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ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer is a disease where the cells in the breast tissue grow out of control. This growth may form a lump or tumor in the breast. No matter where a cancer may spread, the place it started is the name it is given.

Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, regardless of race or ethnicity. Right now in the United States, there are over 2.5 million breast cancer survivors.

How to reduce your risk

- **Start being physically active** — find something you like to do that gets you moving, and do it.
- **Control your weight** — talk to your healthcare provider about ways to achieve a healthy weight.
- **Know your family history** — talk to your family and learn about family members who may have had breast cancer.

Take the time to talk to your healthcare provider about possible risk factors.

Early detection

Early detection by observing breast cancer symptoms and talking to your healthcare provider is very important and key to breast cancer survival. You can get screened for breast cancer by your healthcare provider or at a



hospital, clinic, or doctor's office. For long-term survival, it is important to discover breast cancer in an early stage.

Keys to early detection

- **Get a yearly mammogram** — This screening is a breast x-ray. If you are 40 years old or older you should get one every year, or as your healthcare provider recommends.

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- **A regular clinical breast exam** — This exam is conducted by a healthcare provider who checks for lumps or other changes in the breast.
- **A monthly breast self-exam** — Starting in their 20s, all women are encouraged to check their breasts on a monthly basis for lumps or changes. To learn how to conduct a monthly self-breast exam, log onto the website: http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/testing/types/self_exam/

If you have any questions about breast cancer and breast exams, talk to your healthcare provider.

Symptoms

It is important to be aware of symptoms associated with breast cancer. Not everyone who has breast cancer has symptoms. If you feel that something is wrong, you should talk to your healthcare provider.

- Pain in any area of your breast
- Change in the color of your breast
- A lump or thickness in the breast or under your arm
- A change where one breast suddenly becomes larger or heavier than the other
- A rash on your breast
- A breast nipple that becomes painful or turns inward
- Discharge from your nipple
- Skin around the nipple becomes scaly or crusty
- A dimple or “pulling in” of an area on the breast when you raise your arm or lean forward

What if I do not have insurance?

If you don't have health insurance, there are free or low-cost mammograms available through the Kentucky Women's Cancer Screening Program. Call 1 (502) 564-2454 to see if you qualify or for more information.

For more information about breast cancer, contact these resources:

National Cancer Institute:

- 1 (800) 4-CANCER or 1 (800) 422-6237
- <http://www.cancer.gov>

Susan G Komen for the Cure:

- 1 (877) GO-KOMEN or 1 (877) 465-6636
- <http://www.komen.org>



REFERENCES:

- American Cancer Society: <http://www.cancer.org/>
- National Cancer Institute: <http://www.cancer.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/>

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