



What you can do to lower your risk of breast cancer or catch it early

Frequently asked questions from the experts at Owensboro Health Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center.

• At what age should a woman be seeking regular breast cancer screenings? Women of average risk for breast cancer may begin screening at age 40 with an annual mammogram.

• Does age play a part in a woman's likelihood of developing breast cancer? Yes. Most breast cancers are found in women age 55 and older.

• How often should mammograms or screenings be performed? Women with average risk for breast cancer

should receive mammogram screening annually. Women should discuss their risk for breast cancer with their health care provider. If they are at high risk due to family history or genetic mutations, they may have other screenings in addition to mammogram, such as breast MRI.

• What are some signs that women can watch for to indicate they may need to see a doctor? Women should be familiar with their breast tissue so that they can report any changes to their doctor. Report any new lump or mass, swelling of the breast, skin dimpling, breast pain, nipple retraction,

redness of the breast, nipple discharge, or swollen lymph nodes under the arm or near the collar bone.

• Are there risk factors associated with lifestyle (such as diet) or family history? Lifestyle related risks include alcohol consumption, being overweight or obese, and lack of adequate exercise. Other risk factors include, never having children, never breast-feeding, and use of some types of hormonal birth control.

Family history plays a role in a person's risk for breast cancer. Particularly, having a first degree relative (mother, sister, or daughter) almost doubles

a woman's risk. It is possible to inherit a gene mutation that may increase your risk as well.

• Are there precautions or steps that a healthy woman can take to reduce risk factors? Maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding alcohol and getting regular exercise (at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week) are all things women can do to help reduce their risk of breast cancer.

• What are the next steps after a diagnosis? After a breast cancer diagnosis has been confirmed, the patient will likely be seen by a team of specialists (breast surgeon, plastic surgeon, medical oncologist, radiation oncologist) to determine a treatment plan. This plan may include some of the following: further imaging, lab work, surgery, chemo-

therapy, endocrine therapy, immunotherapy, radiation therapy. Each individual case is different, based on details regarding each patient's particular diagnosis.

• How does an oncologist determine the right treatment option for a patient? The oncologist will determine and arrange any further testing that may be needed after a diagnosis. They work closely with other disciplines such as surgery, radiology, pathology, and radiation oncology to determine the best treatment plan for a patient. The stage of a patient's cancer, along with pathology, genetic testing, patients age, and past medical history, among other factors will help determine a patient's treatment recommendation.

• What are the possible side effects of treatment? Side effects will vary from person to person and are based on which particular type of cancer treatment(s) a patient receives.

• What are the follow up steps after treatment? After breast cancer treatment, the patient will be followed closely by the oncology treatment team. This will include a physical exam 1-4 times as needed for the next 5 years and a mammogram every 12 months. Other imaging or lab work may be checked periodically as well based on patient's particular case.

Learn more about the high-quality cancer care we offer close to home at OwensboroHealth.org/Cancer.

Reclaiming Your Body with Therapeutic Nutrition



Recent analysis from the American Institute of Cancer Research shows that diet plays a significant role in the survival of breast cancer patients. The holistic approach to therapeutic nutrition empowers you with the tools to build back a healthy body post cancer treatment. We focus on digestion, mineral balance and immune health.

Helping you on your journey to recovery by supporting you with dietary plans providing the nutrients you need to bounce back and not just survive, but THRIVE!

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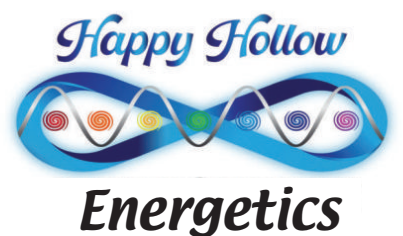
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Breast Cancer Has a Profound Effect on Mental Health

The effects of breast cancer go beyond the toll it takes on your body. A breast cancer diagnosis and treatment can produce feelings of depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Since the focus is on the physical body, a lot of the mental symptoms go unchecked or unnoticed. Stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness often affect those fighting and their loved ones. A cancer diagnosis can completely upend one's life and the lives of those around them.

According to Psychology Today, seek professional mental health help if you or a loved one is experiencing the following: Feelings of existential dread, anxiety, sadness, or depression.

- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness.
- Inability to enjoy activities you used to love.
- Changes in sleep or appetite.
- Suicidal thoughts.
- Panic attacks or anxiety attacks.
- Denial of diagnosis.
- Refusal of medical treatment.

Practice Self Care

One of the best things you can do when fighting breast cancer is practice self-care.

Some activities for cancer patients or survivors include:

Meditation.

Meditating can help soothe your senses and bring you clarity.

Aromatherapy.

Aromatherapy provides many therapeutic benefits.

Arts and crafts.

Crocheting, knitting, drawing, and painting are wonderful forms of escapism and activity that can provide therapeutic emotional and mental benefits.

Reading.

Reading is one of the best ways to get lost in another world while exercising our brain.

Taking a bath.

Grab your favorite bath bomb, some candles, and your favorite album and indulge in a cozy atmosphere that can relax all your senses.

Get a massage.

Massages are incredibly therapeutic. They can provide the much-needed

physical release that your body is craving.

Focus on adequate sleep.

Sleep is how we recharge and reset. Without proper sleep, our bodies can't function optimally, and our immune systems run on empty. Adequate sleep is vital for our health.

Dancing.

Sometimes, it only takes your favorite songs and an empty room to boost serotonin and dopamine. Listening to music and dancing provides numerous benefits.

Spend Time with Loved Ones

Sometimes, time with loved ones can cure all. Whether it's friends or family, talking to or spending time with a loved one can provide a healthy distraction.

Therapy is Your Friend

Local Therapy Places In Our Area Include:

*River Valley Behavioral Health (270-691-0786) or (270-689-6879)

*Owensboro Behavioral Health (270-417-7980)

*Anyone on your medical care team, including your primary care doctor a trusted family member or friend.

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