



National Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Breast Cancer

Breast Cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States, aside from skin cancer. According to the American Cancer Society an estimated 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed among women in the United States this year. Today, there are about 2.5 million breast cancer survivors living in the United States.

If you're worried about developing breast cancer, or if you know someone who has been diagnosed with the disease, one way to deal with your concerns is to get as much information as possible. In this section you'll find important background information about what breast cancer is and how it develops.

Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that grows in one or both of the breasts. Breast cancer usually develops in the ducts or lobules, also known as the milk-producing areas of the breast.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women (after lung cancer). Breast cancer is much less common in males; by comparison, the disease is about 100 times more common among women.

Types of breast Cancer

There are several different types of breast cancer that can be divided into two main categories-noninvasive cancers and invasive cancers. Noninvasive cancer may also be called "carcinoma in situ." Noninvasive breast cancers are confined to the ducts or lobules and they do not spread to surrounding tissues. The two types of noninvasive breast cancers are ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) and lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS).

It is known that hormones in a woman's body, such as estrogen and progesterone, can play a role in the development of breast cancer. In breast cancer, estrogen causes a doubling of cancer cells every 36 hours. The growing tumor needs to increase its blood supply to provide food and oxygen. Progesterone seems to cause stromal cells (the woman's own cells) to send out signals for more blood supply to feed the tumor.

Not all breast cancers are alike

Not all breast cancers are alike-there are different stages of breast cancer based on the size of the tumor and whether the cancer has spread. For doctor and patient, knowing the stage of breast cancer is the most important factor in choosing among treatment options. Doctors use a physical exam, biopsy, and other tests to determine breast cancer stage.

Mammography Screening

Mammography screening remains the best available method to detect breast cancer early. However, no medical test is always 100 percent accurate, and mammography is no exception. Research is under way to improve the technology to lead to better accuracy and to create new technologies.

It is important for women to practice the elements of good breast health. It is suggested women:

- Obtain regular mammography screening starting at the age of 40
- Obtain annual clinical breast exams
- Perform monthly breast –self exams
- Obtain a risk assessment from a physician

