

Health Connect

February 2014

Editorial

Dear Readers,
Greetings from GHPL!

With World Cancer day being observed on 4th February and International Women's day being celebrated on 8th March, we thought it appropriate to dedicate this issue to raising awareness on "Breast Cancer". About 1.5 lakh new cases of breast cancer are reported in India every year and unfortunately the majority of them are detected at Stage III or later thus raising the mortality levels. Another startling fact is that; in India, 48% of breast cancer patients are below 50 years of age, compared to mostly post-menopausal women in the west. Early detection of breast cancer greatly improves survival rates and hence awareness is our biggest weapon in this combat.

The next topic we have dwelt upon is Anaemia; which is a significant public health challenge in India. Over half of Indian women suffer from anaemia thus posing a major threat to maternal and child survival, low birth weight babies, lowered resistance to infection, poor cognitive development and decreased work productivity.

Out from Daadi Maa Kee Potli comes some simple home-made tips to maintain those luscious locks; the crowning glory of a woman.

We hope you continue to find the newsletter interesting and informative and welcome your comments and feedback.



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Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women all over India and accounts for 25 - 31% of all cancers in women. A recent study of breast cancer risk in India revealed that 1 in 28 women develop breast cancer during her lifetime. This is higher in urban areas being 1 in 22 in a lifetime compared to rural areas where this risk is relatively much lower at 1 in 60 women. The average age of the high risk group in India is 40-46 years unlike in the west where women aged 53-57 years are more prone to breast cancer.

As per a WHO report, 61% of breast cancer patients are in stage III or IV of the disease, thereby severely restricting treatment options. In the year 2012, India recorded 70,218 deaths due to breast cancer, more than any other country in the world (second: China - 47984 deaths and third: US - 43909 deaths).

While early stage breast cancer shows no symptoms, timely detection can turn breast cancer into a survivor's tale. Breast lump is often the first thing noticed that spurs a visit to the doctor. Though it occurs in both men and women, the vast majority of breast cancer cases occur in females.

Most Common Types of Breast Cancer

Breast cancer can be invasive or noninvasive. Invasive means it has spread from the milk duct or lobule to other tissues in the breast. Noninvasive means it has not yet invaded other tissue. Noninvasive breast cancer is also called "in situ."

Ductal Breast Cancer

This is when the cancer originates in the cells which line the breast ducts. 80-90% of breast cancer is of this type. Although invasive ductal cancer can affect women at any age, it is more common as women grow older.

Lobular Breast Cancer

About 10 to 15% of breast cancers diagnosed are invasive lobular cancer. This means that the cancer started in the cells that line the lobules of the breast and has spread into the surrounding breast tissue. This results in the presence of abnormal cells in the milk-producing glands of the breasts.

Risk Factors

The risk factors influencing breast cancer risk are broadly classified into modifiable and non-modifiable factors.

Non modifiable risk factors:

- *Age* - Older the woman, higher the risk
- *Genes* - There are two genes, called BRCA1 and BRCA2, inheritance of which increases the chances of breast cancer. A third gene (TP53) is also associated with



Daadi Maa Kee Potli (from the Grandmother's closet)



Hair Care

Hair is a woman's crowning glory but factors like stress, pollution, improper care etc, can damage it easily. The major problems related to hair are –hair loss, dandruff and oily/dry hair. Here are some home remedies:

Hair Conditioning, Strengthening and Care:

Hibiscus: Crush a few flowers of hibiscus & mix with sesame / coconut oil to make a fine paste. Apply this to the scalp & rinse after a few hours.

Onion & Garlic: Chop the onion & squeeze the juice. Apply to scalp; rinse after 15 minutes. Crush a few cloves of garlic, add in a little coconut oil; boil for a few minutes. After it cools, apply on the scalp. Repeat this twice a week.

Coconut: Grate coconut & squeeze out the milk by mixing little water. Apply this to the area where there is thinning/balding. Allow to stay overnight & rinse off with water next day.

Henna: Mix 250 ml of mustard oil+60 gm of washed & dried henna leaves; Boil this mixture until the leaves burn totally; Filter, cool & store in an airtight container & use regularly.

Egg: Mix egg yolk in 3 tablespoons of olive oil & 1 tablespoon of honey. Gently massage this mask & cover with a shower cap. Wash with a mild shampoo after half an hour.

Dry/Oily Hair: Massage with natural oil like coconut/sesame/olive helps treat dry hair. Vinegar and honey are also effective. Daily hair wash, a rinse with fresh lime/tea/vinegar, use of baking soda helps control oily hair.

Dandruff

Curd: apply this on the scalp and wash after an hour

Henna: Mix henna, amla, tea powder, lemon juice in curd; add a few drops of hair oil. Keep aside for 10-12hrs. Apply and wash after one hour

Aloe vera gel: Apply fresh aloe vera gel on the scalp, wash after 30 minutes

Fenugreek (Methi): Soak fenugreek seeds overnight and grind to a fine paste. Apply this on the scalp, wash after 45 minutes

Natural leaves: Boil Neem/Basil (tulsi)/ Coriander/Curry leaves in water and use as hair tonic



increased risk. However, the majority of breast cancers are not hereditary

- **Dense breast tissue** – women with dense breasts have a higher risk
- **Menarche / Menopause:** Early menarche (start of menstruation before the age of 12) and late Menopause (after the age of 55) increases the risk. The increase in risk may be due to a longer lifetime exposure to the hormones estrogen and progesterone.

Modifiable risk factors:

- **BMI - Obesity:** Obese and overweight women have a greater risk
- **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)-** Estrogen alone has less of a risk but progesterone and estrogen treatments heighten that risk. A number of studies suggest that use of oral contraceptives (birth control pills) appears to slightly increase the risk of breast cancer, especially among younger women.
- **Alcohol consumption** – alcohol intake (2-5 drinks every day) increases the risk
- **Radiation exposure** – Undergoing X-rays and CT scans often increases the risk
- **Lifestyle choice** – occupation that brings the human body in contact with possible carcinogens and endocrine disruptors. Eg. Automotive plastic manufacturing, metal-working, food-canning, etc.
- **No children / late children** - Having many pregnancies and becoming pregnant at a young age reduce breast cancer risk. Pregnancy reduces a woman's total number of lifetime menstrual cycles, which may be the reason for this effect.
- **Breastfeeding:** Not having breastfed or breastfeeding for less than a year in total.

Symptoms & Signs

- A Lump/ thickening tissue in or near the breast
- A lump or swelling or pain in either of the armpits
- A change in the size or shape of one or both breasts
- Discharge(sometimes blood) from either of the nipples
- A change in the appearance of nipple (Sunken / inverted)
- Rash on or around the nipple
- Dimples in the breast
- Scaly, red, or swollen skin on the breast, nipple, or areola

Diagnosis

- **Breast Exam:** The physician checks the breasts for lumps and other possible abnormalities. Doctors recommend that every woman should do a self examination of the breast after the age of 35.
- **Mammogram** – There are two kinds of breast cancer checks - a screening mammogram and a diagnostic one.
 - **X-ray Mammogram** –Generally used for breast cancer screening. An X-ray machine is used to take images of the breast tissue.

Breast Cancer... contd...# 2

- **Diagnostic Mammogram** – This helps to determine if the symptoms are indicative of the presence of cancer. More X-rays are taken from multiple vantage points.
- **Ultrasound** - Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves to produce an image of the inside of the breasts. The image produced will show any lumps or abnormalities present in the breasts.
- **Biopsy** - A tissue sample from the breast is taken and checked for cancerous cells.
- **MRI** - MRI is noninvasive way to examine breast tissue. A dye is injected into the patient. This type of scan helps the doctor determine the extent of cancer.

Stages : Breast cancer is classified into 4 stages from Stage 0 to Stage IV to denote the progression of the disease.

Treatment : In recent years treatment for breast cancer has vastly improved. However, Cancer treatment requires a multidisciplinary approach. The treatment depends upon the age, the stage and type of cancer, the overall health, patient's preferences and the menstrual stage.

The main treatments for breast cancer are:

- Biological (Drug) Therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormone Therapy
- Radiotherapy
- Surgery – Lumpectomy, Mastectomy, breast reconstruction surgery, etc

Side effects of treatment:

- Biological Therapy – diarrhoea, heart damage, hypertension, skin rashes, headaches, etc
- Chemotherapy – Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, fatigue, sore mouth, hair loss, etc.
- Hormone Therapy – changes in periods, weight gain, headaches, aching joints, skin rashes, etc.
- Radiotherapy – Fatigue, irritation of the breast skin, darkening of the breast skin, etc.

Lowering your risk : It is impossible to eliminate the risk totally but there are ways to minimize it. Some tips include:

- Regular self examination
- Screening tests to be taken every year (after 40 years of age)
- Having your first child before the age of 30
- Breast feeding your baby for at least 1 year
- Regular exercise and maintaining healthy body weight
- Healthy diet rich of fruits, leafy vegetables, nuts, pulses, antioxidants, etc
- Drink Plenty of water
- Be Happy (battle stress away)
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco in any form

Conclusion :

Awareness and understanding of this disease is half the war won already. The best way to fight breast cancer is by detecting it early. Survival rates are as high as 98 per cent if the cancer is caught in time.

Natural juices: Rub the scalp with Amla / Ginger root/ beetroot / fresh lime juice and rinse with water

Stay Natural!!!

Anaemia

Anaemia is a condition that develops when your blood does not contain enough healthy red blood cells or haemoglobin. These cells are important for carrying oxygen around the body. If the Hb levels turn out to be less than 12 gm/100 ml (for a woman), it is considered as anaemic condition. Pregnant women, children, women of menstruating age; athletes and seniors are more susceptible to Anaemia. It is estimated that more than half of all Indian women and ¾th of Indian children suffer from Anaemia.

Usually, anaemia is due to iron deficiency, but it can be caused due to deficiency of Vitamin B12, B6, Folic acid and/or copper. Some common causes of Anaemia are: Bleeding (hemorrhage), Iron deficiency, inability to produce sufficient red blood cells, Hemolysis (destruction of red blood cells), Menstruation, Pregnancy, Lactation, Peptic ulcer, Piles, Hiatus hernia, etc.

Symptoms of Anaemia:

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Lack of Vitality
- Shortness of breath
- Paler complexion
- Dry nails
- Craving to eat substances like coal, sand, chalk, etc.

Normal Haemoglobin Range

Adult males	14 - 18
Adult females	12 - 16
Pregnant Women	11 - 12
Middle aged men	12.5 - 15
Middle aged women	11.5-14
Newborns	17-22
One month old baby	11-15
Children	11-16

Tips to combat Anaemia:

- Eat Iron rich food like green leafy vegetables, beet, apple, brown dates, lentils, raisins, prunes, meat, oysters, etc.
- Eat cereals, dairy products, fruits, fish, dry beans, eggs nuts, etc to boost the immune system
- Cook in iron pots
- In case of Vitamin B-12 deficiency, usually injections are prescribed
- Use more honey as it helps increase the haemoglobin levels in the blood



Prevention:

- Eat a balanced diet rich of iron, vitamin B 12 and folic acid
- Sufficient intake of Vitamin C
- Eat iron-fortified cereals and breads
- If occupation involves work with lead-containing materials such as batteries, petroleum and paint, strictly follow safety guidelines
- Avoid drinking coffee, tea and ingesting antacids because they decrease iron absorption

Stay Healthy & Fit!!!



Good Health Plan Ltd.

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News bits

Cancer insurance claims rise sharply

Source: Times of India

Insurance companies are reporting more claims by cancer patients, indicating a rise in the incidence of the disease. Analysis of the reimbursement data shows that the number of patients fighting cancer—and surviving it—is increasing, said medical and insurance experts. On the other hand, though cancer is mainly considered a disease of the elderly, almost half of the claims are from younger patients.

For greater connect, IRDA plans health insurance info grid

Source: Financial Express

The Insurance Information Bureau (IIB), through IRDA, plans to connect with TPAs, insurers and hospitals to evolve and maintain a health insurance information grid. This will help the health insurance industry develop a rationalized system of insurance claims management, leading to transparent treatment costs and efficient pricing of health insurance products. IIB has been collecting health insurance transaction level data from insurers and TPAs for the last several years and publishing useful reports after analysing the data.

IRDA plans to have unique identity number for hospitals

Source: Business Standard

IRDA through the Insurance Information Bureau (IIB) has begun an initiative to have a unique identity number for hospitals. This, said IRDA chairman TS Vijayan, will help them identify the hospitals and also collect information on the charges for different procedures. “We are collecting transactional data from health insurers. We will then be able to know as to how much is charged for a particular disease/procedure, by one hospital versus another hospital,” he added.

Insurers striving to ‘standardise healthcare costs’

Source: The Hindu Business Line

PSU general insurance companies are striving to bring in some standardisation in healthcare costs through the Preferred Provider Network (PPN) mechanism. “This initiative is expected to make healthcare affordable to all,” said the Director and General Manager of United India Insurance Company, Asha Nair. Nair said 46 hospitals in this region, comprising Coimbatore, Erode, Salem, Namakkal and Tirupur, have joined the network and agreed to provide cashless facility for hospitalisation at agreed rates.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE

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ACROSS

- _____ Cancer: This type of cancer originates in ducts (6)
- Usually deficiency of this causes Anaemia (4)
- In this type of diagnosis a tissue sample from the suspected part is taken and checked for cancerous cells (6)
- Regular use of these leaves helps in hair conditioning and strengthening (5)
- Craving to eat substances like this is a symptom of Anaemia (4)
- Applying gel of this leaf is a good remedy for dandruff (4, 4)
- This type of diagnosis uses high-frequency sound waves to produce an image (10)
- This is one of the main treatments for cancer, side effect of which is hair loss (12)

DOWN

- Such type of nails is a symptom of Anaemia (3)
- Drinking this reduces iron absorption (6)
- This type of cancer originates in the lobes (7)
- Non-invasive cancer is also called _____ (2, 4)
- Anaemia can be caused due to deficiency of this element too which is a red colour metal (6)
- A type of diagnosis used for breast cancer screening (9)
- Regular use of oil mixed with this red colour flower conditions and strengthens the hair (8)
- This type of complexion is a symptom of Anaemia (4)

Across: (1) ductal (4) iron (6) biopsy (8) henna (10) sand (11) aloë vera (12) ultrasound (13) chemotherapy
Down: (1) dry (2) coffee (3) lobular (4) in-situ (5) copper (7) mammogram (8) hibiscus (9) pale

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