

## Breast Cancer

### Breast cancer Awareness Month - October

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and various initiatives are around to raise awareness of, and raise funds for, breast cancer.

If you are interested in publicising Breast Cancer within your School, posters and leaflets are available free of charge from Cancer Research UK. Please see the Cancer Research UK website at: <http://edin.ac/1u1RoIT>

### Introduction

Over 41,000 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed every year, and whilst the majority of cases are found in women, it can also affect men as well.



Some facts about the incidence of Breast Cancer:

- The lifetime risk of developing breast cancer is 1 in 9
- Breast cancer is now the most common cancer in the UK
- In 2002, there were around 41,700 cases diagnosed in women and around 300 in men
- Most cases (approximately 80%) of breast cancers occur in post-menopausal women
- Approximately 8,000 women are diagnosed before their menopause each year in the UK
- The incidence of breast cancer in British women is increasing by more than 1% each year
- Almost two thirds of women newly diagnosed with breast cancer are now likely to survive for at least 20 years.
- 9 out of 10 people who go to hospital with a breast problem do not have breast cancer.

Earlier diagnosis and better treatment have led to a 20% fall in breast cancer mortality rates in the years 1993-2002. Five-year survival rates for breast cancer are now around 80%, a massive improvement from around 50% in the early 1970s. Most cancers picked up by screening are at an early stage with five-year survival over 90%.

### Be Breast Aware

1. Know what is normal for you

2. Know what changes to look and feel for
3. Look and feel
4. report and changes to your GP without delay
5. Attend routine breast screening if you are aged 50 or over

### **Changes to be aware of:**

- size - if one breast becomes larger, or lower
- nipples - if a nipple becomes inverted (pulled in) or changes position or shape
- rashes - on or around the nipple
- discharge - from one or both nipples
- skin changes - puckering or dimpling
- swelling - under the armpit or around the collarbone (where the lymph nodes are)
- pain - continuous, in one part of the breast or armpit
- lump or thickening - different to the rest of the breast tissue.

Information from Breast Cancer Care

[www.breastcancercare.org.uk/?page\\_id=101](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/?page_id=101)

### **Reduce Your Risk**

Research suggests that around half of all cancers diagnosed in the UK could be prevented by changes to lifestyle. Cancer Research UK's Reduce the Risk campaign highlights five important ways you can lower your cancer risk.

1. Stop smoking – it's the best present you'll ever give yourself
2. Stay in shape – be active and keep a healthy body weight
3. Eat and drink healthily – limit alcohol and choose a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables
4. Be SunSmart – protect yourself in the sun and take care not to burn
5. Look after number one – know your body and see your doctor about anything unusual. We can all do something to improve our lifestyle and reduce our risk of cancer. Take Five and step inside one of our cancer awareness units, for a healthier life for you and your family.

Cancer Research UK are encouraging people to 'take five' minutes to find out how to live more healthily and reduce their risk of cancer. Please see [www.takefiveminutes.co.uk](http://www.takefiveminutes.co.uk)

## **Sources of Guidance and Advice**

This information is sourced from Breast cancer Care and Cancer Help UK. For further information about breast cancer, breast health and fundraising activities please see the links below.

### **Breast Cancer Care**

Breast Cancer Care provides information, practical assistance and emotional support for anyone in the UK affected by breast cancer. The Breast Cancer Care helpline is free and confidential and provides support and information for all breast cancer and breast health concerns. All helpline staff have either personal or professional experience of breast cancer.

Website: [www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 800 6000 (freephone)

Textphone: 0808 800 6001

Email: [sco@breastcancercare.org.uk](mailto:sco@breastcancercare.org.uk)

### **Cancer Help UK**

Cancer Help UK is one of 5 sites run by Cancer Research UK and provides a free information service about cancer and cancer care for people with cancer and their families. The Cancer Help UK Helpline is staffed by Specialist Nurses and lines are open Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm.

Website: [www.cancerhelp.org.uk/](http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk/)

Telephone: 0800 226 237 (freephone)