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Public Health
Prevent · Promote · Protect

Press Release

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and the Logan County Department of Public Health (LCDPH) encourages all women to take proper steps to take control of their health. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), one out of every eight American women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime and more than 40,000 women in the United States will die this year from the disease. In Illinois alone, over 2,000 women will die each year of breast cancer.

All women are at risk, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. More African-American women die from breast cancer than any other race and minority women tend to be diagnosed at a more advanced stage. There is no way to prevent breast cancer; however, early detection of breast cancer is the key to saving lives. The five-year survival rate is 96% for women who are detected and treated at an early stage. Sadly, only about 9% of breast cancers in Illinois are detected at the earliest and most curable stage. The Illinois Department of Public Health states that early detection depends on women following these guidelines:

- Starting at age 20, women should practice monthly breast self-examinations.

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- At least once a year, woman should have a clinical breast examination done by a health professional.
- Every year, women 40 years of age and older should have a screening mammogram.
- If a breast change occurs such as development of a lump or swelling, skin irritation or dimpling, pain or changes to the nipple, redness or scaliness of the nipple or breast skin, or discharge other than breast milk, a health care provider should be contacted as soon as possible.

Most of the time, breast changes are not cancer, but an experienced health care professional can examine the breast and determine whether additional tests are needed to rule out cancer.

The main risk factor for developing breast cancer is simply being a woman. Women who menstruate at an early age, had their first child late in life or had no children, or have experienced menopause at a late age seem to have an increased risk of developing breast cancer. The risk of developing breast cancer rises as a woman ages. Women, age 65 and older, are twice as likely to develop breast cancer than women between the ages of 40 and 64. Although the risk of developing breast cancer is greater if a woman's mother, grandmother, or sister has had breast cancer, most women who are diagnosed have no family history. In fact, 80% of women with breast cancer have no family history of the disease.

All women are at risk of developing breast cancer and early detection is the key. Mammography, clinical breast examinations and breast self-examinations offer the best

opportunity for breast cancer to be detected at an early stage for life-saving treatment to be more effective. LCDPH urges women to play it safe by following the precautionary measures to reduce breast cancer. For more information, contact LCDPH at 217-735-2317 and, for information regarding services, visit their website at WWW.LCDPH.ORG.

Information Source: IDPH

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