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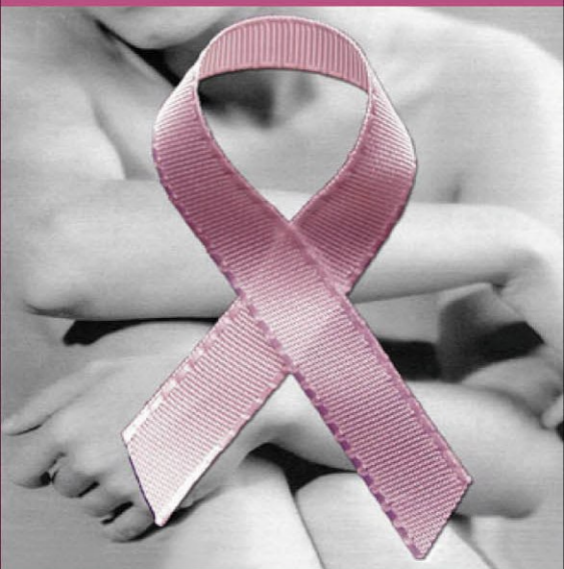
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Apollo Hospitals
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BREAST CANCER



What you should know about Breast Cancer

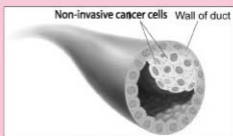
Breast Cancer is the second most common form of cancer among women today, leading to 16 percent deaths in the country. The incidence of this cancer increases as women get older, but it also affects younger women, as well as some men. Early detection and improved treatment increases the chances of survival and cure from breast cancer. Proper awareness about breast cancer can save many lives.

What is Breast Cancer?

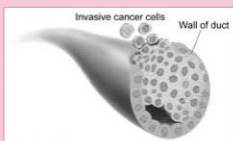
Breast cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells are detected in the tissues of the breast. These cancer cells then spread to surrounding tissues and other parts of the body. When the cancer cells have not spread from the breast duct, it is non-invasive cancer and once they have spread, it is invasive cancer.



Anatomy of the breast



Breast duct containing non-invasive cancer cells



Invasive cancer cells growing through the wall of breast duct

- Non-invasive cancer is the earliest stage of breast cancer having the greatest chance of survival and complete cure.
- Invasive cancer is much serious due to the extent of cancer spread. It requires more extensive treatment and has lower chances of survival as the cancer spreads further.

What causes breast cancer?

The cause of breast cancer is unknown, and any woman can develop it. However, the risk of the cancer increases with age, especially above age 40. Other risk factors of the disease include: family history of breast cancer, early menstruation or late menopause, first childbirth after age 30 or no childbirth, previous abnormal breast biopsy, and excessive radiation or hormone replacement therapy.

While the real cause of breast cancer is unknown, successful treatment and cure is possible with early detection through regular breast checks.

What are the warning signs of breast cancer?

- Painless lump in the breast
- Persistent itch and rash around the nipple
- Bleeding or unusual discharge from the nipple
- Skin over the breast is swollen and thickened
- Skin over the breast is dimpled or puckered
- Nipple is pulled in or retracted

What are the guidelines on breast screening?

39 YEARS

AND BELOW

- monthly breast self examination
- baseline mammography

40 to 49

YEARS

- monthly breast self examination
- annual screening mammography

50 YEARS

AND ABOVE

- monthly breast self examination
- two-yearly screening mammography

How is a diagnosis made?

1. Through a clinical examination by the doctor especially if a lump or an unusual breast change is detected.
2. By a mammogram which may detect changes or abnormalities.
3. Based on a breast ultrasound scan which can detect abnormalities around the breast area.

To confirm breast cancer, a biopsy will have to be performed in which a piece of tissue is removed for examination under a microscope.

What are the common biopsy techniques performed?

- Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)
- Core Needle or Tru-cut Biopsy
- Excision Biopsy

How is breast cancer assessed?

A. STAGE / EXTENT OF SPREAD

STAGE	EXTENT OF SPREAD	AVERAGE SURVIVAL RATE (%)
0	Non-invasive cancer	90
I	Small invasive cancer (less than 2 cm without invasion of lymph nodes)	70
II	Invasive cancer (between 2-5 cm with lymph nodes invasion)	60
III	Large invasive cancer (more than 5 cm with skin invasion)	40
IV	Widespread or metastatic cancer	20

B. GRADE / DEGREE OF AGGRESSIVENESS

The grades are G1, G2 and G3. G3 is the most aggressive and has the most unfavourable outcome.

C. ESTROGEN RECEPTOR (ER) STATUS

If ER is positive, the cancer cells can respond to hormonal therapy e.g. tamoxifen.

Treatment options and prognosis (chance of recovery) depends on the stage of the cancer (whether it is in the breast only or has spread to other places in the body), the type of breast cancer, certain characteristics of the cancer cells, and whether the cancer is found in the other breast. A woman's age, menopausal status (whether a woman still has menstrual periods) and her general health can also affect treatment options and prognosis.

What treatment is offered for breast cancer?

Most patients have surgery to remove breast cancer. The forms of surgery include:

- Breast conserving surgery
- Lumpectomy - removal of the cancer and a small amount of surrounding tissue
- Mastectomy - removal of the whole breast with or without lymph nodes in the axilla

Is any other treatment required?

Often this is followed by systemic therapy which may include either chemotherapy, radiotherapy and/or hormonal therapy to improve the chances of recovery.

Breast reconstruction is an ideal option for women who have had a partial or total loss of breasts due to surgery. The procedure involves the use of breast implants and the patient's own muscle, fat and skin to rebuild lost breasts.

What are the rehabilitation steps?

Physical rehabilitation includes:

- Shoulder exercise after surgery
- Arm care to avoid lymphoedema (localised fluid retention)
- Balanced nutrition and lifestyle adaptation to enhance recovery

Mental rehabilitation involves:

- Close support of spouse, family, friends and support groups
- Reassurance by knowing chances of survival
- Attending doctor reviews regularly

Male Breast Cancer

Male breast cancer is rare, accounting to 1% of all breast cancers. It happens most often in men between the ages of 60 and 70, although the condition can develop in men of any age. Risk factors for male breast cancer include exposure to radiation, a family history of breast cancer and having high estrogen levels, which can occur with diseases like cirrhosis or Klinefelter's syndrome. Symptoms and treatment of male breast cancer is similar to female breast cancer. Successful treatment, again, depends on early detection.

Every year in Bangladesh approximately 35,000 women develop breast cancer, many of whom never seek treatment.

Without proper knowledge about breast cancer, women in our country do not know where to find help when they discover a breast lump. Although the majority of breast lumps are not cancerous and require minimal treatment (hormone therapy), some breast lumps require immediate attention.

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka adopts the best approach to care through the development of a treatment plan by a multidisciplinary team to diagnose, treat and manage breast cancer. This team includes breast surgeons, pathologists, radiologists, oncologists, breast care nurses, and counsellors. Our approach has shown to improve the outcome for breast cancer patients. Prompt diagnosis and proper treatment provides the best chance of long-term survival from breast cancer.



Apollo Hospitals

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