



“One in eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in their lives. Of these women, one in four will undergo a mastectomy.”

“One of my greatest joys is getting a call from a doctor requesting more knockers,” says Barb Demorest, a breast cancer survivor, who has made it her mission to make knitted prosthetic breasts available to any woman who needs them.

When Barb was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011, one of her first thoughts was, “I sure hope I don’t have to have a mastectomy.” Barb did end up having to have a breast removed, and because of complications; she was unable to have reconstructive surgery. Shortly after her breast removal, Barb contacted a local cancer society to find out what her options were for a prosthetic so she could go back to work. She was told she would not be able to put anything on the scar for at least six weeks. Barb was devastated.

Later that week Barb went for a follow-up doctor appointment, and while waiting, she started reading a brochure on silicone breast prostheses. Her doctor saw her reading the pamphlet and told her that most women are not happy with this type of prosthesis. In dismay, she asked her doctor, “Well then, what am I going to do?” Much to her surprise, the doctor asked, “Do you knit?” To which Barb perked up and replied, “Uhh, yeah!” That day the doctor gave Barb information on how to make a knitted breast. Not feeling up to the actual knitting, Barb immediately called her friend Phyllis to see if she would make her one. A few days later, Phyllis brought her the knitted knocker and Barb still remembers the feeling she had when she stuffed it into her bra. “It was perfect! It was light. It was soft. It was pretty, and it worked in my bra wonderfully! I just felt normal again. It was the perfect solution, and it changed everything for me! It perked up my attitude as well as my breast! It was at that moment I realized my purpose: to make sure that knitted knockers would be available to any woman who needs them.”

This is exactly what Barb has done. “Because there are over 50,000 mastectomies performed in the United States each year, there is always demand for more knockers,” Barb says. Using her own funds, as well as donations from generous supporters, she has established a website that includes information for people interested in donating time and/or money as well as suggestions for how people can get involved locally. The website also includes the “request a knocker” form. Barb sends knitted knockers to anyone who asks, including doctors’ offices and cancer centers. “Recently, I was speaking with a nurse, and she said to me, ‘I sure wish you could be there when a woman comes in who is dejected, wondering what she is going to do. When we bring out the bag of knockers you have sent us, it always brings a smile to her face, and sometimes it brings tears of joy.’ I don’t have to be there,” says Barb with a smile. “I don’t have to be there, because I was there. I was that woman. I understand completely.”

What are Knitted Knockers?

Knitted Knockers are special handmade breast prostheses for women who have undergone mastectomies or other procedures to the breast. Traditional breast prostheses are usually expensive, heavy, sweaty, and uncomfortable. They typically require special bras or camisoles with pockets, and they can’t be worn for many weeks after surgery. Knitted Knockers, however, are soft, comfortable, beautiful, and when placed in a regular bra - they take the shape and feel of a real breast. Knitted Knockers can be adjusted to fill a gap for uneven breasts, and they are easily adapted for those going through reconstruction by simply removing some of the stuffing.



How can YOU help?

You can knit some knockers using skacel's **HiKoo® CoBaSi DK**! **CoBaSi DK** (which stands for **C**otton, **B**amboo, **S**ilk) is a DK weight, soft, washable blend that comes in great colors! One hank of **CoBaSi DK** will make a pair of size C knockers. Barb says she gets the most requests for "nude" and pastel color breast pairs, and most requests are for sizes B and C. Knockers can be shipped with no stuffing to minimize shipping costs.

Please send completed knockers to:

Knitted Knockers, 1780 Iowa St., Bellingham, WA 98229

Knitted Knockers Pattern

Materials:

1 set 6" double point needles, size US 5 or 6. **HiKoo® Cobasi DK** (55% Cotton, 16% Bamboo, 8% Silk, 21% Elastic Nylon - 140 yards per 50 gram skein), tapestry needle.

Outer Piece

CO 3 sts * = 3 sts

Next Row: Kfb every stitch = 6 sts

Divide onto 3 needles to start knitting in the round = 6 sts [2 sts / needle]

Rnd 1: Kfb, k1 each needle = 9 sts [3 sts / needle]

Rnd 2: Knit to last stitch on each needle, M1, k1 = 12 sts [4 sts / needle]

A cup: Repeat Rnd 2 another 18 times, or amount to equal 5" diameter (across) = 66 sts [22 sts / needle]

B cup: Repeat Rnd 2 another 20 times, or amount to equal 5.5" diameter (across) = 72 sts [24 sts / needle]

C cup: Repeat Rnd 2 another 24 times, or amount to equal 6" diameter (across) = 84 sts [28 sts / needle]

D cup: Repeat Rnd 2 another 26 times, or amount to equal 6.5" diameter (across) = 90 sts [30 sts / needle]

E cup: Repeat Rnd 2 another 28 times, or amount to equal 7" diameter (across) = 96 sts [32 sts / needle]

Purl 2 rounds. (These two rounds help define the edge as you begin to create the back of your knocker.)

Inner Piece

Rnd 1: Knit to last 2 sts, k2tog (each needle)

Rnd 2: SSK, knit to last 2 sts, k2tog (each needle)

Repeat Rnds 1 & 2 until 12 sts remain (4 on each needle)

Cut yarn, leaving a long tail. Thread tail through remaining stitches and leave opening loose to allow for stuffing.

Fill with Fiber Fil™ and pull closed. Weave in ends.

** Optional nipple: work 4 rows of i-cord. Stretch and twist i-cord tightly and stitch down to create a very small nipple.*

Abbreviations

CO	Cast On
kfb	Knit into front & back of stitch
K	knit
P	purl
m1	make one, increase
k2tog	knit 2 stitches together
ssk	slip two stitches from left to right as if to knit, then knit them together through the back loops.



For a pattern using Magic Loop or Crochet, or to make a donation, visit: www.knittedknockers.org