

THINK PINK

Bring out the pink ribbons and do your bit as October is Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Henna Achhpal tells you all about breast cancer, how it can be prevented, how to perform self-examinations and how you can help spread awareness...

According to www.breastcancerindia.net, breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in all urban areas of India. As per the most recent data, breast cancer accounts for 28% to 35% of all cancers in women in cities. Besides this, there has been an age shift wherein the average age of developing breast cancer has shifted from 50-70 years to 30-50 years. All these factors combined make it all the more important for vigorous awareness measures.

Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Consultant Surgical Oncologist and Professor at S.L. Raheja Fortis Hospital, Lilavati Hospital and Bombay Hospital answers a few common questions about breast cancer:

Who is at risk?

Anybody who has a family history of cancer, women who have not given birth, late child birth and those who haven't breast fed their infants are at a higher risk.

What are the causes?

There are multiple causes of breast cancer from genetics to modern lifestyle, consumption of high saturated fats, acidic diet, lack of exercise and obesity.

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms include pain in the breasts especially over the age of 40 and lumps in the breast of younger females.

What are the preventive measures?

Younger women are advised to eat a balanced diet, avoid giving birth too late in life and maintain a regular exercise routine.

Is breast cancer curable?

Yes, it is curable if detected at an early stage.

How can one get tested?

Self-examinations are the best method of detecting a lump. If you detect a lump, you should go in for a mammogram test or needle biopsy.

What is the latest innovation in breast conservative surgery?

We have now acquired an intra operative radiation machine at the Asian Institute of Oncology, S.L. Raheja Fortis Hospital, Mahim. According to this treatment, after removal of the cancerous lump from the breast, radiation is given on the operation table. This prevents local recurrences and helps avoid long expensive radiation therapy which is the conventional treatment. This treatment will facilitate breast conservative procedure in most of the early breast cancers where usually mastectomy is chosen by the patient. This treatment is affordable for all.



>> Regular self-examinations are the best way to detect breast cancer in its early stages

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SUPPORT THE CAUSE

Hidesign's Pink Ribbon Collection: To mark Breast Cancer Awareness, Hidesign has launched the Pink Ribbon Collection — a Hot Pink line of leather accessories to help further the cause. These limited edition styles are available at all Hidesign stores up to November 15. The styles range from stylish handbags, signature travel bags



and laptop and iPad covers. In support of the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign, Hidesign's website also goes pink, log onto www.hidesign.com for free delivery of the bags anywhere in India. Hidesign will direct 20% of its sales from this collection towards raising awareness and prevention of breast cancer.

Hard Rock Cafe's Pinktober:

For the 12th year running, Hard Rock Cafe locations worldwide will support the cause of breast cancer through their multi-faceted Pinktober campaign. This month at Hard Rock Cafe, rally for pink at events benefiting breast cancer organisations, sip on pink cocktails such as Pop Diva, Pink Ink and Hot Pink Fusion, look uber chic in the season's hottest colour by buying Pinktober merchandise including the limited edition 2011 Pinktober pin and t-shirts. If this is not enough, there are also activities such as female fronted bands, raffle tickets and more. Proceeds from the pink merchandise, cocktails and raffle tickets will go to the Ogaan Cancer Foundation. Speaking on the occasion, Jay Singh, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Hard Rock Café, says, "Pinktober is a small effort by us to give back to society. Like every year, this time too, the proceeds will be donated to Ogaan Cancer Foundation."



SELF-EXAMINATIONS

Since breast cancer develops without any obvious symptoms, regular self-examinations are extremely important. Ideally, after the age of 20, self-examinations must be done by every woman at least once a month and a clinical examination by a medical professional at least once a year. The five easy steps of a breast self-examination are as follows:

STEP 1: Begin by looking at your breasts in the mirror with your shoulders straight and arms on your hips. Look for breasts that are their usual size, shape and colour, without any visible distortion or swelling. If you see any changes such as dimpling, puckering or bulging of the skin, a nipple that has changed position or an inverted nipple (pushed inward instead of sticking out), redness, soreness, rash or swelling — bring them to your doctor's attention immediately

STEP 2: Raise your arms and look for the same changes.

STEP 3: While you're at the mirror, look for any signs of fluid coming out of one or both of your nipples (this could be a watery, milky or yellow fluid or blood).

STEP 4: Detect any lumps by feeling your breasts while lying down, using your right hand to feel your left breast and then your left hand to feel your right breast. Cover the entire breast from top to bottom, side to side — from your collarbone to the top of your abdomen, and from your armpit to your cleavage.

STEP 5: Finally, feel your breasts while you are standing or sitting.

PROGRAMMES BY WOMEN'S CANCER INITIATIVE - TATA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Women's Cancer Initiative in association with Tata Memorial Hospital have organised campaigns to increase awareness about breast cancer, its prevention and early detection.

October 8: Screening and awareness campaign for 500 women in the age group of 35-60 years from the lower socioeconomic background across various parts of Mumbai.

October 19: Illumination of Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in pink in association with Estee Lauder, ELLE magazine and Taj Hotels.

October 14-16: The 9th annual WCI-TMH conference focused on recent advances in breast cancer which will be held at the Tata Hospital and attended by 250 national and international oncologist specialists in women's cancers.

October 23: B AWARE is a live music concert that will be held at Blue Frog in association with ArtistsAloud.com. 'Haseen Zindagi', an exclusive song to spread breast cancer awareness, written by Javed Akhtar, composed and arranged by Sonu Nigam will be performed by six female artists — Teesha Nigam, Neha Bhasin, Shruti Pathak, Shefali Alvarez, Akriti Kakkar and Shilpa Rao.