

HDHeartbeat

A Health Designs Newsletter



Early Detection Saves Lives: What You Need to Know About Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women in the United States. In fact, it is estimated that 1 in 8 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Breast cancer occurs when there is a gene mutation, causing new cells to grow rapidly, leading to changes in the breast tissue. These signs and symptoms include:

- New lump/skin thickening in or near the breast or armpit
- A change in size or shape of the breast
- A dimple or puckering in the skin of the breast (like the skin of an orange)

- Pain in any area of the breast
 - A nipple turned inward into the breast
 - Nipple discharge that is not breastmilk
 - Scaly, red, or swollen skin in the nipple area of the breast
- Breast cancer is diagnosed with a physical exam, medical/family history review, and imaging test such as a mammogram, ultrasound, or MRI. Early detection using these screening methods are imperative to catching breast cancer in its early stages and preventing further complications.

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Self-Exams and Screenings: A Step-by-Step Guide

A self-exam is an early detection screening tool that combines physical and visual examinations of the breast and can be completed by you at home! The purpose of this self-examination is for you to become familiar with the way your breasts normally look that way you can pinpoint any changes in size, shape, pain, or formation of any new lumps. Follow these three easy steps to complete a self-breast exam.

1. In the Shower – Use your fingers to press gently in circles over your entire breast. Check for new lumps, thick spots, or unusual changes.

2. In the Mirror – Look at your breasts with your arms relaxed. Notice any changes in shape, size, skin texture, or nipples.

3. Lying Down – Place a pillow under one shoulder and use the opposite hand to press around the breast with light to firm pressure. Repeat on the other side.

Remember, self-exams should be completed once a month each year but should not replace any regular mammogram screenings. If you are concerned at all about any possible changes with your body, please seek medical guidance with your healthcare provider.

HD MONTHLY CHALLENGE

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We challenge you to get familiar with the facts of breast cancer so you can better support yourself or a loved one going through breast cancer.

Nutty Cardamom Granola

- 2 c rolled oats
- 2 c mixed nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts)
- 1 cup of raisins or dried cherries
- 4 tsp cardamom powder
- 1/4 c Coconut oil
- 1/4 c Honey
- 1 tbsp Maple syrup
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Water, for desired consistency



1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. In a bowl combine all dry ingredients except for raisins or dried fruit of choice.
3. Melt coconut oil in microwave and add to the bowl with honey and cardamom. Mix well and adjust sweetness if needed.
4. Line baking sheet with parchment paper and lay granola in one flat layer. Bake in oven for 20 minutes until toasted golden. Halfway through cook time, stir granola and add the raisins or desired dried fruit.
5. Allow granola to cool at room temperature without disturbing, then transfer to an airtight container.

How to Support Someone Going Through Breast Cancer

If someone you know has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer, there are many things you can do to show your support.

Loved ones going through breast cancer treatment can be left dealing with intense side effects, making it hard for them to complete basic daily tasks. Depending on the person try helping them with any of the following.

- Grocery shop for them
- Offer to clean their home
- Take their dog for a walk
- Bulk batch meal prep for freezing
- Offer transportation to and from the hospital appointments
- Offer to take their children to or from school

If practical support is not wanted, you can always offer emotional support through active listening. Active listening involves you really engaging in the conversation at hand. Instead of listening to respond, active listening requires us to listen to understand. Take your friend or family member's lead if they want to discuss their diagnosis or not.

Last, don't forget to take care of yourself. Offering support can be hard on your own emotional and mental health. Be sure to practice self-care regularly by getting regular exercise, eating nutritious meals and snacks, practicing mindfulness, and getting plenty of restful sleep each night. Practicing self-care helps build resiliency, the building block of coping with life.

FUEL YOUR BODY, FIGHT THE RISK: HOW FOOD & FITNESS AFFECT BREAST CANCER

In this newsletter we discussed early detection screenings for breast cancer but what can we do to minimize our overall breast cancer risk? Click the below icon to read our new blog post about how lifestyle factors like diet and exercise can affect breast health and breast cancer risk.

