

AROUND THE CLOCK

HEALTH INFORMATION WHEN YOU NEED IT...FROM ASK-A-NURSE

Saint Joseph's Medical Center

Spring 1992

TAKE CHARGE: A WOMAN'S BREAST HEALTH STARTS WITH SELF

The statistics are staggering: One out of every nine women in this country can expect to develop breast cancer during her lifetime. Even in the face of this sobering fact, however, most women fail to follow the medically recommended procedures for prevention — monthly breast self exam, yearly physician exams, and mammography.

Bernadette Dolezal, a registered radiological technologist and supervisor of the Women's Resource Center of Saint Joseph's Medical Center, explains the general guidelines for having a mammogram:

"Women who have no symptoms of breast problems should have a baseline mammogram between the ages of 35-40. All future mammograms will be compared against this first one to accurately note any changes in the breast."

Between the ages of 40-50, women should have mammograms every two years, and after the age of 50, women should have them annually, Dolezal says.

Research conducted by David Taber, MD, a medical oncologist



Women's Resource Center supervisor Bernadette Dolezal prepares a patient for mammography

on staff at Saint Joseph's Medical Center, shows that fewer than 7% of the total number of women in Elkhart county and 19% of the women in St. Joseph county who should have had mammograms actually did so.

"The fact is mammography is not used as much as it should be. I want to use this data as a starting point to address the issues raised about mammography that might keep women from having the test done," Dr. Taber explains.

Among those issues is the test's accuracy and effectiveness in detecting breast abnormalities and the misconception that mammography is painful. On the whole, mammograms are considered to be 90% accurate. However, the accuracy of the test is dependent upon the facility, machinery, and medical personnel involved.

"The facility and machinery used should be accredited by the American College of Radiology; the technologists who actually administer the mammogram need to be registered with the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists and hold a state operator's license; and the radiologist who reads the film should be certified by the American Board of Radiology — all of which are provided at the Women's Resource Center," explains Dolezal.

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What you should know

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• **Getting Your kids to eat right** — Practical tips from an expert

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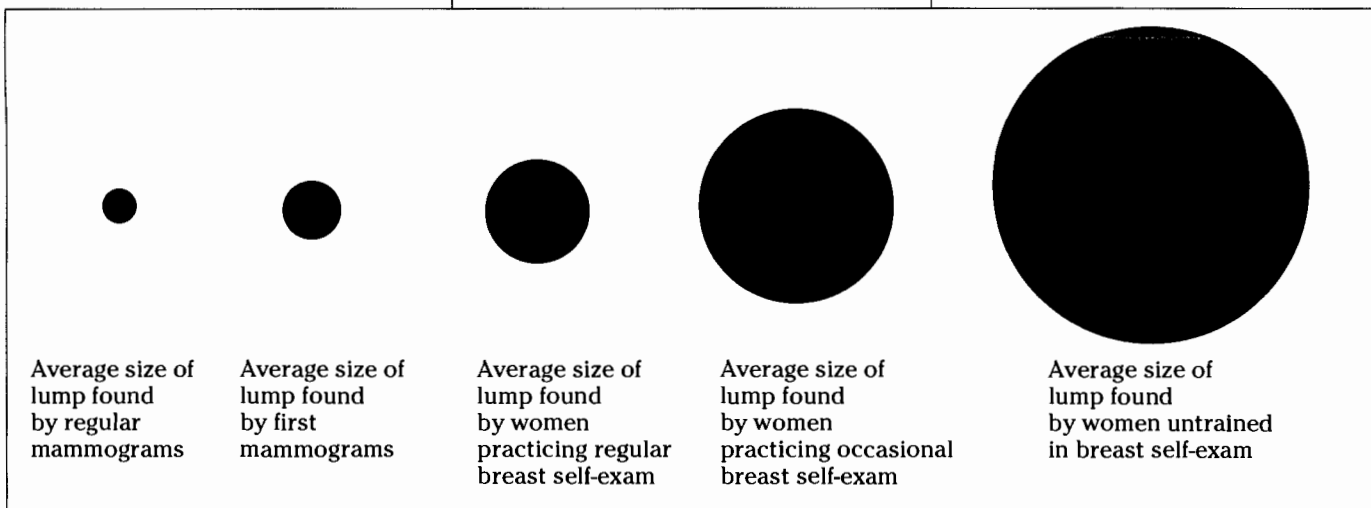
As for the myth that mammograms are painful, the majority of women have no problem with the test, according to Dolezal.

"It is primarily women with tender breasts who complain of discomfort. There are two causes for this: hormones and caffeine. To reduce discomfort, we recommend that a woman have a mammogram 7-10 days after the

first day of her period and three weeks after caffeine has been removed from her diet."

Although mammograms are an integral part of breast health care, women should not depend on them exclusively. "It is important to remember that breast self exams, yearly exams by physicians and mammograms all must be included to provide the most complete preventative care," Dr. Taber points out.

Though the incidence of breast cancer is alarming, women are able to take charge of their own health by following these guidelines. If you would like to know more about mammography at the Women's Resource Center of Saint Joseph's Medical Center or about breast self exams, call **Ask-A-Nurse at 288-9977**.



DOC'S COLUMN

"Healthy Tan" can equal cancer - Learn to protect yourself

In 1935, one out of every 1,500 people could expect to develop malignant melanoma (skin cancer). By the year 2000, one out of every 75 people can expect to be affected by the disease.

The growing popularity of tanning beds coupled with the propensity of Americans to sunbathe, have propelled skin cancers into the most common form of cancer today.

Unfortunately, many people buy into the promise of tanning beds as providing a "safe, healthy tan"

— a dangerous misconception: "The term 'healthy tan' makes about as much sense as the term 'smoking a healthy cigarette,'" says Richard Federspiel, MD, a dermatologist on staff at Saint Joseph's Medical Center.

"The type of ultraviolet rays (UVA) a person gets from a tanning bed are low-energy rays that penetrate more deeply than those of natural sunlight, and are found to be carcinogens, or cancer-causing agents. They are a significant factor in the development of melanoma and other malignancies of the skin."

On the other hand, natural sunlight produces ultraviolet B rays (UVB) which are more superficial and are associated predominantly with basal cell and squamous cell cancers, the less dangerous forms

of the skin disease.

"These two types of skin cancer (basal cell and squamous cell) don't tend to spread internally and are usually amenable to office surgery," Dr. Federspiel explains.

However, the dangerous combination of exposure to both UVA and UVB rays, (as in those who use tanning beds before lying in the sun) compounds a person's chances of developing melanoma. Similarly, those who experience sporadic, intense exposure to the sun resulting in several severe burns can also lay the groundwork for problems with skin cancer, cautions Dr. Federspiel.

The use of a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater is always a good idea. Dr. Federspiel points out that it's still possible

to tan with this level of sun-screen, but the slow and gradual nature of the sun's effects with a sunscreen allow the body's natural protective pigmenting mechanisms to develop.

If you would like to know more about sun exposure and skin cancer, call **Ask-A-Nurse at 288-9977**.

The ABCDs of Melanoma

What's the difference between a freckle, a mole, a liver spot and malignant melanoma? In appearance the difference is often minimal but in reality the difference could mean your life.

Luckily, early detection of malignant melanoma (skin cancer) can be as easy as remembering your ABC and Ds. When examining a spot, look for:

A — Asymmetry. Does one-half of the pigmented spot or growth not match the other half in appearance?

B — Border irregularity. Does the spot have a scalloped or irregular edge?

C — Color. Does the color vary from one area to another?

D — Diameter. Is it larger than a pencil eraser?

If you find a spot that looks suspicious, that itches and won't heal, that grows or changes, or that appears suddenly, consult your dermatologist right away. Learn the difference between a simple freckle, a harmless mole and malignant melanoma. It could save your life.

Free skin cancer screenings by area dermatologists are available ... Check the back page for dates and times, or call **Ask-A-Nurse at 288-9977**.

HEALTH TIP

You should hear what you're missing

Do you sometimes have trouble understanding speech? Do people frequently have to repeat themselves in order for you to hear them clearly? Is background noise a problem for you? If so, you may be among the growing number of people experiencing hearing loss — our nation's second leading disability.

Because hearing loss can be a gradual process that often goes unnoticed, it's important to monitor your hearing level with a screening test to determine the extent of your loss. Thanks to the "Dial A Hearing Screening Test" (DAHST) of Saint Joseph's Medical Center, help is just a phone call away. It offers a simple, accurate way to measure your hearing levels at any time, and from the privacy of your own home.

By calling 237-7071 (24 hours a day, seven days a week) you will be connected with the DAHST program at Saint Joseph's Medical Center. After brief instructions, eight technically-tested tones will sound. If you fail to hear all eight sounds, you will be advised to seek a more comprehensive hearing test from a medical professional.

In addition to the actual screening with the eight tones, the DAHST program message lists medical problems associated with hearing disorders, and a referral for additional information.

If you would like to know more about the Dial A Hearing Screening Test of Saint Joseph's Medical Center, call **Ask-A-Nurse at 288-9977**.

FOCUS ON CHILDREN

Take the struggle out of your child's meal times



Pediatric dietitian Vickie Craker teaches pre-schoolers about the four food groups

Have mealtimes with your youngster become daily battles? Are you tired of your children turning up their noses at anything but macaroni and twinkies?

Making sure your child eats right isn't always easy, but following some basic mealtime tips can ease some of the worries and help ensure that your child's nutritional needs are met.

Vickie Craker, a registered pediatric dietitian at Saint Joseph's Medical Center, and author of "Feeding Facts," an educational pamphlet, offers these guidelines for parents:

1. Parents are responsible for where the food is eaten, what food is prepared and when the food is offered. The child is responsible for how much is eaten — (and remember, children are remarkably good judges of the amount of food they need!)

2. Serve meals and snacks at about the same time every day; avoid distractions (like the TV) during meals so that children can focus on their responsibility — eating.

3. Don't be a short-order cook. Present a meal that has a variety of dishes, and if your child doesn't like a particular food item

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that is part of the meal, he or she can fill up on other dishes.

4. Be careful of "juice-overuse" between meals...fruit juice has just enough calories in it to suppress kids' appetites. It's better to quench thirst between meals with water. Allow your child's appetite to be stimulated.

If you would like to know more about the nutritional needs of your child, or if you would like a copy of Craker's "Feeding Facts," call **Ask-A-Nurse at 288-9977.**

DID YOU KNOW ...

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 30

Women's Night Out, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
"Your Body Yourself: Developing a Positive Body Image"

May 6

"Living with Arthritis: Communication" 7:00-8:30 p.m. Education Center

May 11

Free CPR Training

May 18

Golden Care Senior Luncheon
"Long Term Care Choices"

June 4-7

Senior Games

Call Ask-A-Nurse at 288-9977 for more information on any of the events listed.

FREE SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS:
May 2, May 9
Call the American Cancer Society at 234-4097 to register



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*Saint Joseph's Care Group
Mission Statement*

Faithful to the spirit of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross and the Holy Cross Health System, Saint Joseph's Care Group exists to witness Christ's love through excellence in the delivery of health services motivated by respect for those we serve. We foster a climate that empowers those who serve with us while stewarding our human and financial resources.

LET US KNOW

What you think... what we can send you... whether to keep you on our mailing list.

We are interested in your reaction to *Around the Clock*. Please take a moment to let us know if we can send you any information, and if you would like to continue receiving *Around the Clock*.

Please cut and mail to:
Ask-A-Nurse
Saint Joseph's Medical Center
801 E. LaSalle Ave
South Bend, IN 46617

Please send information about Saint Joseph's:

- Prenatal education classes
- Speakers Bureau
- Weight reduction program
- Supersitter babysitting classes
- Healthy Heart cooking classes
- Personal fitness assessments
- Laser surgery
- Cardiac rehab program
- Stop smoking program

Please send me a free:

- Ask-A-Nurse magnet
- Breast self-exam shower card

Name/Phone _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Comments _____
