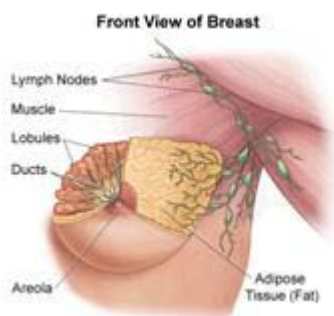


October: Breast Cancer



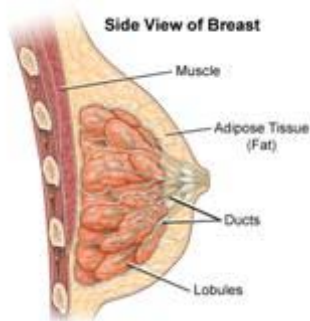
Making sense of the ever changing world of Breast Cancer can be overwhelming. October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. In this issue of Healthy at 80, we provide you with the important facts about Breast Cancer. Breast cancer is the fifth leading cause of death in women age 40 or above, behind heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and other lung diseases.

The first good step to learning about breast cancer is learning the structure of the breast. During your life time, your breast will under go many changes, however, not many men or women understand the anatomy and how the breast functions.



Boys and girls begin life with similar breast tissue. Over time, however, men do not have the same complex breast growth and development as women. At puberty, high testosterone and low estrogen levels stop breast development in men. In men, some milk ducts exist, but they remain undeveloped. Lobules are most often absent.

Breasts are made up of fat and breast tissue, along with nerves, veins, arteries and connective tissue that helps hold everything in place. The figure shows the different parts of the breast. Each breast has 15 to 20 sections, called lobes that are arranged like the petals of a daisy. Each lobe has many smaller lobules, which end in dozens of



tiny bulbs that can produce milk. The lobes, lobules, and bulbs are all linked by thin tubes called ducts. These ducts lead to the nipple in the center of a dark area of skin called the areola. Fat fills the spaces between lobules and ducts. There are no muscles in the breast, but muscles lie under each breast and cover the ribs. Each breast also contains blood vessels and vessels that carry lymph. The lymph vessels lead to small bean-shaped organs called lymph nodes, clusters of which are found under the arm, above the collarbone, and in the chest, as well as in many other parts of the body.

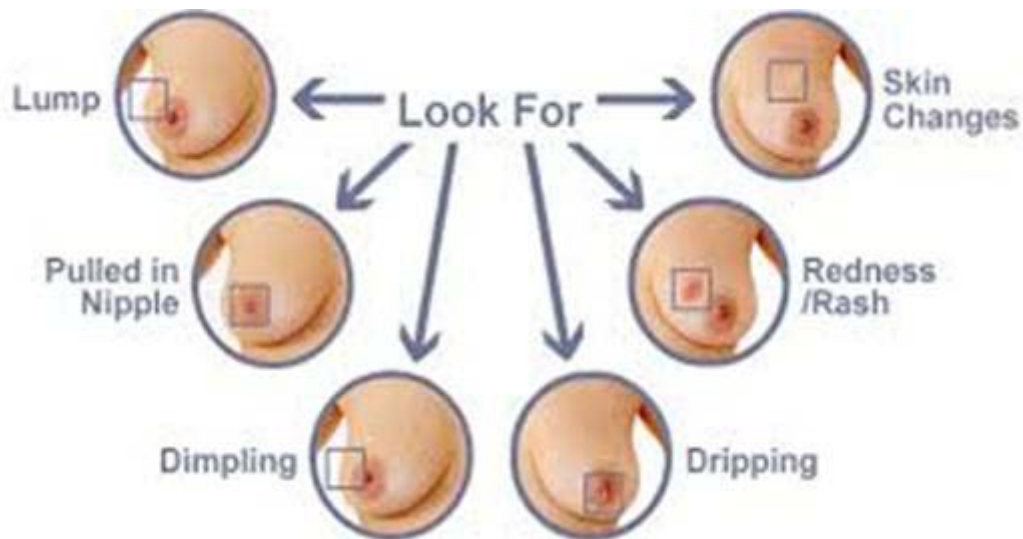
Breast cancer is cancer of the breast tissue. When breast cancer starts out, it is too small to feel and does not cause signs and symptoms. As it grows, however, breast cancer can cause changes in how the breast looks or feels. As men tend to have much less breast tissue compared to women, some of these signs can be easier to notice in men than in women.

Symptoms of breast cancer include lumps in the breast or underarm area, thickening, swelling, flaking, irritation and unexplained redness of the breast areas. Nipple discharge other than breast milk is also a symptom. Men experience similar symptoms including pulling in of the nipple (inverted nipple) or other parts of the breast.

For women, regular mammograms are the best tests doctors have to find breast cancer early, sometimes up to three years before it can be felt. When their breast cancer is found early, many women and men go on to live long and healthy lives. Due to variables like heredity and lifestyle can influence the likelihood of developing breast cancer, women are encouraged to ask their doctors for a formal estimation of their risk.

Aside from mammograms, general lifestyle changes women and men can adopt to reduce their risk of developing breast cancer include limiting alcohol intake, controlling weight and engaging in regular exercise.

Remember the following signs:



Knowing that breast cancer exists is not enough. Get Informed. Pass it on.

