

Top Tips For Healthy Breasts

Breast cancer: it seems we all have a friend or family member who has had it. That makes it personal, and can leave you feeling vulnerable.

“Being female is the strongest risk factor for developing breast cancer,” said Susan Stafford, MD, FACR, Director of Breast Imaging and Intervention at Good Samaritan Medical Center. “But there are steps all women can take throughout life to manage that risk.”

Know your breasts

“Breasts come in all different shapes and sizes, and they look as different on the inside as they do on the outside,” Stafford said.

Every woman’s experience with her breasts is similarly unique. While one person may have dramatic changes in the appearance and feel of her breasts over time related to menstrual cycle, pregnancy, birth control pills, age and weight changes, others may never be aware of symptoms. It helps to become comfortable with the appearance and feel of your own breasts so that you can be confident when there is a change you want to discuss with your doctor. If you feel a lump, don’t wait. Make the call.

“We have the latest technologies — like 3D Tomosynthesis for Breast Imaging — to effectively treat each patient according to her needs,” Stafford said.

Eating healthy is not just for waistlines

Healthy food choices have the potential to not only improve your appearance, but can prevent or even repair injury to cells and DNA that can, in some cases, otherwise lead to cancer. Nutritionists recommend a varied diet of more than two-thirds fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and beans with lean protein filling the remainder of the plate. Avoiding processed, high-fat, high-salt and high-sugar foods is recommended, too.

Make a toast, but take a sip

Alcohol is linked to breast cancer in women, and the risk increases with the amount of alcohol consumed so limit or eliminate your intake.



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Areas of Special Interest

- Imaging Diagnosis of Breast Disorders

Good Samaritan Medical Center

A STEWARD FAMILY HOSPITAL



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What is my risk?

Before you meet with your doctor, determine if anyone in your family has had breast cancer: women and men on both your mother's and father's sides. As best you can, try to learn how old they were when it was first discovered. Has anyone had ovarian cancer? Your doctor can use all of this information and the answers to other questions to help determine your risk and the best testing choices and timing for you.

Take them out

Self examination, regular physical examination by your doctor and mammograms are the primary means by which one checks the breast for the possibility of cancer. "All women should begin annual mammography by age 40 and continue so long as they are healthy enough to have the test and benefit from treatment of breast cancer if it were found," Stafford said. Women with above-average risk may be told to begin mammography at a younger age.

Get the right support!

Proper breast support is more than the bra you choose, it is who you turn to for help. Finding a health-care team that you can trust and are comfortable with is critical to maintaining good health. Women should feel they are able to speak freely of concerns, and trust that they will be heard even if the information they share is ultimately shown not relevant to their health status.

"If a patient feels embarrassed to speak, she could withhold information potentially crucial for early detection," she said.

Dr. Stafford concluded with a reminder that good breast health really depends on good overall health, communication, and access to information and care.

"There are many reliable places for women seeking answers for their health concerns. We hope to help direct patients to those resources," she said.

Hear for yourself as Dr Stafford discuss what physicians are looking for when evaluating your mammogram.

Dr. Susan Stafford is a radiologist with Good Samaritan Medical Center and is the Director of Breast Imaging and Intervention at the Women's Imaging Center in North Easton. She specializes in imaging diagnosis of breast disorders and has been a leader and innovator in the field for many years.

The Good Samaritan Women's Imaging Center has received designation as an American College of Breast Imaging Center of Excellence and is accredited in Mammography, Stereotactic Breast Biopsy, Breast Ultrasound and Ultrasound-Guided Breast Biopsy in its full range of state-of-the-art imaging services including 3-D tomosynthesis digital mammography. The center is locally based at One Washington Place, in the Roche Brother's Plaza in North Easton, and offers flexible appointments including early morning and extended evening hours for patient convenience.



This article was written by Good Samaritan Medical Center Women's Health Staff.