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It's Breast Cancer Awareness Month - Get Screened!

OCTOBER 14TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and we want to not only stress that 1 in 8 women in the U.S. will develop invasive breast cancer, but that many women with breast cancer have no symptoms which is why regular breast cancer screenings are so important.

We know that leading-edge technology and highly trained specialists are the bedrocks of any breast care center. But we believe warm, patient-focused care is also a must. When you come in for a visit, you'll get all three.

Find a location and provider near you to schedule your mammogram!

Breast cancer: What to do if you find a lump

In most cases, a breast lump doesn't mean cancer. Still, if you discover a lump, you should have your doctor check it.

Understandably, discovering a lump in your breast can be cause for concern. You may worry that it could be a sign of breast cancer.

But there's reassuring news: Most breast lumps and other changes don't turn out to be cancerous, according to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Still, it's important to know why lumps occur and what steps to take if you find one. The following information from the NCI and the American Cancer Society (ACS) can help.

What causes breast lumps?

Most women have some type of lumpiness in their breasts.

For example, some women may have areas of their breasts that are denser than other areas. This can cause the breasts to have a lumpy feeling.

Often, lumps occur due to changing hormone levels during your monthly menstrual cycle. These lumps usually go away by the end of your period. Lumps can also occur at other times when hormone levels fluctuate, such as during pregnancy, breastfeeding and menopause.

You may also notice lumps or other breast changes if you use hormones such as:

Birth control pills.

Injectons.

Menopausal hormone therapy.

If you find a lump

Even though a lump usually isn't serious, you should still see your doctor and get it checked out. Your doctor can examine your breasts and the surrounding tissues for any other changes that could indicate a problem.

Be prepared to answer questions your doctor may have, such as:

Do you have a family history of breast cancer?

When was your last mammogram?

What was the date of your last period?

Are you pregnant or breastfeeding?

What medications are you taking?

When did you find the lump?

Has the lump gotten smaller or larger?

Also be sure to tell your doctor about any other breast changes, including:

Nipple discharge or tenderness.

Redness, dimples or puckers.

A change in breast size or shape.

Your doctor may also request other tests to determine whether the lump is cancerous. These tests can include:

Diagnostic mammogram. Though mammograms are used mostly for screening, this x-ray of the breasts can also be used to get a closer look at breast problems.

Breast ultrasound. Using sound waves, a breast ultrasound can be used to target a specific area of concern found on a mammogram. This test can help distinguish between fluid-filled cysts and solid masses and between benign and cancerous tumors.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). This test creates detailed pictures of the breast that can show the difference between normal and diseased tissue.

Biopsy. In this procedure, a sample of cells from the lump is removed for examination. A biopsy is the only definitive way to find out whether a lump is cancerous, according to the NCI.

Protect yourself with regular screenings

Finding breast changes early can help detect breast cancer early, when it's most treatable.

Generally, the ACS recommends that women have regular mammograms beginning at age 45. Your doctor can suggest a screening schedule that's right for you.

Women should also get to know how their breasts normally look and feel so they can notice changes more easily—and report them to their healthcare provider right away.

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