

Annual "Girls Night Out" Promotes Breast Cancer Awareness

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ALTON – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year in the United States, an estimated 240,000 women get breast cancer and 42,000 women die from the disease. [Mammograms](#) are the best way to find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat and before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms.

Information, education, and mammography screenings will all be available for attendees at this year's annual "Girls Night Out" event at OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center on Thursday, October 26, 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. A limited number of mammography screenings are available during the event and appointments are necessary.

Individuals wanting to schedule a mammography screening during the “Girls Night Out” event need to call (618) 474-6791. All event mammography patients will receive a small gift. Insurance information and proper ID will also be needed for those conducting mammography screenings during the event.

Additionally, more than seven (7) local vendors will be on-hand to share information and resources related to breast cancer awareness – including:

- Faith’s Fabulous Blings (paparazzi jewelry/accessories)
- Styles N’ Files (color streak nails)
- Gwen’s Lemongrass Spa
- Rosa Renner’s Photography (photo booth)
- Scentsy by Gena Boner
- Roberta’s Lovely Lady (wig and bra shop)
- Madison County Health Department (financial and billing assistance information)

Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women.

Breast cancer is a disease in which cells in the breast grow out of control. There are different kinds of breast cancer. The kind of breast cancer depends on which cells in the breast turn into cancer.

Most breast cancers begin in the ducts or lobules. Breast cancer can spread outside the breast through blood vessels and lymph vessels. When breast cancer spreads to other parts of the body, it is said to have metastasized.

The most common kinds of breast cancer are:

- **Invasive ductal carcinoma.** The cancer cells begin in the ducts and then grow outside the ducts into other parts of the breast tissue. Invasive cancer cells can also spread, or metastasize, to other parts of the body.
- **Invasive lobular carcinoma.** Cancer cells begin in the lobules and then spread from the lobules to the breast tissues that are close by. These invasive cancer cells can also spread to other parts of the body.

There are several other less common kinds of breast cancer, such as Paget’s disease, medullary, mucinous, and inflammatory breast cancer.

Different people have different symptoms of breast cancer. Some people do not have any signs or symptoms at all.

Some warning signs of breast cancer are:

- New lump in the breast or underarm (armpit).
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast.
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin.
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast.
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area.
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood.
- Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.
- Pain in any area of the breast.

Keep in mind that these symptoms can happen with other conditions that are not cancer.

Studies have shown that your risk for breast cancer is due to a combination of factors. The main factors that influence your risk include being a woman and getting older. Most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 years old or older.

Some women will get breast cancer even without any other risk factors that they know of. Having a risk factor does not mean you will get the disease, and not all risk factors have the same effect. Most women have some risk factors, but most women do not get breast cancer.

What are some risk factors you cannot change?

- **Getting older.** The risk for breast cancer increases with age. Most breast cancers are diagnosed after age 50.
- **Genetic mutations.** Women who have inherited changes (mutations) to certain genes, such as [BRCA1 and BRCA2](#), are at higher risk of breast and ovarian cancer.
- **Reproductive history.** Starting menstrual periods before age 12 and starting menopause after age 55 expose women to hormones longer, raising their risk of getting breast cancer.
- **Having dense breasts.** [Dense breasts](#) have more connective tissue than fatty tissue, which can sometimes make it hard to see tumors on a mammogram. Women with dense breasts are more likely to get breast cancer.
- **Personal history of breast cancer or certain non-cancerous breast diseases.** Women who have had breast cancer are more likely to get breast cancer a second time. Some non-cancerous breast diseases such as atypical ductal hyperplasia or lobular carcinoma *in situ* are associated with a higher risk of getting breast cancer.
- **Family history of breast or ovarian cancer.** A woman's risk for breast cancer is higher if she has a mother, sister, or daughter (first-degree relative) or multiple

family members on either her mother's or father's side of the family who have had breast or ovarian cancer. Having a first-degree male relative with breast cancer also raises a woman's risk.

- **Previous treatment using radiation therapy.** Women who had [radiation therapy](#) to the chest or breasts (for instance, treatment of Hodgkin's lymphoma) before age 30 have a higher risk of getting breast cancer later in life.
- **Exposure to the drug [diethylstilbestrol \(DES\)](#).** DES was given to some pregnant women in the United States between 1940 and 1971 to prevent miscarriage. Women who took DES have a higher risk of getting breast cancer. Women whose mothers took DES while pregnant with them also may have a higher risk of getting breast cancer.

So what are some risk factors you can change?

Being physically active can help lower your risk of getting breast cancer. Other topics worth paying attention to include:

- **Not being physically active.** Women who are not physically active have a higher risk of getting breast cancer.
- **Being overweight or having obesity after menopause.** Older women who are overweight or have [obesity](#) have a higher risk of getting breast cancer than those at a healthy weight.
- **Taking hormones.** Some forms of hormone replacement therapy (those that include both estrogen and progesterone) taken during menopause can raise risk for breast cancer when taken for more than five years. Certain oral contraceptives (birth control pills) also have been found to raise breast cancer risk.
- **Reproductive history.** Having the first pregnancy after age 30, not breastfeeding, and never having a full-term pregnancy can raise breast cancer risk.
- **Drinking alcohol.** Studies show that a woman's risk for breast cancer increases with the more [alcohol](#) she drinks.

Research suggests that other factors such as smoking, being exposed to chemicals that can cause cancer, and changes in other hormones due to night shift working also may increase breast cancer risk.

If you have a strong [family history of breast cancer](#) or [inherited changes in your BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes](#), you may have a high risk of getting breast cancer. You may also have a high risk for [ovarian cancer](#).

And as with any health concerns that you may have, always consult with your primary care provider to know what your best course of action might be.

Learn more about women's health care services at OSF Saint Anthony's by visiting www.osfsaintanthonys.org.