

OCTOBER 2018 HEALTHY TIP

NATIONAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

The best way to fight breast cancer is to take steps to detect the disease in its early stages. Due to the regular use of mammography screening, most breast cancers in the U.S. are found at an early stage, before warning signs appear. Every person should know the symptoms and signs of breast cancer, and by performing monthly breast self-exams, you will be able to more easily identify any changes in your breast. Be sure to talk to your healthcare professional if you notice anything unusual.



- Are you due for a mammogram? Please make your appointment now, do not delay! Breast cancer prevention starts with your own health habits – such as staying physically active and eating right. Early detection can be a big plus in treating breast cancer.
- Most mammogram results will be good news, with the test finding no signs of breast cancer. For some women, though, the test may show something abnormal. During your lifetime, you may have a breast lump or have an abnormal area show up on a mammogram. To make sure that the lump or abnormal area is not cancerous, you will require further tests.
- Women who undergo follow-up tests should take heart that most abnormalities found by a mammogram are not cancer, but something less serious like a benign breast condition. Additional testing may indicate that everything is normal.
- Follow-up testing generally begins with less invasive tests (such as a diagnostic mammogram or ultrasound) and, if necessary, will progress to more invasive tests (such as a needle biopsy).
- If the abnormality is definitely not cancer (for example, a simple cyst), then no treatment may be necessary. If the abnormal finding appears to be benign, a woman may have a repeat mammogram and/or be followed up at her health care provider's discretion, depending on the results. If it is suspicious or likely to be cancer, the next step is to remove some tissue from the abnormal area (biopsy) to determine if it is cancer. This involves removing cells or tissue from the suspicious area and examining them under a microscope.
- Even though the prospect of having a biopsy can be frightening, keep in mind that about four in five women who get biopsies don't have breast cancer. Still, the test is very important as it is the only way to learn if something is cancer or not. And if a biopsy does find cancer, the good news is that it usually can be treated successfully.

For additional information go to www.komen.org and www.nationalbreastcancer.org

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