

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The purpose of this campaign is to remind everyone that taking care of our health is just as important as taking care of our safety at work.

Breast cancer can affect women and men. Knowing the warning signs, understanding your risk, and seeking medical attention when something changes can make a difference.

1. What Is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer occurs when abnormal cells in the breast grow uncontrollably. It can develop in different areas of the breast and may affect people of different ages.

Early detection is important because finding breast cancer early can improve the chances of successful treatment.

2. Warning Signs to Watch For

Know what is normal for your body and pay attention to changes, including:

- A new lump or swelling in the breast or underarm.
- Changes in the size or shape of the breast.
- Dimpling, redness, irritation, or thickening of the skin.
- Changes in the nipple, such as pulling inward.
- Unusual nipple discharge, especially if it contains blood.
- Persistent pain or other unexplained changes in the breast.

These symptoms do not always mean cancer, but any new or unusual change should be evaluated by a healthcare professional. Do not ignore these changes or wait for them to go away without seeking medical advice.

3. Prevention and Early Detection

Although not all cases of breast cancer can be prevented, there are steps we can take to care for our health:

- Become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel.

- Schedule recommended mammograms and discuss your screening needs with your healthcare provider.
- Talk to your doctor about your personal and family medical history.
- Maintain a physically active lifestyle and make healthy choices.
- Seek medical attention if you notice any unusual changes, even if you recently had a normal mammogram.

Remember: self-awareness is important, but it does not replace recommended screening or medical evaluation.

4. Everyone Can Help Raise Awareness

Breast cancer awareness is not only for women. Men can also develop breast cancer, and everyone can help by supporting family members, coworkers, and friends.

We can make a difference by encouraging one another to attend medical appointments, take symptoms seriously, and speak openly about the importance of early detection.

Just as we speak up when we see an unsafe condition on the job, we should also encourage one another to take action when something does not seem right with our health.

Before we finish, remember three important things:

1. **Know your body.** Pay attention to changes.
2. **Do not ignore warning signs.** Seek medical advice when something is unusual.
3. **Stay up to date with recommended screenings.** Early detection matters.

Our safety culture is built on looking out for one another. This October, let's extend that commitment beyond the jobsite by promoting awareness, supporting one another, and taking care of our health.

Your health matters. Early detection can save lives.

Free or low-cost screening services may be available for people who qualify. See the resources below for information and assistance.

1. Texas Breast and Cervical Cancer Services (BCCS)
2. National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF)
3. CDC — National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program
4. National Cancer Institute (NCI)
5. American Cancer Society (ACS)