



Central Health Board

of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Supreme Council

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CHB NEWS FLASH

Breast Cancer and You: What you need to know

October is a National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is dedicated to increasing awareness of the importance of early detection of breast cancer. When cancer starts in the breast, it is called breast cancer. The breast is made up of three main parts: glands, ducts, and connective tissue.

Sometimes breast cells become abnormal and grow faster than normal cells. These extra cells form a mass called a tumor. Some tumors are "benign," or not cancerous. Other tumors are "malignant," meaning they are cancerous and have the ability to spread to other parts of the breast and body and disrupt normal functions in those areas.



What raises a woman's chance of getting breast cancer?

There are several factors that may affect your risk of developing breast cancer. These include:

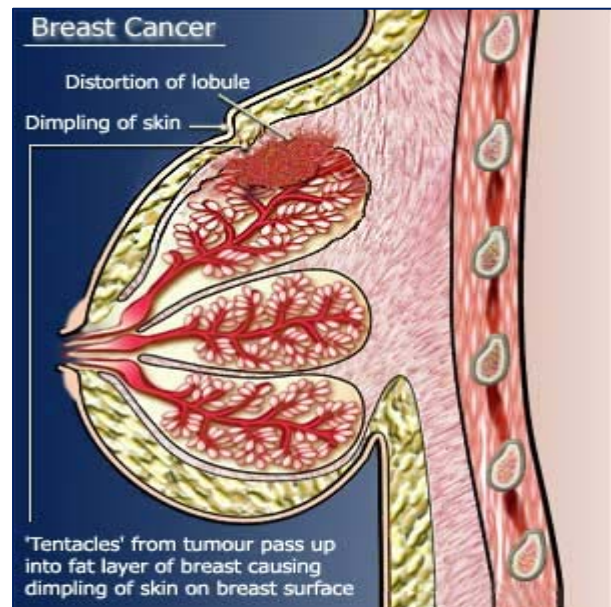
- Getting older.
- Not having children, or having the first child later in life.
- Starting the first menstrual period at an early age.
- Beginning menopause at a late age.
- Having a personal history of breast cancer or certain benign breast diseases.
- Having close family relatives (such as a mother, sister or daughter) who have had breast cancer.
- Having a genetic condition, such as certain mutations in BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes.
- Having been treated with radiation therapy to the breast or chest.
- Being overweight, particularly after menopause.
- Using hormone replacement therapy for a long time.

- Using oral contraceptives.
- Being physically inactive.

What are the symptoms of breast cancer?

When breast cancer starts out, it is too small to feel and does not cause signs and symptoms. As it grows, however, breast cancer can cause changes in how the breast looks or feels. Symptoms may include—

- New lump in the breast or underarm (armpit).
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast.
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin.
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast.
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area.
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood.
- Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.
- Pain in any area of the breast.



All women should ask the following question:

How can I lower my risk of breast cancer?

- Regular health check-up and breast examination.
- Control your weight and exercise.
- Know your family history of breast cancer. If you have a mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer, ask your doctor what is your risk of getting breast cancer and how you can lower your risk.
- Find out the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy.

“Community’s health – CHB’s priority”