

Breast cancer:

Myths, facts and hope

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WARREN— About one in eight women in the U.S. will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, statistics show. With early detection, though, the survivability rate of breast cancer is about 99 percent, according to Luana Andamasaris, oncology coordinator at Trumbull Regional Medical Center.

“That’s why it’s extremely important to find it early and get those mammograms done,” Andamasaris said.

Yearly mammogram screenings are recommended for women older than 40. There is no upper limit for yearly screenings.

“We’ve treated patients as old as 90 for breast cancer, as long as they’re otherwise healthy,” Andamasaris said.

In addition to yearly mammograms, Koula Coliadis, diagnostic interventional radiologist at Trumbull Regional Medical Center, recommends that women do a monthly self-breast examination during menstruation so they can be aware of regular changes from hormones and take note of other changes that may be a sign that something is wrong.

Coliadis said women should check into the armpit area, as breast tissue can extend there. Lymph nodes, some of which are located in the armpit, are also often the first place breast cancer spreads.

Symptoms of breast cancer include lumps or bumps, changes in skin, dimpling that looks like the skin of an orange, and inverted nipples



Staff photos / Allie Vugrincic

Lyndsay Black, a multi-modularity tech, right, talks with Lisa Judy of Austintown at Trumbull Regional Medical Center's 3D Mammography Center.



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Trumbull Regional Medical Center's 3D Mobile Mammography Center is parked at Steward Health Center, Elm Road Center for Radiology, 2600 state Route 5, Cortland.

her nipples with drainage, according to Andamasaris.

“There’s more than just possibly a lump,” Andamasaris said. “There’s other signs and symptoms.”

Coliadis added that breast cancer is often painless.

“A lot of women wait. They know there’s something there, but they wait because it’s not hurting.”

NOT JUST WOMEN WITH A HISTORY

Coliadis said some women also wait, or hesitate to have a mammogram done at all, because they have no family history of breast cancer.

“It’s true that if you have a family history you are more at risk than most other individuals, but most cases (of breast cancer) are people with no family history,” Coliadis said.

About eight out of nine women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history, according to statistics provided by Trumbull Regional Medical Center.

It’s also not just females who are at risk of developing breast cancer. Males can also develop breast cancer, Coliadis said.

A man’s lifetime risk of breast cancer is about one in 833, according to statistics from Breastcancer.org. Around 2,650 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in men in 2021.

“So, if a male feels a lump or there’s something different

Breast cancer quick facts

- About 1 in 8 U.S. women will develop invasive breast cancer in their lifetime
- About 8 out of 9 women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history
- With early detection, the five-year survival rate is almost 100 percent

Information from Trumbull Regional Medical Center

in the size or the feel of their breast, that is something they should be aware of as well,” Coliadis said.

She said that while mammograms are not routine for males, a mammogram is part of the diagnostic process for men with breast cancer.

3D MAMMOGRAPHY

Mammograms taken to identify problems in the breast are called diagnostic mammograms. If the standard pictures leave questions unanswered, additional photos may be taken for magnification or with more compression, Coliadis said.

Traditionally, two-dimensional mammograms have been used for screenings and diagnostics, but recently Steward Health has taken mammograms to the next level with their 3D Mobile Mammography Center.

The cozy office-on-wheels typically spends Monday through Wednesday at Steward Health’s Elm Road

Center for Radiology, 2600 state Route 5, Building B, Cortland, and Thursday and Friday at Steward Health Center Austintown, 20 Ohltown Road, Austintown.

2D mammograms normally involve two pictures of each breast, which are put together to make one picture of each breast for physicians to view, Coliadis said.

“So a lot of the tissue of the breast is overlapping,” Coliadis said.

3D mammograms take the same two views of the breast, but provide dozens of pictures of “thinner slices” of the breast, Coliadis said. The “slices” allow physicians to view individual tissues.

“It’s kind of like looking at a whole loaf of bread versus slices of bread,” Andamasaris said of 2D compared to 3D mammograms.

While 3D mammograms produce slightly higher radiation, the advantage of 3D mammography is that physicians can better tell a

cancerous mass from regular breast tissue, and typically can spot problems sooner and without asking patients to return for additional mammograms.

Coliadis said while insurance companies typically didn’t cover 3D mammograms when the technology first came out, most companies cover it now. She recommended anyone who previously checked with their insurance company to see if 3D mammograms are covered check again — you may be surprised.

Available since June, the Mobile Mammography Center has started making appearances in the community. Recently, it spent the day at the Boomers & Beyond Senior Expo at the Metroplex Expo Center.

“It’s a great thing to be able to expose more women to mammography that might not be able to get to the hospital,” Andamasaris said. “We’re able to go to them.”



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Statistics

- In 2021, an estimated 281,550 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in women in the U.S.
- In 2021, about 2,650 new cases of breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in men
- For women in the U.S., death rates from breast cancer are higher than any other cancer except lung cancer
- As of 2021, breast cancer became the most common cancer globally

Information from Breastcancer.org.