



# TIP SHEET Breast Cancer

FOR  
TEENS

## Calling Out Breast Cancer Myths

**Myth** Breast cancer is inherited.

**Fact** Most breast cancers occur at random. Only about 5% to 10% of breast cancers are caused by inheriting a faulty gene. Most women who get breast cancer—about 75% of them—do not have a family history of the disease.

**Myth** Certain vitamins and dietary supplements prevent breast cancer.

**Fact** While eating a healthy and nutritious diet may have a protective effect against cancer in general, no specific ingredients, vitamins, enzymes, minerals, herbs or other supplements have been proven to prevent breast cancer.

**Myth** Wearing underwire bras and using antiperspirants cause breast cancer.

**Fact** No conclusive evidence links the development of breast cancer to either of these.

**Myth** Mammograms cause/prevent breast cancer.

**Fact** A mammogram is an x-ray of the breasts that gives physicians a picture of the inside of the breast tissue. They do not prevent, nor cause breast cancer, but mammography is one of the best tools we have today to detect cancer at its earliest and most treatable stages.

Most breast lumps are not cancer, but they still need to be checked out.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW...

**Get moving.** Couch potato alert: Women who are inactive throughout life have a greater risk for breast cancer.

**Maintain a healthy weight throughout life.** Obesity increases risk for many cancers, including breast cancer.

**Don't start drinking alcohol.** Drinking beer, wine, coolers, hard lemonades or teas, and other alcoholic drinks can raise risk.

**Avoid smoking.** Call the New York State Quitline for free help and cessation aids at 1-866-NY-QUITS, [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com)

**Get regular checkups.** A clinical breast exam (done in the doctor's office) should become part of your annual checkup starting at age 25.

**Know your risk factors.** Learn and continue to note your family history, especially any family members who may have breast, ovarian or colorectal cancers.

### ...AND LATER

**Breastfeed, if possible.** Breastfeeding (the longer the better) may lower breast cancer risk, especially if you're African American.

**Have a mammogram at age 40 (and every year thereafter).** Encourage your mom, aunts and other women you care about to schedule their mammogram today!

**Avoid hormone replacement therapy (HRT).** Hormone therapy that contains estrogen or progesterone, sometimes given to women who've had ovaries removed or to ease menopause side effects, increases breast cancer risk. (These are different from oral contraceptives.)



## High Risk

### WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ANGELINA JOLIE?

When actress Angelina Jolie announced that she underwent a double mastectomy (surgery that removes both breasts) to prevent getting breast cancer, it raised many questions for a lot of women. The actress learned through genetic testing that she carried a faulty BRCA gene, which greatly increased her risk of developing breast cancer. Experts estimate that less than 1% of women carry such a gene.

Other factors may increase risk for the disease, too, and learning about the ones that affect your personal cancer risk is important. RPCI's **Breast Cancer Risk Assessment and Prevention Program** provides comprehensive risk assessment, surveillance exams and imaging, risk reduction and prevention options, genetic counseling and testing and access to prevention studies. Women may be eligible for the program if they have:

- A history of breast and/or ovarian cancer among parents, siblings, or at least two other close relatives
- Multiple cancers within their family
- A relative diagnosed with breast cancer before menopause
- A family member with one of these gene mutations BRCA1, BRCA2, TP53, or PTEN
- An abnormal breast biopsy
- Prior radiation treatment to the chest
- Increased breast density



## Meet the Doctors

(above from left to right)

### Surgical Oncology

- 1) Helen Cappuccino, MD, FACS
- 2) Stephen Edge, MD, FACS
- 3) Kazuaki Takabe, MD, PhD, FACS
- 4) Jessica Young, MD

### Medical Oncology

- 5) Amy Early, MD, FACP
- 6) Tracey O'Connor, MD
- 7) Ellis Levine, MD
- 8) Mateusz Opyrchal, MD, PhD

### Mammography

- 9) Ermelinda Bonaccio, MD
- 10) Prasanna Kumar, MD
- 11) Sara Majewski, MD
- 12) Roger Smith, Jr., MD

### Radiation Oncology

- 13) Kilian Salerno, MD
- 14) John Powell, MD

### Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

- 15) Robert Lohman, MD, MBA
- 16) Wong Moon, MD, FACS
- \*17) Can Ozturk, MD
- 18) Cemile Nurdan Ozturk, MD
- 19) Paul Tomljanovich, MD

(\*In conjunction with Drs. Lohman, Moon, Tomljanovich and Cemile Ozturk)

## Learn More

[www.yroswell.com](http://www.yroswell.com)

A website designed specifically for young people who want to get involved and help create a world without cancer.

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

Honest, accurate info and advice about health, emotions and life.

[www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/wyntk/breast](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/wyntk/breast)

Breast cancer info from the National Cancer Institute.

[www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/aya](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/aya)

Information and resources for adolescents and young adults with cancer.