

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

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Did You Know . . .

- One in eight women will get breast cancer in their lifetime
- Every 13 minutes a women dies of breast cancer
- 77% of women with breast cancer are over age 50
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of death in women between ages 15 - 54 years
- Breast cancer is the second cause of death in women between ages 55 - 74 years

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer (out of your control):

- Being female
- Having an immediate family member with breast or ovarian cancer (doubles your risk)
- Having two family members with breast or ovarian cancer (risk increases five-fold)
- Menstruating before age 12
- Menopause after age 55
- Never been pregnant or having first baby after age 30
- Being 50 or older
- White women are slightly more likely to develop breast cancer, but African American women have a higher risk of dying from it
- Radiation treatments to the chest area at a younger age (i.e. for non-Hodgkin's disease)



Lifestyle-related Risk Factors (within your control):

- **Overweight** - a 20-year Brigham and Women's Hospital study in Boston showed that large weight gain in adulthood increased breast cancer risk; those who gained 55 pounds after age 18 doubled their risk vs. women who maintained their weight. The good news is the more weight you lose, the more your risk drops!
- **Poor Diet** - diets high in saturated fat increase risk; women drinking 2 to 5+ alcoholic drinks per day have 1½ times higher risk of getting breast cancer compared to non-drinkers
- **Hormone Replacement Therapy** - use of combined estrogen and progesterone increased risk (risk decreases 5 to 10 years after hormone replacement discontinued)
- **Inactivity** - evidence is growing that exercise reduces risk; studies have shown brisk walking for 1.25 - 2.5 hours per week decreases risk by 18%

Early Detection is Best! Performing monthly self-breast exams may help you detect a lump, or notice a change in the size, shape or texture of your breast. Signs of redness, swelling, warmth, burning or aching may also be symptoms of an aggressive form of cancer known as inflammatory breast cancer.

In addition to performing monthly self-breast exams, women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) by their health care provider, at least every 3 years. After age 40, women should have a breast exam by a health professional every year. Getting an annual mammogram after age 40 is one of the best screening methods for detecting breast cancer in the early stages when it is more likely to be successfully treated. Talk with your personal physician to find out when and what type of screening is best to meet your individual needs based on your family history and other personal risk factors.

Source: American Cancer Society

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