



*Being informed
is half the battle
won*

Breast Cancer

Warning signs

- A change in the shape or size of the breast
- Dimpling, puckering (orange peel)
- A lump or thickening in the breast or under the arm
- Nipple retraction
- Unexpected, abnormal nipple discharge
- A change in the colour or feel of the skin of the breast or around the nipple
- Swelling, redness or a feeling of "heat" in the breast

Risk factors

- A woman's risk of breast cancer is higher if her mother, sister or daughter had breast cancer
- Majority occur after the age of 50
- First period before the age of 12
- Tobacco use, obesity and possibly high fat diet, physical inactivity, alcohol (greater risk if two to five drinks are consumed per day)
- Long-term, post-menopausal use of combined oestrogen and progesterone hormone replacement therapy
- Not having children or having the first child after the age of 30 and not breastfeeding

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. ER24 is urging women to go for regular screening and to conduct self examinations.

Diagnosis includes clinical examination by a medical doctor, an ultrasound in women under 30, a mammogram, fine needle biopsy or surgical biopsy. Most breast lumps are non-cancerous and not life-threatening however, some can increase the risk of breast cancer. Early detection is key to enabling effective treatment and a better chance of recovering from cancer.



"The incidence of breast cancer among South African women is increasing with women having a one in 29 lifetime risk of being diagnosed," - Elize Joubert, CANSA CEO



Women must do a breast self examination once a month (seven to 10 days after menses and on the same day each month). Abnormalities are easier to detect once a person is familiar with what their breasts normally feel like. Most lumps are found through self examination. You must consult a doctor as soon as possible if abnormalities are found. Women can contact a local CANSA Care Centre to arrange for a clinical breast examination or if they have been diagnosed with breast cancer so that staff can help guide them through the public healthcare system and offer them and their loved one's care and support.