

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. The key to fighting breast cancer is early detection. One out of eight women will develop breast cancer at sometime during her life. Early detection is vital to successful treatment and cure. You can improve your odds greatly by working with your doctor to protect yourself. The most effective tool for early diagnosis is mammography. A mammogram is a simple, safe x-ray examination of the breast. A mammogram can often detect signs of breast cancer years before a lump can be felt. Mammography, annual physician examination, and monthly breast self-examinations can increase the accuracy of early detection by 95 percent.

How can I reduce my risk? While you can't control some breast cancer risk factors, there are lifestyle choices you can make that may help lower your risk:

- **Maintain a good weight.** Especially for women after menopause, being overweight is related to increased risk.
- **Exercise.** Moderate physical activity may decrease your risk of breast cancer.
- **Eat Right.** Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. These have antioxidant properties and micronutrients that may help prevent some cancers.
- **Limit alcohol.** The use of alcohol is clearly linked to the increased risk of breast cancer.
- **See your doctor.** Make a yearly appointment with your doctor for a breast examination.
- **Breast self-examination.** If you're age 20 or over, become familiar with the normal look and feel of your breasts. Don't examine your breasts more than once a month, as this may reduce your ability to notice a gradual change.
- **Mammogram.** The American Cancer Society recommends that women ages 40 and older have a mammogram every year. If you are under 40 and have a family history of breast cancer or other concerns about your risk, talk with your doctor about when to begin mammography.

There is wealth in good health, so take care of yourself!

Websites and Resources:

- **American Cancer Society**
www.cancer.org
- **National Cancer Institute**
www.nci.nih.gov
- **Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation**
www.komen.org