Breast Cancer Awareness

The Life-Saving Power of Screenings

We all know that the best defense against breast cancer starts with early detection. But what exactly does that mean, and what should women be looking for?

For many women, a lump in breast tissue is a tell-tale sign that something is wrong. But there are other symptoms that could point to breast cancer, including:

- Unusual lumps in the breast or armpit
- A dimple on the breast
- A change in breast size, shape, texture or temperature
- Reddish, pitted skin
- A change in the nipple
- Unusual nipple discharge

“It’s so important to know your body and routinely examine your breasts,” said Paul Kim, M.D., lead physician, Breast Diagnostic Center, Kaiser Permanente Panorama City. “If you find a lump or other unusual change, make an appointment with your doctor to have it checked, even if your screening mammogram is negative, because your doctor may order additional tests.”

For women between ages 40-74 with no abnormal breast symptoms, mammograms are offered or recommended every 1-2 years. “If our members are not sure they’re due for a mammogram, our electronic medical record system will alert our providers they are due, allowing for same-day, preventable screenings,” said Dr. Kim.

Kaiser Permanente also offers its members appointment-free mammograms, on a walk-in basis.

“We encourage our members to take advantage of our walk-in screenings,” added Dr. Kim. “Mammograms really do save lives.”

Walk-in mammograms are available at most Kaiser Permanente Panorama City Medical Center area medical offices—including North Hollywood Medical Office, Kaiser Permanente Panorama City, and Santa Clarita Medical Offices.

PROVIDING INNOVATIVE CARE FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Thanks to its advanced electronic medical record system, new offerings in Kaiser Permanente facilities are now bringing telehealth and virtual care options into everyday practice.

In Santa Clarita, Kaiser Permanente’s new specialty care offices (scheduled to open in March of 2018) will offer high-tech tools for personalized care. Video and phone appointments, mobile check-in options, and digital displays in exam rooms will make it easy for providers to review health information and conduct same-time video consultations with specialists from remote locations.

The atmosphere of the new specialty care facility — including an outdoor walking path — is open and inviting, offering an unfiltered experience that embodies what it means to thrive. There will also be open, collaborative spaces, both inside and outside of the building for community use.

“Our goal in Santa Clarita has always been to provide as many services as possible locally, so our members don’t have to travel to the San Fernando Valley or beyond for primary and specialty care,” said Payman Roshan, Senior Vice President and Area Manager, Kaiser Permanente Panorama City.

The 64,000-square foot medical offices represent Kaiser Permanente’s evolution toward creating highly efficient, environmentally-friendly facilities designed to improve the member experience.

Kaiser Permanente Santa Clarita Medical Office 2 will offer specialty services such as Cardiology, Hematology, Oncology, Neurology, Orthopedics, Podiatry, Imaging/Radiology and more — plus several outpatient surgical suites.

Other services to be offered in the new building include Laboratory, Pharmacy and Urgent Care, all under one roof to further enhance the patient care experience.

For more information on Kaiser Permanente in Santa Clarita, visit kp.org/santaclarita.
October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month: What You Need to Know and How You Can Help

Thanks to earlier detection—through screening and increased awareness—and better treatments, a woman’s risk of dying of breast dropped 38 percent between the late 1980s and 2014, translating into 297,300 fewer breast cancer deaths during that time. However, there’s much more to be done.

Breast cancer is still the second leading cause of cancer death in women. Only lung cancer kills more women each year. And there remains a large racial gap in mortality, with African-American women having 42 percent higher death rates compared to whites. The chance that a woman will die from breast cancer is about 1 in 37 (about 2.7 percent).

If you or someone you love is concerned about developing breast cancer, have been recently diagnosed, are going through treatment, or are trying to stay well after treatment, the American Cancer Society can help you find the answers you need.

THE FACTS
The American Cancer Society’s estimates for breast cancer in the United States for 2017 are:
- About 252,710 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women.
- About 63,410 new cases of carcinoma in situ (CIS) will be diagnosed (CIS is non-invasive and is the earliest form of breast cancer).
- About 40,610 women will die from breast cancer.

While black and white women get breast cancer at roughly the same rate, black women are more likely to die from it.

At this time, there are more than 3.1 million people with a history of breast cancer in the United States. (This includes women still being treated and those who have completed treatment.)

RISK FACTORS
- Limited but accumulating research indicates that smoking may slightly increase breast cancer risk, particularly long-term, heavy smoking and among women who start smoking before their first pregnancy.
- Obesity increases the risk of postmenopausal breast cancer. Risk is about 1.5 times higher in overweight women and about 2 times higher in obese women than in lean women.
- Growing evidence suggests that women who participate in regular physical activity have a 12%-25% lower risk of breast cancer compared to women who are inactive, with stronger evidence for postmenopausal than premenopausal women.
- Numerous studies have confirmed that alcohol consumption increases the risk of breast cancer in women by about 7%-12% for each one drink of alcohol consumed per day on average. Women who have 2-3 alcoholic drinks per day have a 20 percent higher risk of breast cancer compared to non-drinkers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP
From investing in research, providing free rides to treatment, giving insurance advice and providing a free place to stay during chemotherapy, the American Cancer Society is attacking cancer from every angle.

Join ACS and help save lives from breast cancer: Fundraise and participate in one of more than 250 Making Strides events or participate virtually at makingstrideswalk.org.

Information for this article was provided by the American Cancer Society. Take action with the American Cancer Society’s nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) and help make fighting breast cancer a national priority at acscan.org/makingstrides
National Grassroots Initiative Launched to Address Fears and Empower Women to Take the Fright Out of Breast Cancer

Launched in Tandem with Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Halloween Season, Initiative Fights Fear and Anxiety as Obstacles to Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment

When pink season arrives each October, much attention is focused on encouraging women to know their risk of breast cancer and get annual breast screenings, but we often fail to address the fears that block those efforts. Breastcancer.org, a nonprofit organization and the world’s leading online resource for breast cancer and breast health information and support, has launched Take the Fright Out of Breast Cancer, a national grassroots initiative to turn Halloween into a celebration with a purpose: to replace the fear of breast cancer with knowledge that will help women reduce their risk of the disease or its recurrence and learn what they need to know about early detection and testing options.

“In my opinion, being diagnosed with breast cancer is one of every woman’s greatest fears. And as a breast oncologist and breast cancer survivor, I also know the fear of cancer coming back is always there,” explained Marisa Weiss, M.D., founder and chief medical officer, Breastcancer.org. “Far too often, women miss the opportunity for potentially life-saving treatments because they fear going to the doctor, ignore a lump, or avoid getting an annual mammogram. We launched Take the Fright Out to empower women with the knowledge, clarity, and confidence they need to make health decisions according to their wishes. Take the Fright Out will empower women with the knowledge they need to break through these barriers of fear and anxiety.”

The program will be supported by a number of leading companies that have joined together to extend the important message of the campaign. For anyone interested in hosting or participating in a local event, they can visit TakeTheFrightOut.com for more information.

ABOUT TAKE THE FRIGHT OUT OF BREAST CANCER

Take the Fright Out of Breast Cancer is a national grassroots initiative to turn Halloween into a celebration with a purpose: to replace the fear of breast cancer with knowledge that will help women reduce their risk of the disease or its recurrence and to learn what they need to know about early detection and testing options. The initiative encourages women to host a Halloween party or event to share important facts about breast cancer while raising funds that will allow Breastcancer.org to provide information and support to women who have or are worried about breast cancer. Party hosting information and a party toolkit are available through TakeTheFrightOut.com.

Breastcancer.org is a patient-centric resource for breast health and breast cancer information and support. We engage, educate, and empower women with our expert information and dynamic peer support community to help them make the best decisions for their lives. The nonprofit organization was founded by breast oncologist Marisa C. Weiss, M.D. and born out of her conviction that women with breast cancer need more information and support than a physician visit can provide. Breastcancer.org receive more than 10 million visits each year. For more information about Breastcancer.org, please visit www.Breastcancer.org.

Regardless of the healthcare landscape, Valley Community Healthcare must continue to be here for those in need.

A healthy community is a successful community. You can help us build a healthy community for everyone. Join our 2017 Corporate Partners.

The Afriat Consulting Group
American Business Bank
Bolton & Company
Brightwood College
California United Bank
María Lucia Cruz, DDS
Rickey Gelb, the Gelb Group, A Family of Companies
Keyes Automotive Group

MedPoint Management
Millennium Dance Complex
Paul Davis & Alberta Bellisario Insurance Services
Really Great Employee Benefits
San Fernando Valley Business Journal
SoCalGas
Wells Fargo

Please contact Judi Rose at:
818.301.6321 or jrose@vchcare.org

Valley Community Healthcare, a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable agency providing a medical home to almost 25,000 low-income men, women, and children in 2016.
Breast Cancer Statistics Reveal New Insights

Overall breast cancer death rates dropped 39 percent between 1989 and 2015, averting 322,600 breast cancer deaths during those 26 years. And while black women continue to have higher breast cancer death rates than whites nationally, death rates in several states are now statistically equivalent, perhaps reflecting an elimination of disparities in those states.

The findings come from Breast Cancer Statistics, published in CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians and its companion consumer publication Breast Cancer Facts & Figures, reports published every two years by the American Cancer Society to describe the latest trends in breast cancer incidence, mortality, survival, and screening by race/ethnicity in the United States, as well as state variations in these measures.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed among U.S. women (excluding skin cancers) with about 252,710 new cases expected to be diagnosed in 2017. It is the second leading cause of cancer death among women in the U.S., after lung cancer; 40,610 women in the U.S. are expected to die from this disease in 2017.

Eighty-one percent of breast cancers are diagnosed among women ages 50 years and older, and 89% of breast cancer deaths occur in this age group. The median age at diagnosis for all women with breast cancer is 62 years; the median age at diagnosis is younger for black women than for white women; and the median age at breast cancer death is 68 years overall (70 years for white women and 62 years for black women).

The report outlines substantial variations in breast cancer incidence and mortality rates by race/ethnicity in the United States. Non-Hispanic white (NHW) and non-Hispanic black (NHB) women have higher breast cancer incidence and death rates than women of other race/ethnicities; Asian/Pacific Islander (API) women have the lowest incidence and death rates. Although the overall breast cancer incidence rate during 2010 through 2014 was slightly (2 percent) lower in NHB women (125.5 per 100,000) than in NHW women (128.7 per 100,000), the breast cancer death rate during 2011 through 2015 was 42 percent higher in NHB women (29.5 per 100,000) than in NHW women (20.8 per 100,000).

The steep declines in breast cancer death rates since 1989 have been attributed to both improvements in treatment and early detection by mammography. By the same token, not all women have benefited equally from these improvements, as evidenced by variation in mortality trends. A striking divergence in long-term breast cancer mortality trends between black and white women emerged in the early 1980s and continued to widen over the last several decades, but recent data suggest that the racial disparity may be stabilizing.

In fact, while the excess death rate in blacks varies widely in the United States, ranging from 20 percent in Nevada to 66 percent in Louisiana, in seven states there were no significant differences in breast cancer death rates between NHB and NHW women. In many of those states, the closing gap may reflect a lack of statistical power (small numbers of breast cancer deaths among black women). But in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Delaware, the similar rates suggest equitable breast cancer outcomes are achievable.

“A large body of research suggests that the black-white breast cancer disparity results from a complex interaction of biologic and non-biologic factors, including differences in stage at diagnosis, tumor characteristics, obesity, other health issues, as well as tumor characteristics, particularly a higher rate of triple negative cancer” said Carol DeSantis, MPH, lead author of the report. “But the substantial geographic variation in breast cancer death rates confirms the role of social and structural factors, and the closing disparity in several states indicates that increasing access to health care to low-income populations can further progress the elimination of breast cancer disparities.”

Information for this article was provided by the American Cancer Society.