

LEARN THE FACTS VS. MYTHS ABOUT BREAST CANCER



Breast cancer awareness has increased over the past decade with walks for the cure, celebrities speaking out about their experiences and proceeds of pink-ribboned products going to breast cancer research. But even amid a greater level of awareness, rumors and myths about breast cancer continue to circulate.

“Surprisingly, many women require a fair amount of education about breast cancer,” says Jennifer Stone, MD, Nashoba Valley Medical Center’s medical director of the Center for Cancer Care. “In particular, I find that many of the women I see in my clinic are unaware that this type of cancer is highly curable when it’s caught early.” Here are some common misconceptions about breast cancer, and the truth behind them.

Myth: Breast cancer is only hereditary.

Fact: While family history plays a part, it is not the only risk factor. Some women who have no family history can get breast cancer, and others who have a strong family history may never get it. Talk with your health care provider about women and men in your family who have had cancer to determine what screenings are appropriate for you. In fact, the majority of women diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a first degree relative with breast cancer.



Myth: Antiperspirants and deodorants cause breast cancer.

Fact: Internet rumors have been circulating for years linking antiperspirants and deodorants to breast cancer. The claim is that either harmful substances, such as aluminum, in deodorants leach into the skin, raising the risk of cancer, or that they block the body’s ability to release toxins, causing a buildup that ultimately leads to cancer. Neither the National Cancer Institute nor the FDA have found any link between the use of antiperspirant or deodorant to breast cancer.

Myth: Eating fruits and vegetables will cure breast cancer.

Fact: Although eating the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables is good for your health, it does not cure cancer. Fruits and vegetables are full of antioxidants, though, so eating them is still a healthy habit to adopt, along with being active and maintaining a healthy weight.

Myth: Eating soy causes breast cancer.

Fact: Soy products are low in fat, cholesterol and can be a healthy addition to your diet, but some claim the phytoestrogens contained in soy have an estrogen effect, which can lead to breast cancer. Studies are inconclusive as to whether the amount of phytoestrogens in soy products is high enough to be correlated with breast cancer. Talk to your health care professional to find out whether soy is right for your diet.

Myth: Birth control pills cause breast cancer.

Fact: Hormones can affect your likelihood of getting breast cancer, and birth control pills alter the hormones in a woman’s body. Studies on the types of estrogen and other hormones used in birth control and their influence on cancer have been inconclusive. It seems most likely that current birth control pills, with low levels of estrogen are not a risk factor. Talk to your health care professional to choose a contraceptive that is right for you.

Myth: All I need to do is my monthly breast self-exam and I will be fine.

Fact: While it is good to examine your breasts monthly and feel for lumps and changes, mammograms, as well as a yearly clinical exam done by your health care provider, are an important step in catching breast cancer early. Women age 40 and older should have a yearly mammogram. Women with a history of breast cancer or family history of early breast cancer may need to begin annual screenings sooner.

“October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, is right around the corner and it’s a perfect time to schedule an annual mammogram,” says Nashoba Valley Medical Center Breast Surgeon Wassim Mazraany, MD. “It’s very important to have an annual mammogram even if you do not have a family history of breast cancer as this does not decrease your chance of getting breast cancer. Most women who are diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a family history. Other risk factors include gender, age, if you did not have children, higher breast density, and certain benign breast conditions can increase the risk of breast cancer.”

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Nashoba Valley Medical Center
Breast Surgeon
Wassim Mazraany, MD



The Women’s Imaging Center at Nashoba Offers the Latest in Digital Mammography, Close to Home

According to the American Cancer Society, it’s estimated that a woman’s lifetime risk of developing breast cancer is one in eight. Mammography is the most effective method of screening for breast cancer, and early detection, especially utilizing the latest digital mammography available at the Women’s Imaging Center at Nashoba Valley Medical Center, is the key to higher survival rates and better prognosis.

Digital mammography is different from conventional mammography in how the image of the breast is viewed and, more importantly, manipulated. It also offers patients additional distinct advantages over traditional film-based exams, including enhanced image quality, shorter wait times for results, and reduced radiation exposure.

The Women’s Imaging Center was recognized by the American College of Radiology as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence. In order to achieve this recognition, the Women’s Imaging Center was required to be fully accredited in mammography, stereotactic breast biopsy and breast ultrasound.



Schedule your mammogram today at Nashoba’s Women’s Imaging Center by calling 978-784-9272. In most cases, we can provide an appointment within 48 hours.