

Breast Cancer Awareness

October is breast cancer awareness month. With breast cancer being one of the most common forms of cancer, it is likely that you or someone you know has been diagnosed. According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, one in eight women will be diagnosed in their lifetime. This year, it is estimated that 297,700 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Numbers like this can be hard to take in, but understanding the statistics and taking action will lead to more and more cancer survivors every year.

Breast cancer commonly affects middle to older aged women. Although rare, breast cells in men can also develop cancer. While we don't directly know what causes it in the first place, there are some highly researched links to the development of breast cancer. Alcohol consumption, obesity, and a sedentary lifestyle are all linked to an increased risk of breast cancer. A history of breast cancer on your maternal side of the family can also be a factor. Knowing your family history and living a healthy, active lifestyle can play a huge role in reducing your chances of developing breast cancer.

There have been significant breakthroughs in technology and cancer treatments, but the best approach is a proactive one that starts with you at home. Making regular appointments to be screened and performing monthly self-examinations at home is the key to early detection. Both men and women should perform monthly self exams and note any shape or texture changes in breast tissue. If you come across any changes from the previous months or notice anything abnormal, it is important to get it checked out by a provider. It is important to address any concern you may have, but even if you do detect a lump or change in your breast tissue, there is a chance it is not cancerous.

Breast cancer can be uncomfortable or even scary to talk about. With that being said, there is a lot to be celebrated. A statistic from the National Breast Cancer Foundation says that early, localized stages of breast cancer have a survival rate of 99%. This is an incredible statistic for current and future patients. Though you may be anxious about the topic, it is important that you know there is a lot you can do to take control of your health and change your fear into hope.

This information is brought to you by Kittson Healthcare & Kittson Healthcare Public Health Department. For more information or to schedule an appointment please contact Kittson Healthcare Clinic Hallock (218) 843-3825 or Kittson Healthcare Clinic Karlstad (218) 436-2251.

Breast Cancer statistics taken from www.nationalbreastcancer.org.