

HEALTH AWARENESS



A COUNTY HEALTH
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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS



One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. While men are at risk for breast cancer, it is more common in women, and after skin cancer is the most common type of cancer diagnosed in women in the United States. October has been designated breast cancer awareness month to help bring attention to this all-too-common cancer.

WARNING SIGNS

Male or female, the signs of breast cancer are the same:

- change in the look or feel of the breast or nipple,
- nipple discharge,
- lump, hard knot, or thickening inside the breast or underarm area,
- swelling, warmth, redness, or darkening of the breast.

While these symptoms may indicate a benign breast condition, a thorough exam from your healthcare provider is warranted to rule out cancer.

RISK FACTORS

A risk factor is anything that might increase the risk of contracting cancer. Some risk factors, such as smoking, can be avoided, while others, such as a family history of cancer, cannot be.

Advances in genetic research have found that some cases of breast cancer can be tied to mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. These genes produce tumor suppressor proteins that help repair damaged DNA and aid in maintaining cell stability. Women with a damaged copy of these genes are roughly 69 to 72 % more likely to develop breast cancer by the age of 80 compared to the general population.

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PROTECTIVE FACTORS

A protective factor is anything that can decrease the risk of getting cancer. Researchers have found that lifestyle changes like regular exercise and eating a healthy diet can decrease cancer odds. Limiting alcohol to less than one drink per day can lessen the risk of breast cancer, as can quitting smoking.

Other things currently being studied to reduce the incidence of breast cancer are medicines to treat pre-cancerous conditions and risk-reducing surgeries, such as mastectomies, in high-risk patients, such as those with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations.

TREATMENT

Radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery are all possible treatment options for breast cancer. According to the American Society of Clinical Oncology, when caught early before the cancer has spread or metastasized beyond the breast, the five-year survival rate is 99%.

Fortunately, most breast cancers, about 62%, are caught during this stage.

The five-year survival rate drops to 85% once the cancer has spread to regional lymph nodes and decreases to 27% once the cancer has spread to distant parts of the body.

This drop in survivability for more advanced forms of breast cancer is why early detection is so crucial. Regular breast self-exams and routine mammograms are essential in decreasing breast cancer deaths. 📺

BENEFITS CORNER



2023 RENEWAL AND OPEN ENROLLMENT

The County Health Pool (CHP) held its annual renewal and board meeting last month. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom. The CHP medical and Rx plans have a 5% cost increase, which is lower than the average 6 to 10% increase on the national level. The dental and life insurance plans will remain unchanged for 2023, as will co-payments, deductibles, coinsurance, or out-of-pocket maximums.

All seven CHP plans (5 PPO and 2 HDHP/HSA) will be maintained for 2023. Flu shots and preventative services are covered at 100%, subject to guidelines. Health Fairs are covered at \$40 annually, and CDL physicals are covered at 100% every two years or earlier if required to maintain a CDL. COVID-19 testing and vaccines will continue to be covered at 100% in compliance with the HHS Public Health Emergency.

As always, CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. You can reach us at 303 861 0507.



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