

OCTOBER Health Topic

Breast Cancer



Breast Cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in American women. It is caused by abnormal cell growth in the breast tissue, usually beginning in the milk-producing ducts. The abnormal growth may spread (metastasize) through your breast to your lymph nodes, or other parts of your body.

The most common symptom of breast cancer in both men and women is a lump in the breast, which is usually painless. Most breast lumps are non-cancerous, but it is still important to have any lumps evaluated by a physician. Other symptoms of breast cancer include clear or bloody discharge from the nipple, change in breast size or shape, retraction or indentation of the nipple and skin around the breast. Treatment for breast cancer often involves surgery, radiation therapy, and/or chemotherapy. A variety of surgical techniques are available depending on the size of the lump or tumor.

Resources at Northwestern for Breast Cancer

The Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation in partnership with Northwestern Memorial Hospital and the Robert H Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center has established the Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Program to provide women with access to the latest advances and technology in breast cancer treatment. The center offers clinical, diagnostic, rehabilitation and counseling services at a single location.

Northwestern Memorial Hospital also offers breast reconstruction surgery for patients who have undergone lumpectomy or mastectomy or who have other cancer-related deformities. Dr. Neil Fine, a plastic surgeon at NMH has developed an innovative technique as an alternative to total mastectomy. The technique involves repositioning portions of the latissimus dorsi

into the breast where a tumor has been removed. Only a handful of other hospitals across the country are offering this procedure.

- <http://www.nmh.org/nmh/home.htm>
- <http://www.nmh.org/nmh/prentice/plasticsurgery/reconstructsurgery.htm>

Northwestern Physicians/ Researchers specializing in Breast Cancer Treatment

The SPORE (Specialized Programs of Research Excellence) in Breast Cancer is a program at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center dedicated to breast cancer research. Co-Directed by Drs. Seema Kahn, MD and William Gradishar, the program has four ongoing projects, which will benefit current and future breast cancer patients. The projects are committed to research and developments in four areas: improved genetic screening, more accurate prognosis and prediction of response to chemotherapy, more effective therapy for patients with Her2-positive metastatic disease, and mitigation of a common side effect of taxane-based chemotherapy. Click to see physician profiles and clinic information:

- <http://www.nmff.org/findPhysician/physearch.asp>
- <http://www.nmff.org/ClinicalMedical/department.asp?id=36>

IWHR Highlighted Researcher

Dr. Jacqueline Jeruss, MD, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Surgery at Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine. As both a breast surgeon and laboratory based investigator, Dr. Jeruss is committed to the advancement of breast cancer research and treatment. Her lab at Northwestern is working on several projects related to breast cancer encompassing diagnosis, treatment, and cause of the disease. One project is looking to restore

regulatory control of tumor suppressors in the breast tissue, whose ability may be impacted by cancer-induced overexpression of a class of proteins called cyclins. Another project is looking to develop a technique for molecular diagnosis of breast cancer, which may provide greater insight into disease outcomes and response to therapy. Dr. Jeruss's lab is also researching the potential effects of infertility treatment on the development or progression of breast cancer.

Useful Links and Resources:

- <http://www.ovarian.org/Default.aspx>
- <http://www.ovarian.org/Divisions/Division.aspx?CName=ILNV&CPID=1>
- <http://www.ovariancancer.org/>
- <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/ovarian>
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ovariancancer.html>

Upcoming Conferences/Symposiums/Events:

- Susan G. Komen and Wacoal Fit for the Cure at Macy's East – State Street, Chicago IL, October 23rd, 2008
- <http://cms.komen.org/Komen/NewsEvents/FindAnEvent/index.htm>

2008 Symposium on Women and Cognitive Health at Northwestern, October 24th, 2008

- <http://www.scs.northwestern.edu/pdp/npdp/women-cognitive-health/>

Federal, state, and local organizations identify a number of health issues each month to bring to national attention. The Institute will focus on one of these topics each month.

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