



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is an annual campaign to increase awareness of the disease. While most people are aware of breast cancer, many forget to take the steps to have a plan to detect the disease in its early stages and encourage others to do the same. We have made a lot of progress but still have a long way to go.

Breast cancer awareness is an effort to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of breast cancer through education on symptoms and treatment.

Supporters hope that greater knowledge will lead to earlier detection of breast cancer, which is associated with higher long-term survival rates.

Definition:

Breast cancer is cancer that forms in the cells of the breasts. In rare cases, breast cancer can start in other areas of the breast.

Worrying trends about the trend of breast cancer in India:

- 🦋 Age shift (More young ladies affected).
- 🦋 Rising numbers of cases of breast cancer in India.
- 🦋 Late presentation.
- 🦋 Lack of awareness and Screening.
- 🦋 Aggressive cancers in young (Generally, the younger the age below menopause, the more aggressive the cancer).

Causes:

- 🦋 **Age and gender** -- Your risk of developing breast cancer increases as you get older. Most advanced breast cancer cases are found in women over age 50. Men can also get breast cancer. But they are 100 times less likely than women to get breast cancer.
- 🦋 **Family history** of breast cancer.
- 🦋 **Genes** -- The most common gene defects are found in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.
- 🦋 **Menstrual cycle** -- Women who got their periods early (before age 12) or went through menopause late (after age 55) have an increased risk of breast cancer.
- 🦋 **Alcohol use** -- Drinking more than 1 to 2 glasses of alcohol a day may increase your risk of breast cancer.
- 🦋 **Childbirth** -- Women who have never had children or who had their first child after age 30 have an increased risk of breast cancer.
- 🦋 **DES** -- Women who took diethylstilbestrol (DES) to prevent miscarriage may have an increased risk of breast cancer after age 40.
- 🦋 **Hormone therapy (HT)** -- You have a higher risk of breast cancer if you received hormone therapy with estrogen for several years or more.
- 🦋 **Obesity** -- Obesity has been linked to breast cancer, although this link is not well understood. Experts think that obese women produce more estrogen. This may fuel the development of breast cancer.
- 🦋 **Radiation** -- If you received radiation therapy as a child or young adult to treat cancer of the chest area, you have a very high risk of developing breast cancer.

Symptoms:

Symptoms may include:

-  Breast lump or lump in the armpit that is hard, has uneven edges, and usually does not hurt.
-  Change in the size, shape, or feel of the breast or nipple.
-  Fluid from the nipple -- may be bloody, clear to yellow, green, or look like pus.
-  Bone pain.
-  Breast pain or discomfort.
-  Skin ulcers.
-  Swelling of the lymph nodes in the armpit (next to the breast with cancer).
-  Weight loss.

When to see a doctor:

If you find a lump or other change in your breast — even if a recent mammogram was normal — make an appointment with your doctor.

Screening for breast cancer:

-  Clinical breast examination (doctors or nurses examine women's breasts for lumps).
-  Mammography and other imaging techniques.

Prevention:

Making changes in your daily life may help reduce your risk of breast cancer. Try to:

-  Ask your doctor about breast cancer screening.
-  Become familiar with your breasts through breast self-exams.
-  Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all.
-  Exercise most days of the week.
-  Limit postmenopausal hormone therapy.
-  Maintain a healthy weight.

Moral of the story:

-  All the problems are pointing to one necessity - Screening for breast cancer.
-  We cannot prevent this cancer, all we can do is to detect this cancer early.
-  **SCREENING** is the way to go.

Reference Links:

-  <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001911/>
-  <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/breast-cancer/basics/prevention/con-20029275>
-  <http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-awareness-month>
-  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breast_cancer_awareness
-  <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/screening>

For any enquiry or assistance please contact: wellness@medicaretpa.co.in

Disclaimer: No information contained here should be relied on in making health decisions. Always check with your doctor or other health care provider.