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Health & Wellness

Resources & Lifestyle Tips

Be the change you want to see in the world

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This time of year, as we prepare for holiday celebrations and family gatherings, we often look forward to seeing our favorite relatives. Unfortunately, there's a good chance that at least one cousin, aunt or mother won't be joining us this year due to breast cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, one in eight women will develop breast cancer. A woman in 21st century America has a greater chance of dying from breast cancer than contracting Polio, a crippling and often deadly disease that existed for thousands of years and was one of the most dreaded even in the 20th century. (source: Post-Polio Health International.) Yet, it is my role as a breast surgeon that affords me the opportunity to change that sobering statistic. By advocating advancements in women's wellness, I ultimately endorse the health and healing not only of my patients, but entire families, as well. I consider it an honor to provide the uncompromising quality care that breast surgeons before me have so diligently done.

Although part of my job involves surgery in some cases, I am passionate about the prevention of breast cancer. As a Fellow of the Susan G. Komen Foundation For the Cure™, I conduct community outreach, to educate and empower adolescents and adult women to become advocates for their own health. One of the basic principles I advocate is Whole Body Awareness, equipping a woman to become familiar with her breasts so that she can notify her doctor of any changes. I also integrate this philosophy into my private practice. With each of my patients, even one seeking a routine breast exam, I describe normal breast anatomy, so she can better understand any abnormalities. Patients can view a computer monitor at my desk to see their mammogram and ultrasound images, as I explain what is happening in their bodies, as evidenced by test results. During these visits, I update each patient on the latest research findings and technology, and replace prevalent myths with evidence-based facts.

What makes the breast surgical oncologist such a key component

Healthy Living Tip

Here are some things you can do to reduce your risk of developing breast cancer:

At Home: Diet: Eat five or more servings of fresh veggies and fruits every day. Limit red meats to 1-2 servings a week. Choose food low in processed grains and sugars. Curb alcohol consumption to no more than 3 drinks per week.

Exercise: Regular exercise reduces breast cancer risk by 10-25%. Get 45 min. of moderate exercise each day; you can even break it up in 10-minute spurts

Breast Self-Exam: Age 20+ as frequently as you'd like; consult your healthcare professional for more info

At Your Doctor's Office: Get a Mammogram at age 40+ every year.

Clinical Breast Exam: Age 20-39 at least every 3 years, 40+ every year

in addressing America's health care problems? The overwhelming proportions of patients treated by a breast surgeon are female. When these women remain in good health, their families benefit from it. For example, a healthy woman will make sure that her husband gets his prostate cancer, heart disease and diabetes screenings each year, that her daughter receives the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine, and that her son engages in daily exercise. She will promote a low-fat, high-fiber diet for her family and her aging parents. She will also encourage her sister to get her first screening mammogram and her brother to have a testicular mass immediately evaluated. A healthy woman translates into a healthy family. The breast surgeon is a tireless teacher, compassionate counselor, ambitious advocate and a passionate promoter of the health and healing of not only their patients but the entire families. Empowering one person at a time, one family at a time, one community at a time, the breast surgeon carries out Ghandi's ultimatum to "Be the change you want to see in the world." Perhaps one day soon, breast cancer, like Polio, will be a thing of the past, and more of our matriarchs will be present at holiday festivities.