



Men's Health Network
P. O. Box 75972
Washington, D.C. 20013
202-543-MHN-1 (6461)
Fax 202-543-2727

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEN AT RISK FOR BREAST CANCER

October 12, 2000--Washington, DC. This month, Americans across the country will mark National Breast Cancer Awareness Month through stressing greater education and awareness of this devastating disease. Women, their families, and their physicians have made great strides in spreading the word about the importance of early screenings for this disease. But what most men and women don't know is that men can get breast cancer as well. Data gathered by the Men's Health Network shows that men are more susceptible to breast cancer than they may think.

Breast cancer, typically thought of as a "woman's disease," affects thousands of men in the United States. According to the National Cancer Institute, about 1,600 men are diagnosed with the disease every year, and about 400 die of it. Men are usually older when diagnosed, and psychological factors often delay effective treatment.

"Shyness among men causes them to wait before seeking treatment," says Michael Samuelson, male breast cancer survivor and chairman of the National Center for Health Promotion, who was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 50. "Men need to check themselves early, rather than deferring responsibility to their wives and doctors on matters of health."

"The treatments are the same as those for female breast cancer," says Linda Frame of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, an international breast cancer foundation based in Dallas, Texas. "Chemotherapy, radiation, and hormone treatment are common treatments, along with removal of the breast through mastectomy."

Men who have a history of breast cancer in their families are particularly at risk for the disease. An aging population has the incidence of male breast cancer on the rise, since it affects mainly older men. The average age of a man at the time of diagnosis is 65. But a man of any age who feels a small, painless lump on his breast needs to consult a physician.

"The embarrassment facing men who develop what is predominantly a woman's disease like breast cancer can be a deterrent to seeking thorough and effective treatment of the condition," says Tracie Snitker, manager of government relations at the Men's Health Network. "Men are not as accustomed to seeking support from friends and family as their female counterparts. And doctors often dismiss male fears of breast cancer because of its low incidence."

"Don't ignore changes in your body," says Frame. "Get checked out, and seek another opinion if your doctor says there's nothing to worry about."

The Men's Health Network is proud to be at the forefront of informing men of the health risks that they face. The Men's Health Network is a Washington, DC, based, non-profit, educational organization that recognizes men's health as a specific social concern.

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