Women newly diagnosed with breast cancer often are misled by false information regarding treatments and side effects. Web sites can be filled with graphic stories and false information about chemotherapy. Research has examined how patients handle the side effects of chemotherapy physically and emotionally during treatment. No standardized prechemotherapy intervention has been developed to assist patients with breast cancer preparing for chemotherapy. A 30-minute educational intervention provided by nurses before the start of chemotherapy may assist women in increasing their knowledge of chemotherapy treatment, enhancing their ability to manage side effects and improving their coping strategies.

At a Glance
✦ Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women; however, early detection and advances in treatment have helped to lower the death rate.
✦ The availability of different treatment options can be confusing, and the Internet can provide false, nonscientific information.
✦ Educating women regarding the different aspects of their chemotherapy may help to improve their ability to cope with breast cancer.

Providing Cancer Education

An educational resource kit was designed and provided to women newly diagnosed breast cancer (Samarel et al., 1999). Developed around the Roy Adaptation Model of Nursing (Roy & Andrews, 1991), the kit focused on physiological well-being, self-concept, role function, and interdependence in patients. The model could be used independently by women two to three months after diagnosis or by nurses as a guide when providing support over the telephone or during a breast cancer support group. The tool was not recommended for women who had just been diagnosed because it was believed to be an overwhelming amount of information.

Breast care nurse counselors in the United Kingdom provided support to patients before and after initial consultation with a surgeon (Ambler et al., 1999). Patients in the intervention were found to have an increased understanding of treatments and...