

Survivor gives wig library a head start

HEALTH

Lana Lam

BREAST cancer survivor Ayda Soydash says losing her hair was one of the hardest parts of her illness.

"It was the worst thing," the 30-year-old said. "Even now, I've got hair extensions because I don't like short hair."

At 28, Ms Soydash was diagnosed with cancer in her left breast and underwent treatment that made her hair fall out.

As a young woman, the hair loss was traumatic.

"I know what it's like to wake up in the morning and see myself in the mirror with no hair," she said.

Wigs cost between \$200 and \$300 each and it was nearly impossible for Ms Soydash to buy one because she had stopped work to get treatment and had to juggle rent and medical expenses.

"For a lot of people, it's financially hard," she said. "A lot of people can't afford to buy them."

Luckily, her family and friends pitched in and she was able to get four wigs.

"It was good. I never had a bad hair day."

Ms Soydash is now in remission and has donated her wigs to help start a new wig library at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Camperdown.

The library will have wigs, head scarves, turbans and a range of accessories such as under-caps, and shampoos. Breast cancer patients and other cancer patients who lose hair can use the wigs for free.

"I feel like I'm achieving something," Ms Soydash said. "What happened is a bad thing, but it's also a good thing because I can help others. There's a positive side to it."

The Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation has donated \$10,000 to the library and are appealing to the public for an extra \$20,000 to buy 200 wigs. To donate, visit www.sbcf.org.au or call 9515 6345.



Breast cancer survivor Ayda Soydash has donated her old wigs to the RPA Hospital's new wig library.

Picture: Danny Aarons