

knowledge

How can I learn more about breast cancer?



There are several national organizations and Web sites you can visit to learn more about breast cancer. A few of these sites are listed below:

American Cancer Society:
<http://www.cancer.org>

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation:
<http://www.komen.org>

American Breast Cancer Foundation:
<http://www.abcf.org/>

National Breast Cancer Coalition:
<http://www.natlbcc.org/>

<http://www.breastcancer.org/>

You may contact the Mammography Department at KEMH on 441-239-9729

knowledge

understanding breast cancer



Bermuda Hospitals Board

know the facts about breast cancer

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a malignant (cancerous) tumor that starts from cells of the breast. A woman's breast is made up of lobules (glands that make milk), ducts (small tubes that connect lobules to the nipple), fatty and connective tissue, blood vessels and lymph vessels. Most breast cancers begin in the ducts (ductal), some in the lobules (lobular) and the rest in other tissues.

How common is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, except for non-melanoma skin cancers. It is the second-leading cause of cancer death in women, exceeded only by lung cancer. The chance that breast cancer will be responsible for a woman's death is about 1 in 33 (3 percent). In addition, the chance of developing invasive breast cancer at some time in a woman's life is about 1 in 8 (13.4 percent).

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2008, some 182,460 new cases of invasive cancer will be diagnosed among women in the United States, causing approximately 40,480 deaths.

What causes breast cancer?

We do not know yet what exactly causes breast cancer, but we know there are risk factors that increase a person's chance of getting cancer. Being a woman is the main risk. A woman's hormones may also stimulate breast cancer growth. Age, genetic risk factors, family history, personal history, race and several other factors play into evaluating your risk. However, 70 percent of women who get breast cancer have absolutely no risk factors. Consult with your doctor to learn more about your risks.

What are the signs and symptoms of breast cancer?

The most common sign is no sign, but breast cancer may also appear as a new lump or mass. A painless, hard mass that has irregular edges is more likely to be cancerous, but some cancers are tender, soft and rounded.

Other signs of breast cancer include a generalized swelling of part of a breast, skin irritation or dimpling, nipple pain or retraction (turning inward), redness or scaliness of the nipple or breast skin, or discharge other than breast milk. Sometimes a breast cancer can spread to underarm lymph nodes even before the original tumor in the breast tissue is large enough to be felt.

How is breast cancer found?

Mammograms, clinical breast exams and breast self-exams are the best ways to find breast cancer.

What are my chances of survival if I am diagnosed with breast cancer?

If breast cancer is detected early, before it spreads, 98 percent of women will be alive five years later. If breast cancer is not detected until it is more advanced, cure and survival rates drop dramatically. Numerous studies have shown that mammography consistently detects breast cancer at the earliest stages possible.