

Step 4

Use your right hand to feel your left breast and keeping the finger pads flat and together, make small circular movements over the entire breast. Following a pattern to ensure sure you cover the whole breast area.

Repeat the process using your left hand to examine your right breast.

Step 5

Many woman find that the easiest way to feel their breasts is when their skin is wet and slippery, so they do their breast checks in the bath or shower.

Cover the entire breast using the same hand movements in Step 4.

If you have any concerns about anything you've read in this leaflet or regarding your health in general you can access our Private GP service, with appointments available within 24 hours. Call us to find out more.

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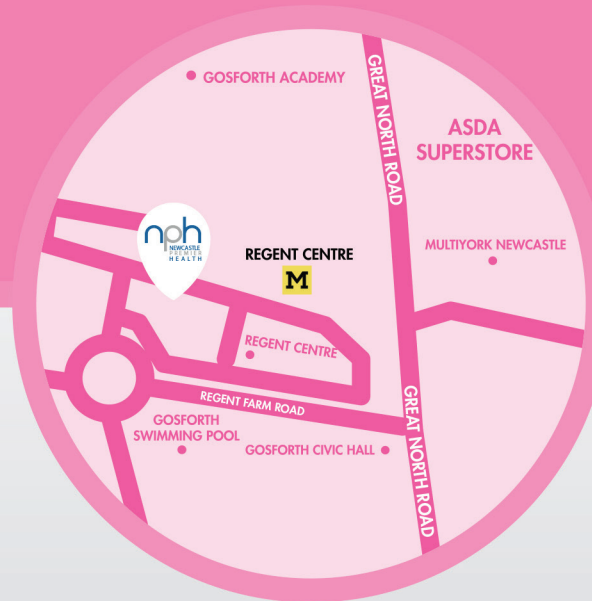
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Breast Cancer

Breast cancer starts when cells in the breast begin to grow in an uncontrolled way. These cells often build to form a lump (tumour). The cancer cells can sometimes spread throughout the body.

If the cancer is not removed or controlled, the abnormal cells can spread and eventually cause death. However, 90% of breast lumps are benign, which means they are non cancerous and usually harmless.

What causes Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a very complex disease thought to be caused by interactions between genes, environment and lifestyle. Although there have been great advances in our knowledge, it is not fully understood what causes the disease or how it could be prevented.

Breast Cancer Survival Rates

Survival rates from breast cancer in the UK have improved significantly over the last 20 years. The chances of survival following a diagnosis of breast cancer depend very much on the circumstances of the cancer diagnosed in the individual person.

A very broad statistic in the UK is that now we would expect 85 out of 100 women to be alive 5 years after a diagnosis of breast cancer.

Breast Cancer the UK facts

- Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers and accounts for nearly one third of all cancers in women.
- 1 in 8 women in the UK develop breast cancer during their lifetime.
- Every year 55,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Currently more than half a million people in the UK are living with and beyond breast cancer.
- Men can also suffer from breast cancer. Although rare, almost 400 men are diagnosed every year. Around 90 men each year die of breast cancer. They too, need to be aware of the importance of self examination.

Known Risk Factors



Age

Like many cancers, the incidence of breast cancer increases with age. Around 80% of breast cancer is diagnosed in women over the age of 50 years.



Family History

Having a mother, sister or daughter diagnosed with breast cancer approximately doubles the risk of breast cancer. But more than 8 out of 10 women who have a close relative with breast cancer will never develop it.

There are many other known risk factors and this leaflet cannot highlight them all. Other risk factors include having had other cancer diagnoses, use of hormonal drugs such as HRT and being of certain ethnic groups.

What you can do about it



Lifestyle

Some risk factors are not modifiable. However, some lifestyle changes may help you reduce your personal risk of breast cancer.



Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol consumption. Excess alcohol consumption has been shown to increase breast cancer risk. Women are advised to drink no more than 14 UK units of alcohol per week.



Stop Smoking

It goes without saying that you should not smoke. In addition to all of the other health problems smoking causes, it increases breast cancer risk.



Body Weight

The relationship with weight is a complex one. However, maintenance of a normal body weight, particularly after the menopause may be associated with a lower incidence of breast cancer.

Be breast aware, see later in this leaflet. If in any doubt, see your doctor at the earliest opportunity. When you become eligible and receive a letter it is vital you attend the NHS breast screening programme. This is usually between the ages of 50 and 70. However, in some areas it may be that you get a letter prior to the age of 50.

How to check yourself for Breast Cancer

Step 1

Begin by looking at your breasts in the mirror with your shoulders straight and arms on your hips.

Here's what to look for:

- Breast that are their usual size, shape and colour
- Breasts that are evenly shaped without visible distortion or swelling

If you see any of the following changes, bring them to your doctor's attention;

- Dimpling, puckering, or the 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

Step 2

Now, raise your arms and look for the same changes.

Step 2

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

