taken a close friend with Stage IV breast cancer to chemotherapy and radiation for years, I was no wiser. In all my involvement with her, I really had no idea what she was dealing with. She didn't talk much about her challenges, and made it look easy. I had no idea of the complexity of the disease or what she was experiencing. A simple book would have helped me understand her experience more fully and perhaps helped me support her better.

Two years after her death, I learned the intimate details by personal experience.

I have also learned that most women know about pink ribbons and raising money for breast cancer, but they don't know a lot about their own risk, early detection, or other important information that could save their lives. Also, women with breast cancer often don't understand the details of their very disease or who have gathered misinformation (or no information) that could cost them their lives, or at the very least, their quality of life.

There is much to learn about breast cancer. I understand that it is overwhelming, even for me. I've condensed a lot of information, shared my personal experience to bring

the book alive, and broken it down into key sections to make it easier to grasp when needed. Starting with understanding risk and early detection, through diagnosis and treatment, well-being during and after treatment, how to navigate the “support” waters for yourself and others, and what survivorship is all about, it is a progression through the experience of being a cancer survivor.

Before my treatment began, I remember thinking how odd it was that I felt perfectly fine, yet there was a tumor growing inside of me. My thought was, “I am healthy and fit *with* cancer. How could that be? Here I am at 46 years old, running nearly an eight-minute mile with boundless energy, but have something growing inside of me that could potentially shorten my life!” I knew I would be healthy and fit *after* my diagnosis of cancer, if there was any way possible. But I had no idea how challenging that would be.

Therefore, I summarize some of the key pieces I have learned through my own experience and that of working with survivors in my Healthy and Fit After Cancer® program, with expanded sections around health and well-being during and after treatment.

Chapters 8 and 9 are helpful to understand a survivor’s experience and what might be helpful and what might not, when it comes to support (on both sides). Every one of us is different and unique in what their needs and experiences are, but hopefully, it can bring about awareness of what might be a starting place.

I recognize that my audience will be diverse, from those who know very little about breast cancer, to experts and those living in the trenches with the disease. To the experts (including survivors), please understand that I am trying to give as much evidence-based information as possible and have had to simplify and shorten a lot of the information, not including every detail. To those who are new to breast cancer, the information presented here is just the tip of the iceberg, and it is intended to hit some of the most basic, compelling, or asked-about topics. Many of the websites I refer to are an endless source of information. For survivors, I hope that the book may shed light on subjects you may not know about, spark curiosity to learn more, and otherwise be a source of information and support to make life easier.

Throughout the book, I have shared my perspective on many of the topics as a survivor, intermingled with facts and information. People have said they like reading my personal thoughts and experiences before the sections (and some throughout). As to those personal thoughts, I’m always surprised at what people glean from the written page. I pray that my words are read with the understanding that this is *my* story and experience, and are written with the utmost respect and knowledge of stories much better and much worse, and different. I am humbled by the knowledge of others’ experiences. My love and respect go out to you. I hope at least some of my words validate your experience and give you hope.

To all of you who have been touched by breast cancer, I wish you peace, love, and much hope to navigate your journey.