



FReHA

Breast Cancer



What should you know about breast cancer?

Breast cancer refers to cancer originating from breast tissue. It has declined over time but remain the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths among women worldwide. Breast cancer occurs almost entirely in women but even men can get it too. It is the most common type of cancer among women and most common cancer, nationwide. Each year, about 4,000 new cases are reported.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include changes in breast size and shape, lumps or swelling in breast, change in skin texture, nipple inversion, rash or crusting, nipple discharge and/or breast pain. These changes don't necessarily mean you have breast cancer. If you have these symptoms, have them checked by a doctor soonest possible.

What are the causes?

The exact cause of breast cancer remains unclear. However, what is known is that breast cancer is always caused by a damage to a cell's DNA. However, there are certain established risk factors that are associated to breast cancer.

Risk factors associated to breast cancer

The development of breast cancer is influenced by a complex interplay between genetics and environmental risk factors.

The following are some of the common risk factors:

Sex

The incidence rate is at 42.4 cases per 100,000 population for females and 1.15 cases per 100,000 population for males.

Age

There is an increased risk from the age of 40 (pre-menopausal women) and 50 for post-menopausal women.

Family history

Those with a family history of breast cancer also have an increased risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer.

Early menstruation and/or late menopause

Early start of menstruation (before 12 years old) and/or late menopause (after 55) also increase the risk of breast cancer.

History of neoplastic breast diseases

Women who have previously had breast diseases are more likely to develop breast cancer.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

LONG-TERM use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) after menopause, particularly estrogen and progesterone combined, is related to increased risk of breast cancer.

Lifestyle

Regular alcohol consumption and a body mass index (BMI) of more than 25 results in an increased risk of developing breast cancer.

Breast Cancer early detection and diagnosis

According to the American Cancer Society, when breast cancer is detected early, as in the localized stage, the 5-year relative survival rate is 99%. Early detection includes monthly breast self-exams (BSE) and scheduling regular clinical breast exams and mammograms.

When BSE is being performed in combination with other clinical screening methods, it can increase the odds of early detection. Early detection and treatment can literally save a life.

Breast Self-Examination (BSE)

Johns Hopkins Medical Center states “40% of diagnosed breast cancers are detected by women who feel a lump” so carrying out a breast self-exam every month is very important. BSE is an inspection that is done on your own using your eyes and hands to determine if there are any changes to the look and feel of your breasts. It is a convenient, no-cost tool that can be used at any age. Most women are familiar with their own breasts, so they understand the normal look and feel of their breasts. If there are any changes that seem abnormal, one should discuss with a doctor.

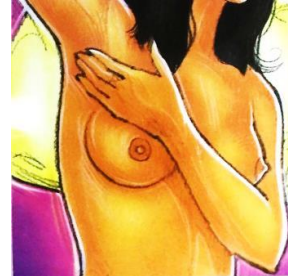
BSE hasn't always been able to detect breast cancer. Additional tests and procedure are necessary to check out suspicious lumps or changes that women find in their breasts, Therefore, a routine BSE, although may be helpful in early detection, must be complimented with a medical screening.

Step-by-step of BSE:

Step 1: Inspect your breasts visually.

Begin by standing shirtless and braless in front of the mirror, with your arms at your sides, look for any abnormal changes in the breast:

- a. Dimpling, puckering, or bulging of breast skin
- b. Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- c. Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast
- d. Nipple is retracted or pulled into the breast (inverted)
- e. Breasts are not evenly shaped and with visible distortion



Consult a doctor if you have any of the following changes.

Step 2: Raise your arms, look for the same changes.

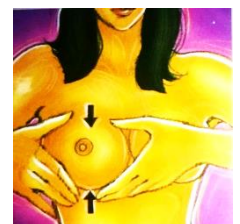


Step 3: Lie down and feel for changes in the breasts.

When lying down, breast tissue spreads out, making it thinner and easier to feel. Use a firm, smooth touch with the first few finger pads of your hand, keeping the fingers flat and together. Use a circular motion, about the size of a quarter. Start from the nipple, moving in larger and larger circles until you reach the outer edge of the breast.

Step 4: Look for any signs of bleeding or unusual discharge.

This could be a watery, milky, or yellow fluid or blood come from one or both nipples



Step 5: Feel for any painless lumps in the breasts or under the armpit.



How often should a BSE be done?

For those who are still menstruating, BSE should be done once a month. The best time is the week after period ends, when the breasts are least tender. For those who no longer have periods (i.e. menopause); remember a date and do it monthly (e.g. day 1 or last day of the month).

3D Mammogram

A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast. It can be used to check for breast cancer in women who have no signs or symptoms of the disease. It can also be used if you have a lump or other signs of breast cancer. This screening is recommended for women aged 40 and above.

Ultrasound

An ultrasound helps doctors look at some breast changes, such as lumps or changes in women with dense breast tissues. This is recommended for women below 40 unless a mammogram has been done and a suspicious lump was detected.

Conclusion

Learning how to do your own BSE and going through routine clinical breast exam will help with early detection. When breast cancer is detected early, treatment can be shorter with fewer side effects and more options. It is important because the earlier the detection, the more treatment options are available. In short, early detection saves and prolongs a life.

Source

1. MyHealth KKM
2. Breast Cancer Foundation
3. Breast Cancer ORG
4. Medical News Today
5. Mayo Clinic

<https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/causes-of-breast-cancer>

<https://www.pantai.com.my/Oncology/Breast-Cancer>

