Center for Women's HealthCare

Carson City Office
401 E Elm St
Carson City, MI 48811
(989) 584-3107

Greenville Office
1014 E Washington
Greenville, MI 48838
(616) 754-9552

Ithaca Office
114 N Main St
Ithaca, MI 48847
(989) 875-4800

WOMAN TO WOMAN NEWS

October, 2005

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS!!

BY JAN RUSSELL, OGNP

It is fall in our community and most people are enjoying leaves changing color, outdoor activities – maybe a trip to the apple orchard or a football game. At the Center for Women's Healthcare it is the time of year we emphasize the importance of Breast Cancer Awareness. While we hope 1:8 is not the win/loss record of your favorite football team, it is sadly, the ratio of women who will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. If you happen to be the "one out of eight," the good news is the five-year survival rate for cancers caught early is 96 percent. Early detection is the key!

Helping with early diagnosis is the identification of women who may be at increased risk for breast cancer. These risk factors include:

Increasing age- 80 percent of all breast cancers occur in women over 50.

Family history of breast cancer – especially if your mother, daughter or sister had breast cancer your risk could be 2-3 times higher.

Personal history of breast cancer – increases your risk of getting it again.

Other risk factors include:

Early age of menstruation (before age 12)

Late menopause (after age 54)

Having your first child after age 30

Never having children

Obesity (BMI 25 or more)

Diet – high in fat or caloric content

Alcohol use

Cigarette smoker

Little or no exercise

European or Jewish ancestry

Caucasian

Unfortunately, most women who are diagnosed with breast cancer have no risks at all.

Since many women have no factors indicating risk for breast cancer, screening procedures must be performed on a regular basis. Women should have a yearly breast exam performed by their doctor, perform a monthly self breast exam, and follow up for yearly mammograms. Screening mammograms are recommended at age 40 if a woman has no risk factors and sooner if risks are identified or a palpable change is noted on breast exam. A breast ultrasound is sometimes recommended to aid in the diagnosis of suspicious breast masses. Mammograms can detect changes in breast tissue and cancer up to two years before you or your doctor can feel a lump. New technology for early identification of breast cancer continues to evolve and is very promising but for now mammograms remain the standard for routine screening.

Excuses! Excuses!

There is a good chance we have already heard your reasoning for not following through with the routine screening recommendations. Here are some common concerns patients have shared in the past:

"A mammogram is painful"

The mammogram device does exert pressure or "squeezes" the breast tissue. Try to schedule the exam just after your menstrual period, if you are still menstruating, and tell the mammogram tech if you have had a painful experience in the past.

"I don't think I could tell if I had an abnormal lump"-

Women need to "know their lumps" by regularly examining your breasts at the same time monthly you can become familiar with your breast characteristics and will know if something is new or has changed. It is the job of your medical providers to decide if a lump is abnormal or cancerous.

"Radiation causes cancer"-

The amount of radiation involved in a mammogram is very low (less than the amount in a chest x-ray) and is not associated with an increased cancer risk.

"I had a friend whose mammogram was normal but she really had breast cancer"

Mammograms do not detect 100% of breast cancer. If a palpable lump is present it should be evaluated by a medical professional.

"**I don't have time to do a monthly self breast exam or schedule a mammogram"**

DO —

-you have time to treat an advanced case of breast cancer?

-a monthly self breast exam –it takes about 3-5 minutes once per month

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Advice from a tree

Stand tall and proud
Sink your roots deeply into the earth
Reflect the light of your true nature
Think long term
Go out on a limb
Remember your place among all living beings
Embrace with joy the changing seasons, for each yields its own abundance:
The energy and birth of spring
The growth and contentment of summer
The wisdom to let go of leaves in the fall
The rest and quiet renewal of winter

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Feel the wind and the sun and delight in their presence
Look up at the moon that shines down upon you and the mystery of the stars at night
Seek nourishment from the good things in life:
Simple pleasures
Earth, fresh air, light
Be content with your natural beauty
Drink plenty of water
Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes
Be flexible
Remember your roots
Enjoy the view

Dr. Green's Help Column

Q: I finished breast feeding over 2 years ago, but I'm still leaking fluid occasionally. Should I be worried?

A: Most nipple discharge is not from a disease process. If it tends to occur only when induced or "forced out," occurs in both breasts, and is milky, watery, greenish, tannish or brownish, it is probably what we call "physiologic," and not worrisome. On the other hand, discharge that is suspicious for cancer tends to occur in one breast, occurs spontaneously and has an associated mass. It's color will be reddish or bloody, black, maroon or brown. Women with these types of discharges will have breast cancer in about 5% of the time. Most of the time this type of discharge will come from a condition called intraductal papilloma, which is a benign condition.

Q: My breasts are sore a lot. The pain seems to come and go. Sometimes it's one breast. Sometimes it's both. What can I do?

A: Breast pain without a lump is called "mastalgia," although a lump must always be ruled out. Most often, all we can do after ruling out any pathology, is give reassurance. Patients can try wearing support bras, warm or cold packs, decreasing caffeine, alcohol and fatty foods. Pain medicines like Ibuprofen can help. Vitamins E, A, and B6, along with evening primrose oil or starflower oil are supplements that sometimes help, although there are no studies to prove it. Lifestyle changes, such as reducing stress and smoking can also help. There are also some hormonal therapies that can be tried. You can ask your doctor about these.

Q: What can I do to decrease my chances of developing breast cancer?

A: Celebrate your health! Here are some things you can do to be proactive and help outsmart breast cancer:

- Increase the green, leafy vegetables in your diet. Broccoli, collard greens, and other cruciferous vegetables contain indole-3-carbinol, which is a chemical that inhibits breast cancer growth.

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PostPartum Depression, by Kathy L. Kruger, DO

You just delivered your baby and you are now responsible for this tiny life. What will you do? How will you do it? Are you going to be a good Mom? It's no wonder that 70% of all women experience the "Baby Blues". What can you do to help get out of those "blues". For most, it is a matter of getting a good, healthy diet, plenty of sleep and some down time.

The problem often is how do I do that and still be "Super Mom". Motherhood brings with it a strong nurturing desire in most which leads to sacrifice of self for baby.

Baby Blues experienced by many women and is extremely common reaction to delivery. Usually appears about day 3-4. About 70% of all women experience this emotional letdown. Symptoms include crying for no reason, irritability, restlessness and anxiety. Usually goes away with proper sleep, diet, and support.

We all do it to one degree or another and just need to find a happy balance. Family and friends are often eager to help, so let them. Believe it or not, your Mom may have been right all of those years. Shhh – we won't tell her. Your doctor can help to guide you in the right direction whether it be counseling or with medications. You may even need to be seen by a psychologist, therapist or psychiatrist.

Postpartum depression can be broken down into many categories relating to the post delivery period. Many people go through the "baby blues" and do not require medication or counseling. Some however, may experience a more dramatic change in them and require the care of a doctor or counselor. Postpartum depression is caused by changes in hormones as well as stress to the body. This stress can be financial, lack of sleep, or doubt about abilities to care for a child. Women with severe premenstrual syndrome (PMS or PMDD) are more likely to suffer from postpartum depression. Women who have postpartum depression love their children, but may be convinced that they're not able to be good mothers.

Postpartum depression is distinguished from the baby blues both by its duration and the debilitating effects of indifference the mother has about herself and her children.

Experienced by about 10% of new mothers. This usually happens just days after delivery and can happen up to one year after delivery. Symptoms include:

- **Sluggishness**
- **Fatigue**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Feelings of hopelessness or depression**
- **Disturbances with appetite and sleep**
- **Confusion**
- **Uncontrollable crying**
- **Lack of interest in the baby**
- **Fear of harming the baby or oneself**
- **Mood swings-highs and lows**

Treatment for Postpartum Depression

If you experience any of these symptoms you and your doctor need to take them seriously so they do not endanger you or your child. Talk to your doctor and together you can find a solution. Steps that help you may include:

Medical Evaluation to rule out other problems
Counseling
Possible Medication/Hormones
Support from a group or family and friends

Continuing treatment after you feel better is important because if stopped too early can lead to a return of the symptoms.

Breast Cancer Awareness, cont'd

DO —

-a routine mammogram requires approximately 30 minutes once per year

"My insurance doesn't cover routine mammograms."

Most hospitals will make a payment plan in advance if necessary.

Some programs are available through the county health department for low cost screening. You must consider the cost of not using this valuable tool – possibly your life

Many of the risk factors for cancer are preventable. As women begin to increase their exercise, decrease the fat and alcohol consumption, and stop smoking, we can attempt to lower the number of women who will succumb to breast cancer.

Grab a bag of fresh apples at the apple orchard, plan a healthy tailgate before the football game, and take a long walk in the woods – enjoy the fall colors while they last.

a MAMMOGRAM can spot cancer up to two years before either you or your doctor can feel a lump!

How to get a better test...

DON'T USE antiperspirant or talcum powder on the day of your mammogram.

IF YOU'VE had a breast implant, be sure to tell the technician prior to the X-ray & the staff when scheduling.

LISTEN CAREFULLY to the technician, and remain as still as possible during the procedure. Movement can blur the image.

Mammograms can be uncomfortable and/or painful because each breast has to be compressed between two plates to produce a high quality image. However, the process is so quick that any discomfort will be short-lived.

Help Column cont'd

- Exercise! Just start moving! A recent medical study showed that women who exercised 3-5 hours a week cut their risk of breast cancer by 50%
- Quit Smoking! Not only do you increase your risk of breast cancer if you smoke, but another medical study showed an increased risk from secondhand smoke. Visit smokefree.gov or call (800) QUIT-NOW for support.
- Research is showing that drinking even one alcoholic beverage a day can raise your risk for breast cancer by 20%. For more information visit the website of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence at ncadd.org.
- Become weight conscious! Excess weight, especially after menopause, produces excess estrogen, and most breast cancers have receptors that bind to excess estrogen, in effect, feeding the cancer. If your body mass index (BMI) exceeds 25, you should consider a weight loss program. To calculate your BMI, visit the CDC website (cdc.gov) and search "body mass index."

Knowledge of your own body is your key to good health!

How to Examine your Breast

Begin your exam in front of a mirror. Look carefully for changes in the size, shape and contour of each breast. Look for puckering, dimpling or changes in skin texture. Repeat the exam with your hands on your hips, then above your head. Raise your left arm. Use your right hand to examine your left breast. With fingers flat, touch every part of the breast, gently feeling for a lump or thickening. Press firmly, starting at the outermost top edge of your breast and spiraling in toward the nipple. Examine every part of the breast. Pay attention for any lumps, thickenings or other changes from previous exams. Repeat the exam using your left hand to examine your right breast.

Place a towel or pillow under your left shoulder and put your left hand behind your head. With fingers flat, press firmly on your left breast with your right hand. Start at the outermost top edge of your breast and spiral in toward the nipple. Examine every part of the breast. Pay attention for any lumps, thickenings or other changes from previous exams. Repeat the exam using your left hand to examine your right breast.

The best time to examine your breasts is two or three days after the end of your period, when your breasts are least likely to be tender or swollen. If you do not have periods, pick a day, such as the first day of each month, to remind yourself!

We are Women Dedicated to Serving Women!!

Dr. Michelle L. Becher

Dr. Candace C. Green

Dr. Kathy L. Kruger

Jan Russell, OGNP

Message from husband,

Gyna Colleges called, said Pabst Beer was fine.

"I didn't know you liked beer?"

!!SAFETY ALERT!!

Women using hormonal patches-for either hormone replacement or birth control-should note that heat from various sources (i.e., suntanning, tanning beds, heat lamps, electric blankets, heating pads, hot tubs, saunas, etc.) can affect the delivery of drugs due to the increased blood flow to the skin.

If you enjoyed this newsletter, please share it with a friend!!

HEALTH TIPS

Drink a glass of water before every meal

Why are you eating?
Are you lonely?
Are you sad?
Are you bored?
Are you hungry?

Drink eight glasses of 8oz of water daily

Change from a dinner plate to a salad plate

Do not go back for a second helping

Exercise over the lunch break

Eat until you are only 80% full

Do not eat out more than once a week – and this includes lunch time!

Get on the move!!

- Park farther out in the parking lot, so that there is a longer walk into the store
- Do a few laps around the store before shopping
- If you have something to take upstairs (or downstairs) take each item up rather than making a pile and doing it all at once (When you do each item individually you will increase your exercising)

It's better to graze all day (six smaller portions) than to sit and eat three big meals

- So eat half your lunch mid morning, the rest at lunch time
- Then eat half your dinner mid afternoon and the other half at dinner time

This will help to boost your metabolism

Get an exercise partner

- A friend
- A neighbor
- A dog – they can be very motivating

Make a thirty minute **commitment** daily to yourself to exercise whether it be yoga or the programs on early morning television
There are exercise videos and DVD's at your local library to check out
Once you get started, do not stop

Involve your children

- Bike with them
- Walk with them
- Keep the whole family on the move

Do not watch television while eating

Do not stand while eating

Turn off the television
Many of us get 'sucked in' to the television programs and before we know it it's past bedtime
So turn it off and play a board game with the family
Better yet, take a family walk on one of the many trails and parks in the area

Make every morsel that goes into your mouth count

Taste every little bit of it
Enjoy **EVERY** forkfull
Think about what you are eating and all the taste of it
Set your fork down while you chew your food

Negotiate with yourself
If you want to eat a slice of cheesecake, well make yourself a deal
"After I walk for thirty minutes then I will eat a small slice of cheesecake"

If you crave something, satisfy that craving immediately

- When you try to avoid a craving the intensity seems to increase

So, satisfy it immediately – if you want an oreo eat an oreo

- Don't wait and try avoiding the craving and then when it is so out of control you end up eating a whole bag of oreo's

Where is your passion?
Do you dream of doing something different?
Exercise can help streamline all your thoughts and make your passions a reality

No one is going to do this for you.

- Your child is not going to come home and say "Mom it's your time for the next hour, take good care of yourself"
- What is amazing though is that it can be an amazing revolution in the family to have their mother exercising routinely
- So make this time for yourself to make these life changing changes.