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for your employees
for your future
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WELLNESS WEEKLY

Think Pink...

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is an annual campaign to increase awareness of the disease. While most people are aware of breast cancer, many forget to take the steps to have a plan to detect the disease in its early stages and encourage others to do the same.

Breast cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the tissues of the breast. It is considered a heterogeneous disease—differing by individual, age group, and even the kinds of cells within the tumors themselves. Obviously no woman wants to receive this diagnosis, but hearing the words “breast cancer” doesn’t always mean an end. It can be the beginning of learning how to fight, getting the facts, and finding hope.

Women in the United States get breast cancer more than any other type of cancer except for skin cancer. It is second only to lung cancer as a cause of cancer death in women. This year it is estimated over 220,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 will die. Although breast cancer in men is rare, an estimated 2,150 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 410 will die each year.

One of the earliest signs of breast cancer can be an abnormality that shows up on a mammogram before it can be felt. The most common signs of breast cancer are a lump in the breast; abnormal thickening of the breast; or a change in the shape or color. However, finding a lump or change in your breast does not necessarily mean you have breast cancer.

You can take control of your health by developing an early detection plan and encouraging others to do the same. Remember—early detection saves lives!

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.

In the past twenty years, great improvements have been made in the treatment of breast cancer. As a result, the number of breast cancer survivors continues to increase. Although each person’s treatment will be slightly different, it generally involves some combination of surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormonal therapy and/or targeted therapy

Emotional support and practical help are very important for people living with breast cancer. Through diagnosis, treatment, recovery and beyond, such support plays a key role in helping people work through both the emotional and physical trials of the disease.



An Early Breast Cancer Detection Plan should include:

Beginning at age 20:

Performing breast self-exams and looking for any signs of change.

Age 20 to 39:

Scheduling clinical breast exams every three years.

By the age of 40:

Having a baseline mammogram and annual clinical breast exams.

Ages 40 to 49:

Having a mammogram every one to two years depending on previous findings.

Ages 50 and older:

Having a mammogram every year.

All Ages:

Recording personal exams, mammograms and doctors' appointments on a calendar or in a detailed file.

Maintaining a healthy weight, following a low-fat diet, getting regular exercise, quitting smoking, and reducing alcohol consumption.