

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER!

Cervical cancer, the most common cancer among Indian women, is a disease in which cancer affects tissues of the cervix, i.e. the mouth or opening of the uterus (womb). 1,27,526 women are affected each year, needlessly claiming an estimated 79,906 lives. The aim of this pamphlet is to alert you about the prevention and early detection of cervical cancer.

RISK FACTORS :

- Early onset of sexual activity
- Early age at marriage
- First pregnancy before 20 years of age
- Multiple pregnancies at short intervals. (This leads to repeated injury to the cervix, leaving it no time to heal.)
- Sexual promiscuity i.e. multiple male sexual partners or even a single male partner having sexual relations with multiple female partners.
- Poor genital hygiene.
- Genital tract infections especially HPV (human papilloma virus) infection.
- Tobacco addiction.

The tragedy is that most of these factors are preventable, but because of ignorance, unhygienic conditions and lack of awareness about personal health, cervical cancer still accounts for a large number of deaths.

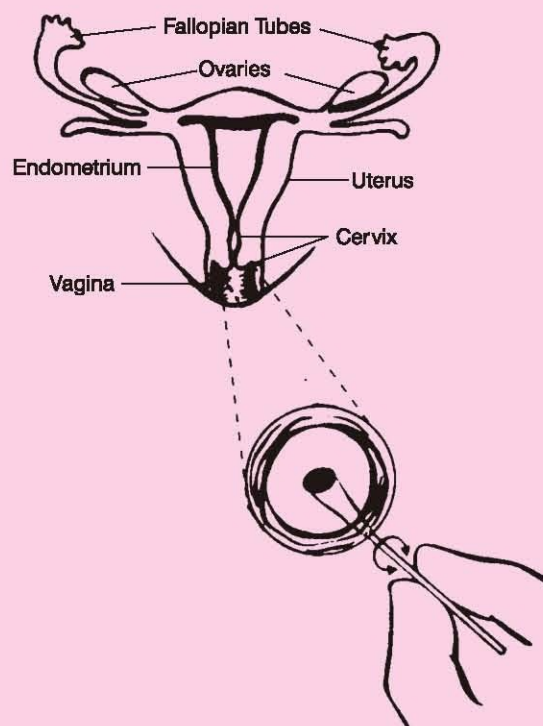
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS :

- Bleeding between menstrual periods
- Bleeding after sexual intercourse
- Bleeding anytime after menopause
- Irregular heavy menstrual periods
- Unusual blood stained vaginal discharge
- Unexplained weakness / tiredness / weight loss

However, one should remember that simple tests can detect early pre-cancerous cervical changes (Dysplasias) much before these signs and symptoms occur.

THE PAP SMEAR

The test is simple and painless. Using a cotton swab or a brush, cells from the cervix are collected and spread over a glass slide and examined under a microscope.



PREVENT CERVICAL CANCER BY :

- Getting a regular Pap test done if you are above the age of 30 and have/had sexual activity.
- Delaying the age of marriage, so that the age at first sexual intercourse also gets delayed.
- Postponing the birth of the first child to after 20 years using contraceptives.
- Avoiding multiple and rapid pregnancies through family planning.
- Modifying life-style like discouraging sexual intercourse at an early age, avoiding intercourse with multiple partners, stopping tobacco use.
- Using barrier contraceptives (e.g. condoms) to prevent sexually transmitted infections. This would also help to space births.
- Maintaining good genital hygiene at all times, particularly while bathing and especially during your menstrual period. Your partner's genital hygiene is also important.
- Seeking medical help from either your gynaecologist or family doctor, if you have any of the above signs and symptoms at the earliest.



"WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WOMEN'S CANCERS"

The Department of Preventive Oncology, Tata Memorial Hospital provides this information in an endeavour to spread awareness on Women's cancers. Once you have got enlightened, be sure to spread the message on to others!

Awareness leading to early detection and treatment would greatly reduce the pain, suffering and death caused by these cancers.

This initiative has been launched in October, because the month of October is designated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the symbol being a pink ribbon.



Centre for Cancer Epidemiology
Tata Memorial Centre

Preventive Oncology Clinic
Room No. 303, 3rd Floor
Shanti Sadan, ACTREC
Sector - 22, Kharghar,
Navi Mumbai - 410210

**Cancer is curable
if detected early**

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BREAST CANCER!

Today, with rapid urbanization breast cancer affects almost 1,92,020 women each year in India leading to 98,337 deaths. The purpose of this pamphlet is to promote awareness on breast cancer, encourage early detection and prompt treatment.

RISK FACTORS :

These make a woman more prone to get breast cancer. We really can't prevent breast cancer, but what we can do is, detect it early. Early detection saves lives and lowers treatment costs.

- Increasing age
- A family history of breast cancer, especially if a first degree relative (mother, sister, aunt) had/has breast cancer.
- A past history of breast cancer in the other breast or Fibrocystic breast disease (an exaggerated lumpy, painful condition related to the menstrual cycle.)
- Early age of menarche (first period)
- First pregnancy after 30 years
- Having no children
- Women who have not breast fed their children
- Late menopause (cessation of periods)
- Dietary factors like consumption of alcohol >3 drinks/week, diet rich in animal fat and obesity
- Hormonal treatment

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- A lump or a thickening within the breast or armpit
- A discharge from the nipple
- A discolouration or change in the texture of the skin overlying the breast (dimpling / puckering / scaling)
- A recent change in the nipple direction - retraction (inward turning)

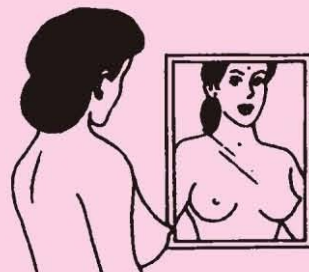
WAYS TO DETECT BREAST CANCER :

As more breast cancers are detected early, far fewer women will lose their lives and it is possible to treat breast cancer in the early stages with preservation of the breast. Fortunately there are ways by which you can detect the early onset of breast cancer.

a) **Breast Self Examination (BSE)** This is a simple technique by which every woman above 18-20 years can notice certain changes in her breast which may be suggestive of breast cancer. Ideally it should be performed once a month, (preferably a week or so after her periods). If she has stopped getting periods, the examination must be done every month on a fixed day. It should be done in the privacy of her bedroom or whilst bathing when the soapy feel of the body makes it convenient for examination. What follows are instructions and illustrations to help you learn to do a BSE.

HOW TO DO BSE

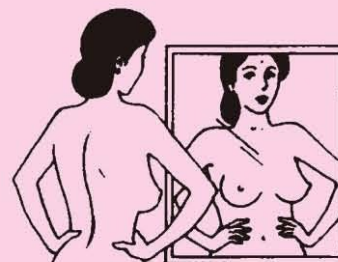
- Look at your breasts in a mirror. Look for any changes in size or shape, retraction of nipple, dimpling or thickening of skin or any obvious lump.



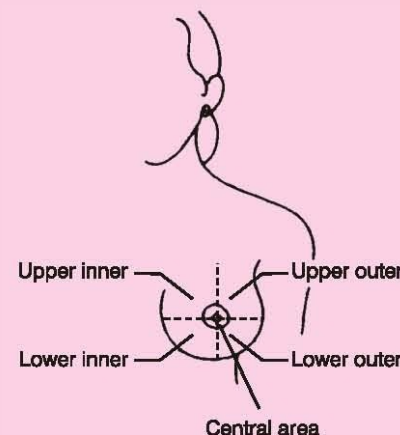
- Raising both your arms, look for any unevenness in your breasts.



- Keep your hands around your waist and press them firmly. These positions may help in showing any retraction or dimpling present over the skin of the breast.



- Feel the whole breast in a systematic manner. The breast is divided into 5 parts. The upper inner area, upper outer area, lower inner area, lower outer area and the central area beneath the nipple. Feel all the parts of the breast without missing any area.



- Lie down with one of your arms stretched. Keeping your fingers close to each other, use the flat surface of the fingers to feel for any lumps in the breast. Do not feel the breast between the finger tips and the thumb. Press firmly enough to know how your breast feels. A firm ridge at your lower curve of each breast is normal.



If you happen to find a lump or any other problem with your breasts, get it checked either with your gynaecologist or family doctor. Please feel free to contact us in case of any doubt at the address mentioned on this pamphlet

"DON'T FORGET TO DO YOUR MONTHLY BSE, SPENDING 5 MINUTES A MONTH CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE"

b) **A clinical breast examination by the doctor :** as part of your routine physical check-up with your gynaecologist, make sure your doctor examines your breasts at least once a year if you fall within one of the above risk groups.

c) **A mammogram :** This is essentially an x-ray of the breast. It is used only for women who fall in the high-risk group and is therefore not advocated for routine use.

d) If a lump is present, a biopsy may be required.