

## **KNOW ABOUT CANCER BREAST**

Breast cancer starts when cells in the breast begin to grow out of control. It is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the tissues of the breast. These cells usually form a tumor (swelling) that can often be seen on an x-ray (Mammography) or felt as a lump.

Breast cancer occurs almost entirely in women, but men can get breast cancer, too. Breast cancer has ranked number one cancer among Indian females with age adjusted rate as high as 25.8 per 100,000 women and mortality 12.7 per 100,000 women.

## **WHAT CAUSES CANCER BREAST?**

- Drinking alcohol
- Obesity
- Not being physically active
- Not having children
- First child after age of 30 years
- Not breastfeeding
- Use of Oral contraceptives
- Hormone replacement therapy
- Family history of breast cancer.

## **HOW CAN I BE AWARE?**

Screening tests can help find cancer at an early stage, before symptoms appear. When abnormal tissue or cancer is found early, it may be easier to treat or cure.

### Breast Self Examination



#### **Step 1**

Stand before a mirror. Inspect both breasts for anything unusual such as discharge from the nipples puckering, dimpling, or scaling of the skin. Watch closely in the mirror, clasp hands behind your head and press hands forward.



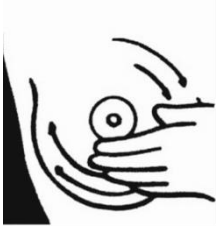
#### **Step 2**

Press hands firmly on hips and bow slightly toward your mirror as you pull your shoulders and elbows forward. You should be able to feel your chest muscles tighten while doing it.



#### **Step3**

Raise your left arm. Use 3 or 4 fingers of your right hand to explore your left breast firmly, carefully and thoroughly. Beginning at the outer edge, press the flat part of your fingers in small circles, moving the circles slowly around the breast. Be sure to cover the entire breast. Pay attention to the area between the breast and the arm pit. Feel for any unusual lump or mass under the skin.



#### **Step 4**

Gently squeeze each nipple and look for a discharge.



#### **Step 5**

Steps 3 and 4 should be repeated lying down. Lie flat on your back, right arm over your head and a pillow or folded towel under your left shoulder. This position flattens the breast and makes it easier to examine. Use the same circular motion described earlier. Repeat on your right breast.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IN CANCER BREAST?**

● A lump or mass which is painless, hard and has irregular edges ● Swelling of all or part of a breast (even if no distinct lump is felt) ● Skin irritation or dimpling (sometimes looking like an orange peel) ● Breast or nipple pain ● Nipple retraction (turning inward) ● Redness ● scaliness or thickening of the nipple or breast skin ● Nipple discharge (other than breast milk) ● lump or swelling under the arm or around the collar bone.

### **TESTS WHICH DOCTOR CAN ADVISE**

- **Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology** of lump or swelling present over breast.
- **Mammography:** According to American Cancer Guidelines recommended age is 45 years for Mammography and annual examination for 40-54 years and biennial at age more than 55 years.
- **Ultrasound:** USG is recommended for those women presenting with a mass or asymmetric thickening or nodularity.
- **BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 Genes:** should be done in females who have positive history of breast cancer or who has first degree relatives with positivity of BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 gene.

### **BREAST CANCER IS TREATABLE**

Treatment includes ● Surgery ● Radiation therapy ● Chemotherapy ● Hormone therapy ● Targeted therapy

The treatment modality depends upon tumor size, stage, age, number of lymph nodes excised and other histo-pathological factors. It can be a single modality or multi-modality treatment. Sequence of treatment depends upon various factors decided by Oncologist.

## **WHAT NEXT ONCE YOU ARE TREATED?**

- **Doctor visits:** At first, your follow-up doctor visits will probably be scheduled for every few months. The longer you have been free of cancer, the less often the appointments are needed. After 5 years, they are typically done about once a year.
- **Mammograms:** If you had breast-conserving surgery, you will get a mammogram about 6-12 months after surgery and radiation are completed, and then at least every year after that. If you had a mastectomy you will still need to have yearly mammograms on the remaining breast.
- **Pelvic exams:** If you are taking either of the hormone drugs tamoxifen or toremifene and still have your uterus, you should have pelvic exams every year because these drugs can increase your risk of uterine cancer.
- **Bone density tests:** If you are taking an Aromatase inhibitor (anastrozole, letrozole, or exemestane) for early stage breast cancer, or if you go through menopause as a result of treatment, your doctor will want to monitor your bone health and may consider testing your bone density.

## **NEVER FORGET**

- Breast cancer is curable if diagnosed early.
- FNAC/ Biopsy is must. Do not afraid of getting it.
- Discuss the side-effects of Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy with cancer specialist. Get your doubt clear and do not be afraid of treatment.
- In case of family history of breast cancer, be in continuous consultation with your cancer specialist.