



October: Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an observance dedicated to increasing awareness of breast cancer issues, especially the importance of early detection.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in America. When breast cancer is detected early and treated promptly, suffering and the risk of death can be significantly reduced. Women are encouraged to ask their doctors and other health care providers about mammography screening. Mammography (an X-ray picture of the breast) is the single most effective method to detect breast changes that may be cancer, long before physical symptoms can be seen or felt.

As women age, their risk of breast cancer increases. For most women, high-quality mammography screening should begin at age 40. As risk factors vary in everyone, each woman and her doctor should discuss the plan that's right for her.

Early Detection is Key

When breast cancer is detected at an early stage of development, a number of effective treatment options are available, treatment can be less disfiguring and less toxic and the chances of survival are improved. A woman and her physician will choose the treatment that is right for her, based on the location and extent of the cancer, her age and preferences and the risks and benefits of each treatment. The basic treatment choices for breast cancer are surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and hormonal therapy.

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