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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
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Breast Awareness - Don't leave it too late

By Vicki Louise

For the last three months, I have been nursing a deep concern: would the lump I found turn out to

be breast cancer? How many other women have had that terrible feeling of dread when they came across their own lump? I have to say, I agonised over it for several weeks. Should I waste the time of the Doctor? If I waited a bit longer it may go away of its own accord. If I didn't go to the doctor I wouldn't have to hear the bad news. All absolutely naïve and irrational responses for a supposedly educated lady like me. But when you are faced with something like this, I now understand how your mind can play tricks on you, and you can convince yourself of anything no matter how ridiculous it would seem in the cold light of day, or even bury your head in the sand if you want to.

Having seen all the news recently about Kylie Minogue, and having my own customers who have had varying levels of breast surgery from lumpectomy to mastectomy, I finally overcame my procrastination and went to see my doctor who referred me to the Breast clinic. Thankfully, my appointment came through very quickly. The consultant examined me, and I had a mammogram on both breasts; a scan and a fine needle aspiration. All of these examinations were only slightly uncomfortable and any embarrassment I felt was very quickly eradicated by the caring, compassionate and sensitive staff who dealt with me at each stage. We even had chance for a giggle when my breasts wouldn't fit onto the standard mammogram plate - I am after all an H cup!

My results picked up the lump I was aware of, but more significantly a group of small lumps I was completely unaware of and that could only be picked up by the scan. However, in my case, the news was good: no need for surgery, no need for treatment, and only a requirement for a regular check up. I know how lucky I am. I can only imagine how other women react at being given their results - good or not so good. And I don't profess to be an expert on the subject. My experience pales into insignificance against those ladies who receive worse diagnoses than mine.

One thing that sticks in my mind from my talks with the consultant, the radiographers and the breast care nurses, was that they were all surprised I had left it so long before being checked out. After the event, I am angry with myself that I did leave it so long. After all, what would have happened if the results had shown cancerous growths?

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The bottom line ladies, is: don't wait. Don't procrastinate. Don't think you are wasting doctors' time. I certainly did not feel that any person I came across at the hospital thought I had wasted their time - they were genuinely as pleased as me that the outcome was good.

I have picked up some statistics and self awareness tips below - copied directly from the UK Breast Cancer Care site (

<http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk>

) which I have found very useful:

1. Approximately 41,700 people are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the UK (245 men).
2. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK and accounts for almost one in three of all cancer cases in women.
3. Breast cancer is the third most common cause of cancer death in people in the UK, after lung cancer and bowel cancer.
4. The incidence of breast cancer in British women is increasing by more than 1% each year.
5. Survival rates beyond five years are improving, probably due to increased breast awareness, earlier detection and improved treatment.
6. Earlier diagnosis and better treatment have led to a 29% fall in breast cancer mortality rates since 1989 (1993–2002).
7. It is estimated that around 172,000 women are alive in the UK who have been diagnosed with breast cancer in the last ten years.
8. Breast awareness means women getting to know how their breasts look and feel normally so that they notice any change that might be unusual. Detecting a change early means that if cancer is diagnosed any treatment may well have a better outcome.

Follow the 5–point breast awareness code:

1. Know what is normal for you
2. Know what changes to look and feel for
3. Look and feel
4. Report any changes to your GP without delay

5. Always attend routine breast screening if you are aged 50 or over

Nine out of ten breast cancers are detected by women themselves or their partners. Although most breast changes will prove to be benign (non-cancerous) women should always report any concern to their GP.

Changes to be aware of:

size – if one breast becomes larger, or lower

nipples – if a nipple becomes inverted (pulled in) or changes position or shape

rashes – on or around the nipple

discharge – from one or both nipples

skin changes – puckering or dimpling

swelling – under the armpit or around the collarbone (where the lymph nodes are)

pain – continuous, in one part of the breast or armpit

lump or thickening – different to the rest of the breast tissue.

Check out

<http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk>

and other local breast cancer support organisations and

websites if you are not in the UK.

More importantly, check yourself out and see your doctor quickly if you do find something.

Vicki Louise, founder of

<http://www.vickilouise.com>

offers a stunning range of luxurious, designer

lingerie and nightwear especially for ladies with a fuller bust. Gift vouchers and a luxury gift wrapping service are also available.

Breast Cancer Awareness Bracelet: Support A Noble Cause!

By Lisa Hyde

Breast cancer is a major health threat to women around the world. The number of women affected by breast cancer is shooting up every year. The sad thing is early diagnosis and treatment can lead to an almost 100 per cent cure rate among those affected by this illness.

Often the problem is not the unavailability of treatment for breast cancer, but late diagnosis. Awareness of the symptoms of breast cancer is the only way to assure that every person with the disease will get an early diagnosis. Many charities and cancer foundations have launched breast cancer awareness programs with this fact in mind.

The mass appeal of the LiveStrong yellow cancer bracelets from the Lance Armstrong foundation led breast cancer foundations to launch the breast cancer awareness bracelets. Pink was chosen as the color for these bracelets as an expression of the feminine character. Currently millions of dollars are being generated from the sale of pink ribbons and breast cancer awareness bracelets, which is going towards supporting cancer research and for spreading awareness of the disease.

What makes breast cancer insidious is that there are no clear cut symptoms or criteria that help predict this illness. It doesn't matter if you have a family history or not, whether you are young or old, you can still get breast cancer. Though age increases the risk of breast cancer, more than 20 per cent of the affected women are those under 50 years.

Even though breast cancer awareness bracelets first came out in pink color, they now come in a variety of colors and materials. Usually the rubber and the silicone awareness bracelets sell for around \$1. These bracelets can also be made of pearl, cats eye or any other suitable material and sell for around \$30. These metal and pearl bracelets can be used as jewelry, and at the same time they support a cause.

Custom-made breast cancer awareness bracelets on which you can stamp any message that you want are also available. These messages can be of hope, or endurance, or success. Often, the friends and family of the cancer patients wear these bracelets to show their support to the struggling person.

Over the years the sale of breast cancer awareness bracelets has helped many. There are many discussion and information groups online on cancer that are supported by money from the sale of these bracelets. There are 'fund-free mammogram' facilities available for those who cannot afford the diagnostic procedure, funded by the sale of these breast cancer awareness bracelets.

Be it a \$1 or a \$ 30 breast cancer awareness bracelet, it can go a long way in spreading breast cancer awareness.

Lisa Hyde-Barrett, a registered nurse and wellness advocate, understands the relationship between awareness and prevention and make breast cancer awareness a top goal! Please visit her site:

<http://www.buy-awareness-bracelets-online.com>

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