



Catholic Healthcare West

Ask the Expert

Arizona Republic

Q: In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, can you please share with me what I should be doing to prevent or detect breast cancer?

A: According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), breast cancer is the most common cancer among women with the exception of skin cancers. One in eight women in the United States is diagnosed with invasive breast cancer each year.

Whether it's your mom, sister, aunt, friend or co-worker, breast cancer touches all our lives. October has been designated Breast Cancer Awareness Month to remind everyone of the risk factors associated with breast cancer and the ways in which you can be proactive with your own breast health.

There are several risk factors that may increase the chance of developing breast cancer. Some include age, personal or family history, alcohol use, being overweight and ethnic background. It's important to note that just because someone has a risk factor for breast cancer, it doesn't mean he or she will get it. However, there are some things you can do to lower your risk for developing breast cancer, such as eating healthy, exercising and limiting your alcohol consumption.

Early detection is key to the overall health and recovery of someone who is diagnosed with breast cancer. The ACS recommends the following preventive breast cancer screenings, which may differ depending on your health history:

- All women age 40 and older should have an annual mammogram and clinical breast exam.
- Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam once every three years.
- Women ages 20 and older should perform a monthly self-breast exam.

Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers, members of Catholic Healthcare West (CHW), have dedicated imaging staff that provides state-of-the-art digital mammography, ultrasound, and an MRI breast program providing more efficient testing and the most accurate diagnoses available. Our radiology departments can usually accommodate women with prescriptions for screening mammograms within a day, or for diagnostic mammograms within a week. Mammography services are also available at the CHW Urgent Care in Ahwatukee.

There's no need to wait. For hours and to schedule an appointment for any of these locations, please call 480-728-3900.



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Denise Hooper, M.D., is a board-certified radiologist and fellowship trained breast imaging specialist at Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers. For a physician referral, please call the ResourceLink toll-free at 1.877.728.5414.