

Health *capsule*

Breast Cancer; Myths & Facts

1. Breast cancer is the most frequently found type of cancer among women.

TRUE

Among women, breast cancer has the highest incidence of all cancer. It is estimated that 1 in 9 women * will develop breast cancer by the age 85. However 1 in 27 women will die from breast cancer.

*The widely quoted 1 in 9 figure applies to a woman closer to the end of her lifetime. A 20-year-old has a 1 in 2500 chance of developing breast cancer in the next ten years while a 30-year-old's probability is 1 in 250 in the next decade. At age 40, it's 1 in 77. From 50-60, it's 1 in 42 and from 60-70, it's 1 in 32. The 1 in 9 risk is a cumulative lifetime risk of developing breast cancer if you live to at least 85 years of age.

Source: Canadian Cancer statistics 2006, Table 12, page 55.
www.rubanrose.org

2. Men can develop breast cancer.

TRUE

Men have breast tissue just like women, and can develop breast cancer. In Canada, less than 1% of all breast cancers occur in men. Breast cancer is most commonly diagnosed in men over 60, but can be found in men of all ages. Breast health starts with knowing your breasts so that you are more likely to notice changes that may lead to problems. The most frequently diagnosed kind of breast cancer in men is found in the breast ducts (ductal carcinoma). Common symptoms are:

- a small, painless lump close in the breast
- a small discharge from the nipple

Source: www.cancer.ca



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3. Excessive use of alcohol has a connection with breast cancer.

TRUE

There is evidence to suggest that regular use of alcohol in excess of 2 drinks (over 30 grams) per day increases the risk of breast cancer substantially.

It is valid to ask why the same increase in breast cancer risk is not seen in men. Men do get breast cancer at a rate of 100 times less than women. A possible answer is the fact that increased alcohol intake causes an increase in estrogen concentrations, which is only found in women. There is considerable evidence linking high estrogen concentrations with breast cancer.

Source: International Journal of Epidemiology (1997, 26: 915-923)
www.rubanrose.org

4. Deodorants cause breast cancer.

FALSE

This is a myth that was spread anonymously on the Internet. There is no scientific evidence to support this claim. It is claimed that there are toxins in perspiration that are deposited in lymph nodes under the arm and if one does not perspire; these toxins can cause breast cancer. This is NOT TRUE. Toxins are metabolized in the liver and excreted through the kidneys. Men use more antiperspirants than women do. We would thus have expected an explosion in breast cancer in men after the advent of antiperspirants. This has not happened. The incidence of male breast cancer has remained stable over many years and at present compromises 1% of all diagnosed breast cancer cases.

Source: Journal of the National Cancer Institute, 94: 20:1578-1580, Oct.16, 2002
www.rubanrose.com

5. The birth control pill increases the risk for breast cancer.

FALSE

Studies involving large numbers of women who have been taking oral contraceptives for over 15 years have shown that they do not increase the risk of breast cancer. Other studies have shown that women using contraceptive pills have a reduced risk of developing uterine and ovarian cancer.

Source: New England Journal of Medicine, July 2002
www.rubanrose.org

Have a safe and happy Halloween!

Here are a few tips to help you prepare your child for a safe evening of trick or treating:

- Before going out for Halloween, serve your child a hearty meal to discourage him or her from eating candy while trick or treating.
- Use face paint instead of masks, which could obstruct your child's view.
- Avoid long and cumbersome costumes that may cause your child to trip.
- Attach emergency identification inside costumes (name and phone number).
- Dress your child in bright, non-flammable clothing and/or use reflective tape.

(Source: Canadian Dental Association Website)



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