



Think **Pink**

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

September 30, 2020
A Special Pull-Out Section to

**Lake
Okeechobee
News**

The Significance of Support

The vital role of a cancer support network

What to Watch For
*Early warning signs
for breast cancer*

Managing Your Meds
*How to manage pain medications
during breast cancer treatment*

**And
More**

The vital role of a cancer support network



The moment a person is diagnosed with cancer can elicit a variety of emotions. Fear of what's to come is a common reaction to such a diagnosis, and some people may feel alone upon learning they have cancer. But no cancer patient should face their diagnosis and treatment alone. In fact, a strong support network can be vital to patients' recoveries.

According to Weill Cornell Medicine, recent changes in the healthcare industry have shifted the burden of care from the hospital to the home. That underscores the importance of a strong support network. Many of the challenges cancer patients face in the months after diagnosis will be new, and patients can expect a range of emotions. According to Breast Cancer Now, a charitable organization that funds one-third of breast cancer research in the United Kingdom, women may experience emotions such as shock, anger, disbelief, anxiety, and sadness after being diagnosed with breast cancer. Having loved ones there to help them make sense of those emotions and stay

positive as they navigate their way through the treatment process is essential.

In addition to providing emotional support, loved ones of breast cancer patients may need to take on additional roles as they help their friends or family members face the challenges that lay ahead. Because of the industry changes noted by Weill Cornell Medicine, cancer caregivers and support networks may need to prepare themselves to take on the following roles, each of which is vital to cancer patients' survival.

Monitor the disease: Support networks may need to keep track of how their loved ones' disease is progressing and if there are any complications from treatment.

Manage symptoms: Breastcancer.org notes that treatment causes severe side effects in many women. Such side effects may include nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, pain, arm swelling, shortness of breath, and skin irritation. Thankfully, most of these side effects can be treated. In addition, Breastcancer.org notes that most side effects ease up after treatment is completed. In the meantime, support networks may need to help patients manage those symptoms, performing a host of

tasks to make their loved ones' lives easier.

For example, patients experiencing shortness of breath may be incapable of performing chores around the house. In such instances, members of a support network can tackle those chores until their loved one bounces back.

Administer medication: Breast cancer patients may be too overwhelmed to handle their own medications, so support networks can take over this important responsibility for them.

Assist with personal care: Some patients may experience fatigue after treatment. In such instances, support networks can help patients maintain their personal hygiene.

Support networks can be vital to helping cancer patients overcome their disease and navigate their way through successful treatment regimens.

Did you know?

Women diagnosed with breast cancer who want to speak with someone who has survived the disease can do so thanks to a unique program sponsored by the American Cancer Society. The Reach to Recovery program from the ACS connects current cancer patients with breast cancer survivors via an online chat. Patients, regardless of where they are in their cancer journeys, can connect with volunteers for one-on-one support. Volunteers can help patients cope with treatment and side effects while also offering advice on speaking with friends and family, working while receiving treatment and more. Even people facing a possible breast cancer diagnosis can sign up. The program works by asking patients and volunteers to join the program and create profiles on the Reach to Recovery website (www.reach.cancer.org). Patients then look for a match by searching volunteer profiles, filtering through suggested matches and sending an online chat request to volunteers. Patients and volunteers can then schedule a chat and discuss any concerns patients may have. Volunteers with the Reach to Recovery program are breast cancer survivors who have been trained by the ACS to provide peer-to-peer support to people facing a breast cancer diagnosis. Volunteers can provide support to patients, but are prohibited from offering medical advice. More information about the Reach to Recovery program, including how to join as a patient or volunteer, is available at www.reach.cancer.org.

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How to cope with COVID-19 and breast cancer

and Prevention notes that undergoing cancer treatment can weaken the immune system, further increasing a person's vulnerability to infection. Specifically, targeted therapies, chemotherapy and radiation can weaken the immune system and compromise its ability to fight off the coronavirus. Furthermore, these treatments also may cause lung problems that can exacerbate COVID-19 symptoms, particularly among breast cancer patients whose cancer has metastasized to the lungs.

In April 2020, new guidelines for the prioritization and treatment of breast cancer patients during the COVID-19 pandemic were released, compiled by a group of U.S. medical organizations, including the

the American Society of Breast Surgeons. Breast cancer patients have been broken down into priority levels of A, B and C for urgency of care.

Priority A: A patient has conditions that are immediately life-threatening or require urgent treatment.

Priority B: A patient has conditions that don't require immediate treatment, but he or she should begin treatment before the end of the pandemic.

Priority C: A patient has conditions for which treatment can be safely put on hold.

Breast cancer patients are further urged to take extra caution in their daily activities to help reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. That means always wearing a mask or another face covering when interacting with other people.

This advice may be applicable even if a six-foot distance can be maintained. Wash hands frequently, especially when coming in from public places. If possible, ask a friend or family member to do your shopping or run errands for you to limit exposure to other people and crowds.

Breast cancer patients may have to discuss the possibility of altering or delaying treatment for breast cancer with their oncologists because of increased risk factors presented by COVID-19. Together, patients and doctors can work to keep breast cancer patients as healthy as possible.



The novel coronavirus COVID-19 first appeared in late 2019 and has changed life for the foreseeable future. While many people are quick to focus on the ways COVID-19 has impacted their abilities to shop, visit with friends and relatives or travel, the virus has made life especially difficult for people with preexisting health conditions.

Medical News Today reports that the symptoms of COVID-19 may be more severe for breast cancer patients. Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control

National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, the American College of Radiology and the Comprehensive Cancer Network. At hospitals where resources and staff have become limited due to COVID-19 treatment efforts, doctors have had to define which breast cancer patients need urgent care and which can have delayed or alternative treatments. These measures can help balance maintaining positive survival outcomes as well as reducing risk of exposure to the virus, according to

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About Hendry Regional Medical Center: Hendry Regional Medical Center is a 25-bed critical access hospital that incorporates modern technology with state-of-the-art medical staff to care for its patients. Hendry Regional Medical Center's mission is "to excel in quality, compassion, and innovation to make our community healthier."



Hendry Regional Medical Center is excited to offer Genius™ 3D Mammography™ exams, developed by Hologic, Inc., a worldwide leader in Women's Health. Utilizing advanced breast tomosynthesis technology, Genius exams are clinically proven to significantly increase the detection of breast cancers, and also decreasing the number of women asked to return for additional testing.

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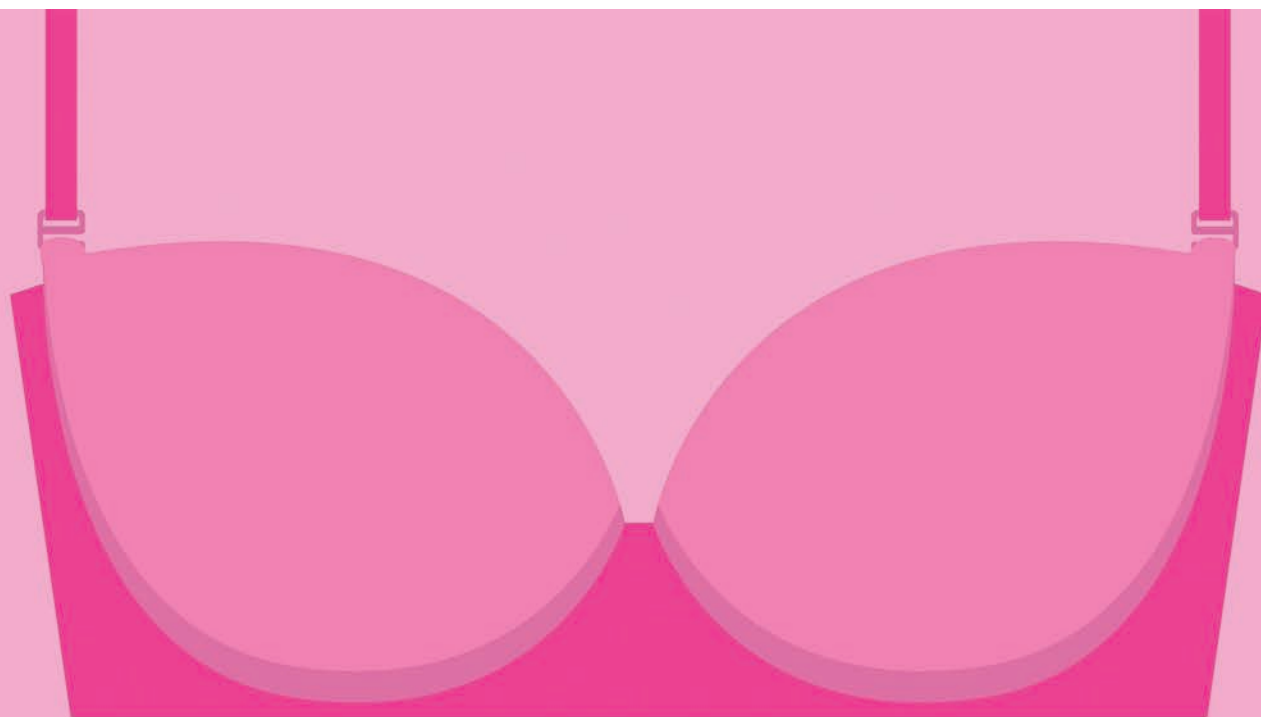
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Early warning signs for breast cancer

Breast cancer affects millions of women across the globe every year. According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the most frequent cancer among women, affecting 2.1 million women each year. As daunting as that may seem, the WHO also notes that early diagnosis can greatly reduce a woman's risk of dying

from breast cancer.

Women can be proactive in the fight against breast cancer by learning to identify early warning signs of the disease. The nonprofit breast cancer advocacy organization Susan G. Komen® notes that the warning signs for breast cancer are not the same for all women, but the most common signs include a change in the look or feel of the breast or a change in the look or feel of the nipple. A discharge from the nipple is another common warning sign of breast cancer.

Physical changes in the breast can vary, but Susan G. Komen® advises women who notice these changes to bring them to the attention of their physicians immediately:

- Lump, hard knot or thickening inside of the breast or underarm area
- Change in the size or shape

of the breast

- Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin

Women with breast cancer also may notice physical changes in their nipples, including:

- Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple

- Pulling in of the nipple or other parts of the breast
- It's important that women recognize that physical changes in their breasts are not necessarily indicative of breast cancer. In fact, the American Breast Cancer Foundation notes that not all lumps in the breast cause cancer and that many such lumps are benign. Fibroadenomas and intraductal papillomas are examples of benign lumps, though it's important to note that even benign conditions such as these may put women at greater risk of developing breast cancer.

Susan G. Komen® notes that breast tissue naturally has a lumpy texture. If lumpiness can be felt throughout the breast and it feels like your other breast, then it's likely that this is just the normal texture of your breasts. However, women concerned by a lump or lumpy texture are urged to discuss those concerns with their physicians immediately.

Discharge from the nipple is another potential sign of breast cancer, but Susan G. Komen® notes that such discharge is rarely a sign of cancer. Discharges that occur without squeezing the nipple, occur in only one breast or are bloody or clear are potentially indicative of more serious conditions, including breast cancer.

Breast cancer is a formidable foe. But women who arm themselves with knowledge of the disease, including its early warning signs, are in better position to overcome it.



Breast cancer affects millions of women across the globe every year. While some women may be at greater risk of breast cancer than others, no woman is immune, and that includes expecting mothers.

The National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc.® notes that pregnant women can be diagnosed with breast cancer, though such diagnoses are rare. In fact, Breastcancer.org notes that instances of women developing breast cancer during pregnancy are so rare that only small studies have thus far been conducted in regard to treating pregnant women with the disease. However, there are various treatment options for expecting mothers diagnosed with

Pregnancy and breast cancer

breast cancer.

Each woman is different, and treating breast cancer in pregnant women will depend on a host of factors. The NBCF notes that the size of the tumor, its location and the term the pregnancy is in will help to determine the safest, most effective treatment plan.

According to Breastcancer.org, a mastectomy with axillary lymph node dissection will likely be recommended to women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer during the first trimester of their pregnancies. That recommendation will be based on guidelines established by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Surgery will be recommended because radiation therapy is not safe during pregnancy. Once women have undergone successful surgery, the NCCN guidelines suggest waiting until the second trimester to begin chemotherapy.

Doctors treating women diagnosed with breast cancer during the second trimester of their pregnancies may recommend either mastectomy or lumpectomy, a surgical procedure in which a lump is removed from the breast. Such recommendations align with NCCN guidelines. In addition, women who receive a lumpectomy would wait until after their children are born to receive any necessary radiation therapy or hormonal therapy. That's because radiation is not safe during pregnancy and the NBCF notes that the

effects of hormone therapy on unborn children are not entirely understood.

The NCCN guidelines advise that women diagnosed with breast cancer during the third trimester of their pregnancies undergo a mastectomy or lumpectomy with axillary lymph node dissection. Chemotherapy is safe during the third trimester, but radiation and

hormone therapies will be delayed until after the child is born.

Pregnant women are only rarely diagnosed with breast cancer. But as scary as such a diagnosis can be, women should rest assured that treatment is safe, even if it entails a combination of therapies.



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How to manage pain medications *during* breast cancer treatment



Breast cancer researchers have worked tirelessly over the last several decades as they work to eradicate the disease once and for all. While breast cancer still affects millions of women across the globe each year, advancements in treating the disease have dramatically improved five-year survival rates, providing patients and their families with hope as well as a realistic expectation of a long, healthy life after cancer.

According to Breastcancer.org, women diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020 and beyond have an array of treatment options to fight their disease. That marks a stark contrast from recent history, when treatment options were considerably more limited. Though treatment options have expanded and improved survival rates, women diagnosed with breast cancer can still expect to confront some side effects as they navigate their way through treatment.

Pain is one of the more common symptoms breast cancer patients experience, both before diagnosis and during treatment. In fact, breast cancer treatment plans typically include strategies to address pain. Breastcancer.org notes that most breast cancer patients can get complete relief for their pain. However, it may take some time before the right formula is found and patients can return to enjoying daily activities.

The American Cancer Society notes that medication is typically part of cancer patients' pain treatment plans. Breast cancer patients unaccustomed to taking medication each day can consider these tips to effectively manage their

medications as they progress through their treatments.

Take your medication on a regular schedule. The ACS advises cancer patients who have been diagnosed with chronic pain to take their medications around the clock on a schedule, rather than taking it only when pain is severe. Schedules can be adjusted, but patients should not do so on their own. Pain medication schedules should only be adjusted after speaking with a physician.

Familiarize yourself with pain medication side effects. Pain medications may produce side effects such as sleepiness and dizziness. The ACS notes that these symptoms typically improve after a few days, but cancer patients must recognize the threat they pose. Patients may need help getting up or walking, and the ACS discourages patients from driving while on pain medication until they are sure of the effects of the medicine.

Do not crush or break pills. Many medicines are time-release medications in pill form. Taking broken or crushed pills can be very dangerous. Only patients who get the go-ahead from their physicians to take crushed or broken pills should do so.

Monitor your side effects. No two people are the



same, so some cancer patients may react differently to pain medications than others. Keep track of any abnormalities and side effects you experience while taking pain medicine. Discuss them with your cancer care team during each doctor visit, and report severe or uncomfortable symptoms to your physician immediately.

Pain medication can help breast cancer patients overcome a common side effect of both their disease and their treatments. Learning to manage pain medications is vital for patients as they recover from their disease.



Menstrual history *and* breast cancer risk

Certain breast cancer risk factors, including when women begin menstruating and enter menopause, affect women of all ages.

Various factors can affect a woman's risk for breast cancer. Some of these factors, including whether or not a woman is physically active, are within her control. But others are not,

and those include when a she started to menstruate.

According to Breastcancer.org, women who started menstruating prior to age 12 have a higher risk of developing breast cancer later in life.

But that's not the only link between menstruation and breast cancer risk, as women who go through menopause when they're older than 55 years of age also have a higher risk of developing breast cancer later in life.

Breastcancer.org notes that, over the last two decades, girls have begun puberty at younger ages than girls in previous generations. Researchers have linked that phenomenon to the obesity epidemic and broad exposure to hormone disruptors. A rise in hormones triggers the onset of puberty. The breast tissue of girls who begin menstruating at a younger age tends to be immature and sensitive to hormonal influences, which is associated with a

higher risk of breast cancer later in life.

Women may not be able to control when they start and stop menstruating, but they can control certain factors that can make them less likely to menstruate early. Breastcancer.org notes that maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly and eating nutritious foods are some lifestyle choices that girls and women can make to keep their risk for breast cancer as low as possible.

Various factors can increase a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. Understanding the link between those factors and cancer risk can help women make healthy decisions that benefit both their short- and long-term health.



Symptoms of male breast cancer



- redness or scaling of the nipple or breast skin
- discharge from the nipple, which may be clear or blood-tinged

The American Cancer Society advises that sometimes breast cancer can spread to the lymph nodes under the arm or around the collar bone and cause a lump or swelling in these locations. The protrusion may be noticeable even before the original tumor in the breast is large enough to be felt.

Men should realize that enlargements or issues affecting both breasts (not on just one side) typically is not cancer. Enlargement or changes to both breasts in men can be caused by weight gain, medications or heavy alcohol consumption.

Types of male breast cancer

Various types of breast cancer can affect men, according to the Mayo Clinic:

Ductal carcinoma: Cancer that begins in the milk ducts. Nearly all male breast cancer is ductal carcinoma.

Lobular carcinoma: Cancer that begins in the milk-producing glands. This type is rare in men because they have few lobules in their breast tissue.

Especially rare types of breast cancer that can occur in men include Paget's disease of the nipple and inflammatory breast cancer.

Diagnosis

BreastCancer.org says that a small study of breast cancer in men found that the average time between first symptoms and diagnosis was about 19 months. This can be startling because early diagnosis can be vital to survival. Through the realization that breast cancer can happen to men and more education and awareness, men can feel more comfortable about discussing changes to breast tissue with their doctors.

Male breast cancer is a very real occurrence, albeit a rare one. It is important that men take any abnormalities in their chests seriously.

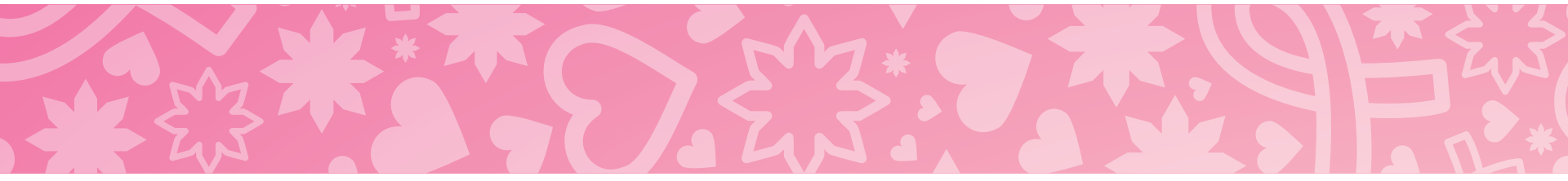
Breast cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer diagnosed among the female population. Though breast cancer may seem like a disease that's exclusive to women, breast cancer can affect men as well.

While they have a smaller concentration than women, men have breast tissue, which means it's possible for them to develop breast cancer. Male breast cancer is most common in older men, but it is important that men recognize that the disease can strike them at any age.

Signs and symptoms

Men with breast cancer experience symptoms that are similar to those experienced by women. Possible signs to be aware of include:

- skin dimpling or puckering
- a lump or swelling, which is typically (but not always) painless
- nipple retraction



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