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Proactive Self Care for Breast Health

Nobody understands exactly what causes breast cancer. With a basic understanding of the breast, you will see that self-care can make a difference in the health of your breast tissues. The following is the complete content of the on-line brochure, *Personal Care: Self Care For Your Breasts*.

While one in eight women will find themselves in the grasp of breast cancer during their lifetime, you don't necessarily have to be one of them. The information provided in this brochure will give you some insight into how your breasts work and what you can do to keep them functioning properly.

The goal of this brochure is to help in the prevention of breast cancer. It doesn't make sense to leave your health to chance. Even the Self-Breast Exam is designed to help you after you get a tumor or breast cancer. This is not to say that you shouldn't regularly check yourself for lumps. Early detection does greatly increase your odds of surviving cancer. However, waiting for cancer rather than actively participating in its avoidance can be detrimental to your health.

Your breasts are essentially structures made up of fat and gland, mounted to the female's chest wall with a delicate system of ligaments. The circulation in the breast is much the same as the rest of the body consisting of arteries, veins, and lymphatic vessels. In short, the arteries bring fresh blood to the cells carrying along with it the nutrition that the breast and its tissues need for proper health. The veins bring the blood back from the cells along with cellular waste and toxins. The lymphatics are designed to return the toxin and other waste materials that lie in the intracellular fluids, or between the cells.

Toxins are believed by many to be the local beginnings of cancerous tissue. It is imperative that these toxins be continually removed through the body's veins and lymphatic vessels. When these toxins are unable to exit the body properly, the possibility of cancer increases.

A recent study* of 4,700 women found that women who wore brassieres had an increased chance of acquiring breast cancer. It is very possible that the constant pressure that the bra puts on the breast is limiting the flow of toxins that need to be released, resulting in the increases cancer rate. Any more than a gentle amount of pressure can flatten the lymphatic vessel and stop the toxic flow from the breast.

The study found the highest rate of breast cancer in those who wore bras 24 hours a day, and the lowest rate in those who never wore bras. The study suggested that women should wear their bra less than 12 hours a day.

*Singer, Sydney Ross. Dressed to Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras, Garden City Park, NY: Avery Pub. Group, 1995

Self Care

Now that you have a better understanding of your breasts, it is important that you apply this knowledge to your health. The four-step procedure shown on this page will give you a simple massage technique that can be done, by yourself, in the privacy of your own home. Although almost any gentle massage technique will benefit, these four techniques should be a part of your personal regimen.

The purpose of these techniques is to flush fluids from the breast, (both venous and intercellular), bring nutrition to the tissues and specifically remove toxins via the lymphatic system. Also, these techniques will enhance the health and elasticity of the support ligaments, which will in turn provide you with better breast support.

More specifically, steps number One and Two are to assist in the movement of venous fluids. Feel free to experiment with these two movements and find what is comfortable for you. Step Three is simply to help keep your support ligaments in good health and assist in the fight against gravity. Step Four is gentle draining motion designed to drain the breast lymphatic system and is possibly the most important of the four steps.

This procedure should be done at least twice a week. It can be done on bare skin, but you may find that using some oil may be more comfortable.



Step One: Use your fingers to gently smooth away from the nipple. These movements travel from the nipple and directly away using no more pressure than what you would apply to your eyelid. Any more pressure would flatten the lymphatic vessel and stop the flow of toxins and fluids.

Step Two: Gently massage the breast with a kneading-like motion, using lifting and pressing movements.

Step Three: Slowly and carefully use your hands to twist the breast in a clockwise and counter clockwise direction, being careful not to put too much tension on the breast.

Step Four: Use both hands as shown to apply several, moderate pressure, compressions to move out venous fluids.