

Survivor Guide

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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and the Suffolk News-Herald is honoring survivors with our special Survivor Guide. Local survivors whose photos were submitted are featured in this section, as well as a wealth of information about how to prevent and overcome breast cancer. We hope, as you read this section, you will take a moment to celebrate our survivors and remember those lost.



Debi Brooks
1 year



Jenysz White
4 years



Trona M. Lee
7 years

Early warning signs for breast cancer

Breast cancer affects millions of women across the globe every year. According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, affecting 2.1 million women each year. As daunting as that may seem, the WHO also notes that early diagnosis can greatly reduce a woman's risk of dying from breast cancer.

Women can be proactive in the fight against breast cancer by learning to identify early warning signs of the disease. The nonprofit breast cancer advocacy organization Susan G. Komen notes that the warning signs for breast cancer are not the same for all women, but the most common signs include a change in the look or feel of the breast or a change in the look or feel of the nipple. A discharge from the nipple is another common warning sign of breast cancer.

Physical changes in the breast can vary, but Susan G. Komen advises women who notice these changes to bring them to the attention of their physicians immediately:

- ▶ Lump, hard knot or thickening inside of the breast or underarm area
- ▶ Change in the size or shape of the breast
- ▶ Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast
- ▶ Dimpling or puckering of the skin

Women with breast cancer also

may notice physical changes in their nipples, including:

- ▶ Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
- ▶ Pulling in of the nipple or other parts of the breast

It's important that women recognize that physical changes in their breasts are not necessarily indicative of breast cancer. In fact, the American Breast Cancer Foundation notes that not all lumps in the breast cause cancer and that many such lumps are benign. Fibroadenomas and intraductal papillomas are examples of benign lumps, though it's important to note that even benign conditions such as these may put women at greater risk of developing breast cancer.

Susan G. Komen notes that breast tissue naturally has a lumpy texture. If lumpiness can be felt throughout the breast and it feels like your other breast, then it's likely that this is just the normal texture of your breasts. However, women concerned by a lump or lumpy texture are urged to discuss those concerns with their physicians immediately.

Discharge from the nipple is another potential sign of breast cancer, but Susan G. Komen notes that such discharge is rarely a sign of cancer. Discharges that occur without squeezing the nipple, occur in only one breast or are bloody or clear are potentially indicative of more serious conditions, including breast cancer.



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