Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast cancer is a type of cancer where cells in the breast divide and grow without normal control. The disease occurs mostly in women, but men can get it too.

Early detection.

One of the earliest signs of breast cancer can be an abnormality that cannot be felt and can only show up on a mammogram. The most common signs of breast cancer are:

- Redness, itchiness, soreness, thickening, or scaling of the nipple or breast skin

- Any new, hard lump or thickening in any part of the breast

- Change in breast size, shape or color

- Dimpling or puckering of the skin

- Swelling of all or part of the breast

- Pain in the breasts or nipples

- Pulling in of the nipple

- Nipple discharge

Finding a lump or change in your breasts or nipples does not necessarily mean you have breast cancer, but is a good indicator to consult your healthcare provider.

BREAST CANCER SCREENINGS

- Obtain a regular mammography screening starting at the age of 40, or otherwise advised by your health-care provider

- Obtain annual clinical breast exams

- Perform monthly breast self-exams

LIFESTYLE-RELATED RISK FACTORS

- **Alcohol use** – The use of alcohol is clearly linked to an increased risk of breast cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends limiting the amount of alcohol you drink to one drink a day or less. Women who have two to five drinks daily have about a 1 ½ times greater risk of women who do not drink alcohol.

- **Being overweight or obese** – Being overweight or obese is linked to a higher risk of breast cancer, especially for women after menopause or if the weight gain took place during adulthood. This risk seems to be higher if the extra fat is around the waist. The American Cancer Society recommends you stay at a healthy weight throughout your life and avoid gaining too much weight.

- **Lack of physical activity** – Research shows that engaging in physical activity reduces breast cancer risk. The American Cancer Society suggests that you should exercise 45-60 minutes 5 or more days a week.