

Public Health, Epidemiology and Prevention

PEP Talk

Pinellas County Health Department • October 2008

Prevention and Early Detection Save Lives

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

More than 200,000 cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed this year in the U.S. The sooner breast cancer is found, the less likely a woman will need uncomfortable surgery and treatments, and the more likely she will survive.



A mammogram is the best method of early detection. Women over age 40 should get an annual mammogram. You should go for a check-up with a health professional every year.

You can take charge of your breast health by performing a breast self-exam every month. You should also understand your personal risks of breast cancer – and report any breast changes to your health provider.

Special populations at risk for breast cancer include minority and older women. African-American women have a higher breast cancer death rate than women of any other racial or ethnic population.

Many women older than age 60 feel that screening for breast cancer isn't necessary. On the contrary, women over 60 are more at risk, not less, for breast cancer.

Regular breast self-exams, combined with an annual exam by a doctor, improves the chances of finding cancer early.

Breast Self Exam (BSE)

Examining your breasts every month is an important way to find a breast cancer early, when it's most likely to be cured. Not all cancer can be found this way, but it is an important step you can, and should, take for yourself.

The more you examine your breasts, the more you will learn about them and the easier it will become for you to tell if something unusual has happened. BSE is an



important part of taking care of yourself and reducing your risk of breast cancer.

Get in the habit of doing a BSE once a month (put a note on your calendar to help remember). Examine yourself several days after your period ends, when your breasts are least likely to be swollen and tender. If you are no longer having periods, pick a day that's easy to remember, such as the first or last day of the month.

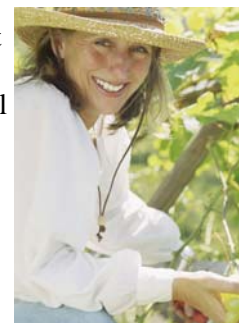


Don't panic if you think you feel a lump. Most women have some lumpy areas in their breasts all the time. Eight out of ten breast lumps that are removed are benign – non-cancerous.

The upper, outer area of your breasts – near your armpit – tends to have the most noticeable lumps. The lower half of your breasts can feel like a sandy or pebbly beach.

The area under the nipple can feel like a collection of large grains. Another part might feel like a lumpy bowl of oatmeal.

What's important is that you get to know the look and feel of your breasts. Has anything changed? Tell your doctor about any changes in your breasts that last over a full month's cycle, or that seem to get worse or more obvious over time.



For more information, contact the Pinellas County Health Department health center nearest you or visit www.breastcancer.org www.komen.org Or www.cancer.org

October is Child Health Month

One in six U.S. children between age two and 19 is overweight, a risk factor for significant health consequences, including asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

You can help solve this serious – and growing – health problem. **October 6 is Child Health Day**, a time to remember to help children eat healthy and be active for a healthy future!

October is Child Health Month, and the Pinellas County Health Department joins the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in challenging parents, caregivers, teachers, school nurses and all adults who care about kids to grapple with an important health issue: childhood overweight and obesity.



Childhood obesity is an increasingly critical health concern for children and adolescents. In less than 30 years, obesity has more than doubled among children ages two to five and has more than tripled among youth ages six to 11 and adolescents ages 12 to 19.

In Florida, about ten percent of high school students are not active. Florida teens have higher rates of inactivity than teens in the rest of the nation. Florida also ranks as the 16th heaviest state in the U.S.

Children who do not get enough physical activity have an greater risk of developing health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease as they grow into adults.

Parents and caregivers can play a vital role by teaching and modeling proper nutrition and physical activity. Good nutrition is not just beneficial for children's



health, it can also improve students' ability to concentrate which will contribute to success in the classroom.

Health consequences can be severe. Overweight kids are at risk for many chronic conditions.



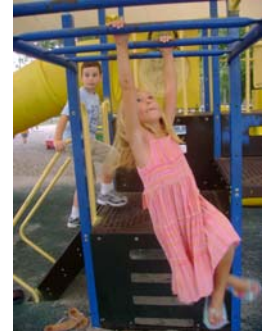
The good news is that many times overweight and obesity can be reversed or prevented by helping children and adolescents:

★ Develop healthy eating habits

- ★ Stay active
- ★ Make healthy choices

Want to help? Be a role model. When children see their parents, caregivers and other adults enjoying healthy foods and being physically active, they are more likely to do the same.

Better yet, get involved with your kids! Jump rope, go jogging - just act silly - you'll be surprised how much you benefit, too!



To find out more about **Child Health Day**, visit <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/childhealthday/>

To find out more about **healthy foods and physical activity**, visit

<http://www.pinellaswellness.com/>



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