



NEWS

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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Norristown, PA (October 10, 2013) –In recognition of breast cancer survivors, pink is the signature color for the month of October. Pink lights on buildings, pink clothing, accessories, and even pink specialty items at the local super market are ever present to serve as a reminder of breast cancer awareness. This is a time of increased awareness of breast cancer with spirited campaigns to fundraise for the cause. Nearly 900 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year in Montgomery County. This October, take some time to review your family history, your risk profile, and focus on the prevention of breast cancer.

Every day, cells in the body divide and grow in a cyclical fashion. Most of the time cells divide and grow in an orderly manner but sometimes cells grow out of control. This kind of growth of cells forms a mass or lump referred to as a tumor. Tumors are either benign or malignant. Benign tumors are not cancerous. Malignant tumors are made of abnormal cells and are cancerous. What is important to note is that cells can grow out of control before any symptoms of the disease appear. That is why a breast screening to find early changes is so important. If breast cancer is found early, there are more treatment options and improved chance for survival. If you have a history of breast cancer in your family, talk with your doctor about your personal risk, including when to start getting mammograms and how often to have them.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following screening guidelines for women:

- Conduct a Breast Self-Exam (BSE) starting in your 20s on a regular or monthly basis.
- Receive a Clinical Breast Exam (CBE) exam conducted by a healthcare practitioner about every three years for women in their 20s and 30s and every year for women 40 and over.
- Schedule yearly mammograms starting at age 40 and continuing for as long as a woman is in good health.

While it is true that there are fixed factors like being female and having a family history of breast cancer that increase one's risk of developing breast cancer, a healthy lifestyle plays an important role in prevention. It is very important to maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese increases your breast cancer risk. Eating a diet that is high in fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and fiber is a necessary part of a healthy routine. Also limit or eliminate high fat foods and alcohol. In addition, adults need 150 minutes of physical activity per week for optimal health. Always consult with a health care provider for a comprehensive exam, screening options, and healthy living activities that are best suited to your needs and family history.

For more information about risks associated with breast cancer and to further test your breast cancer IQ, please visit <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancer/index>.