

## UNDERSTANDING PREGNANCY AFTER BREAST CANCER

*Research is needed to understand fertility and pregnancy after breast cancer treatment; help Rethink bring the Baby Time research study to Canada to find the answers*

(**May 21, 2015** – Toronto, Canada): [Rethink Breast Cancer](#) is calling on Canadians to help fund the international [Baby Time](#) research study in Canada to understand and overcome the challenges some women face when trying to get pregnant after cancer.

From Rethink's fourteen years working with young women with breast cancer they know that **fertility is one of the most important issues** to these women. Drugs administered during cancer treatment, and in the adjuvant setting to reduce the risk of recurrence, can have adverse effects on a woman's reproductive system. The Baby Time (scientific name: POSITIVE) clinical trial will investigate what will happen if young women take a break in their hormonal treatment to try to conceive naturally.

"There are **many challenges associated with a diagnosis of breast cancer during the child-bearing years**," says MJ DeCoteau, Executive Director, Rethink Breast Cancer. "Loss of fertility and the issue of pregnancy after treatment for breast cancer are devastating for a young patient. More clinical data is needed so that young women can safely plan and start a family after breast cancer."

Many people are familiar with the difficulties associated with surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, but getting through treatment is not the end of the line for the 70% of women with hormone responsive breast cancers. Most hormone responsive breast cancer patients follow up adjuvant treatment with five to ten years of endocrine therapy (such as Tamoxifen) to reduce the chances of recurrence. While chemotherapy can put young women into early menopause limiting their fertility, endocrine therapy can impact the ovaries as well as carry associated risks to a growing foetus, leaving young women without a safe way to conceive a child. Moreover, the research associated with the risk of pregnancy after breast cancer is limited, making it challenging for a woman to navigate her options.

"At this time, it is hard for me to advise my patients on getting pregnant when we do not have the research to back up our recommendations," says Dr. Karen Gelmon, Medical Oncologist, Department of Medical Oncology, BC Cancer Agency. "Endocrine therapy is important as we know we can increase the number of women who are cured of their early breast cancer, but we do not recommend getting pregnant while on this treatment. My patients are asking about taking a break from endocrine therapy to have a baby. The POSITIVE study is critical because it will help answer their questions about whether this is safe and feasible."

**Rethink has committed to funding the Canadian research arm of this international study**, led by Dr. Karen Gelmon, Co-Chair of the NCIC Clinical Trials Group breast site committee and Dr. Ellen Warner, National Principal Investigator. More than 60 breast cancer centres in 20 countries around the world are participating. The trial will evaluate the pregnancy outcomes and safety of interrupting endocrine therapy for young women with ER+ breast cancer who desire pregnancy. Funding the study in Canada ensures the results will be applicable here, and offers Canadian women the opportunity to participate in the research. Plus, Canada's multicultural population will help advise the global study results as to any differences between women of different ethnic backgrounds.

**Rethink Breast Cancer cannot fund this important research study without the support of donors.** The organization has committed to raising \$100,000 to cover the costs of each patient entered into the study over four years (each patient will be followed for up to 10 years). To raise the initial \$25,000 required to enter the first patients in to the study in 2015, Rethink has launched an Indiegogo crowd-funding campaign. Please visit [rethinkbreastcancer.com/babytime](http://rethinkbreastcancer.com/babytime) to find out more and donate to the campaign.

**About Rethink Breast Cancer**

Rethink Breast Cancer's mission is to empower young people worldwide who are concerned about and affected by breast cancer. Rethink is the first ever Canadian charity to bring bold, relevant awareness to the 40s and under crowd; foster a new generation of young and influential breast cancer supporters; infuse sass and style into the cause; and, most importantly, respond to the unique needs of young women going through it. By taking a breakthrough approach to all aspects of breast cancer – education, resources, advocacy, community building, and fundraising – Rethink is thinking differently about breast cancer. To find out more about Rethink Breast Cancer, visit [rethinkbreastcancer.com](http://rethinkbreastcancer.com).

-30-

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