



October is National Breast Cancer Month. Any males reading this should be aware that it affects men as well as women although in much smaller numbers. Nearly 1700 men receive a breast cancer diagnosis each year and those numbers seem to be increasing). Also, males can do their part to share this information with their loved ones who are female!

The exciting news is that breast cancer is no longer a death sentence—it has become a treatable disease for many women. There are many new drug therapies that are making a significant difference in the lives of women everywhere. Still, an estimated 213,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year (per the National Cancer Institute) and 40,000 women will die from it. This means approximately one in eight American women will get breast cancer in their lifetime. Although certain risk factors make some women more susceptible, surprisingly, 80% of those who get the disease have no risk factors at all.

Know your risk factors:

- Family history of the disease (meaning a mother, grandmother or sister had breast cancer before menopause)
- Menstrual period starting by age 11
- Older than 30 at time of first child's birth or birthing no children
- Consuming more than one alcoholic drink a day
- Overweight by more than 20 pounds
- Use of estrogen replacement therapy for more than 5 years
- Advancing age is most important risk factor of all (risk increases at age 50 or over)

Managing your Risk

- Have an mammogram each year beginning at age 40 (early detection increases chances for survival and reduces the risk of recurrence)
- Have your breasts examined by a physician every two years
- Do a self exam of your breasts every month (visit www.cancer.org/breastcancer or www.komen.org for tips)
- Watch your weight! Women who gain more than 60 pounds in adulthood are 3 times as likely to develop breast cancer that spreads to other organs as those who have gained less than 20 pounds. Postmenopausal women who lose weight or who maintain a healthy weight have a significantly decreased risk of developing breast cancer.
- Eat a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and healthy sources of fat (omega-3 fats found in fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, tuna and herring and walnuts and flaxseed as well as monounsaturated fats such as olive and canola oils, nuts and avocado). Plant proteins such as beans and lentils may also lower risk. Green tea is believed to be beneficial in prevention of all types of cancer (as well as heart disease—see below!)
- Limit alcohol to one drink a day or less. Alcohol increases estrogen levels in blood and the more you consume, the higher your risk.

- Be physically active! Exercise needs to be aerobic and intense to make you break a sweat and increase your heart rate. This lowers estrogen levels, reduces body fat and improves immune function. Aim for at least 30 minutes 5 times a week but 3 to 5 hours a



week may be even more beneficial.

Green Tea Benefits Fight against Heart Disease

Researchers from Tohoku University in Japan followed 4000,000 participants ages 40 to 49 years for 11 years to look at the death rates from heart disease, cancer and other causes. They found that the heart disease death rate from participants who drank more than 5 cups of green tea daily was 26% lower in the first seven years of the study. The benefits of the green tea appeared to be stronger in women than men (study published in Journal of American Medical Association, September 2006). Green tea contains polyphenol catechins, a type of antioxidant which may help protect our body from free radical damage which can lead to aging and chronic disease such as cancer and heart disease. To reap the benefits of green tea, brew it for at least 3 to 5 minutes to bring out the beneficial polyphenols.

Short Walks Can Lower Your Blood Pressure

Research from Indiana University reported in the September 2006 issue of the Journal of Hypertension compared the effects of four short walks to one long walk in reducing blood pressure of 20 subjects with prehypertension (previously known as borderline hypertension or a reading of "135 over 90"). Prehypertension often progresses to high blood pressure which has been associated with heart attacks and stroke. The researchers found that the short walks and the longer walk both decreased blood pressure by the same amount, however the effect lasted for 11 hours after the short walks compared to seven hours after the long walk. So if you can't fit longer bouts of activity into your schedule, there are still great health benefits from multiple smaller periods of exercise. Lack of time is often a factor cited for inadequate exercise for health maintenance.

We have been having great outdoor weather so try to get out for a couple of short walks or a bike ride or another activity if you can! The fresh air and beautiful color of the changing leaves may lift your spirits as well!

Enjoy your weekend!

Sally