



The Fall Report

A Discussion of Health Issues



Breast Cancer

Your best protection is your awareness and understanding of this disease process

Breast cancer is the most common malignancy found in women. One of every 8-10 women will be affected. Though much more rare, men also may develop the disease.

There are various types of breast cancer:

- Ductal and lobular carcinoma in situ (earliest of cancers)
- Infiltrating ductal carcinoma (80% of all breast cancer)
- Infiltrating lobular carcinoma (10-15%)
- Inflammatory carcinoma (1% but aggressive)

Breast cancer may present in various “stages,” i.e. stage 0, 1, 2, 3 (A-B) and stage 4. Proper treatment of your breast cancer relates to these stages.

Surgical treatment options have been controversial over the years. Common operations in the past included:

- Radical mastectomy (removal of the breast, underlying two muscles of the chest wall and removal of lymph nodes of the armpit)
- Simple mastectomy (removal of the breast)

More recently, common procedures are breast conserving, i.e. lumpectomy and quadrectomy.

These procedures commonly involve sampling of one or two axillary lymph nodes, “sentinel” nodes, and most often are accompanied by post operative radiation.

Other treatment modalities include chemotherapy and treatment with hormones.

Your personal risk of developing breast cancer is increased with:

- A personal or family history of breast cancer
- Nulliparity (having no children)
- Late age with first live birth after age 30
- Early age with beginning menstruation
- Late menopause

Detecting breast cancer early, when it is more easily treated can be accomplished by:

- Being aware of your risk factors
- Monthly self examination of your breasts
- Regular mammograms (every 1-2 years between age 40-49; every year age 50 and over)
- Being aware of the signs of breast cancer, including the presence of a lump, dimpling of the skin, newly developed nipple inversion, nipple discharge, and change in color or shape of the breast.

Remember, breast cancer is treatable and often-times, curable. Your best protection is your awareness and understanding of this disease process.