

Pro Cancer Research Fund (PCRF)

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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

October is breast cancer awareness in the world. This is one of the most common cancers, affecting one in nine women (one diagnosed every three minutes) in the western world. Four out of five cases occur in women over the age of 50. Less known is the fact that breast cancer can also occur in men, although this is much less common (only one in about thousand). Nevertheless, occurrence in males means that the cancer can be inherited, rather 'silently' from the father! As with all cancers, breast cancer has two main causes: genetic and environmental. Genes (primarily BRCA1&2) account for about 10 %, whilst the rest of breast cancer cases are due to external factors. Since breast cancer is highly hormone (estrogen) sensitive, any factor, including endocrine disrupting (eg agricultural) chemicals (EDCs) that can upset the hormonal balance can ultimately give rise to breast cancer. Such factors include diet and life style factors, especially fatty foods (including possibly dairy products), salt, smoking, excessive alcohol and hormone-replacement therapy (HRT) beyond five years. Breast cancer cases have been rising in recent years although deaths from it have declined. This means that our modern living conditions are far from ideal for preventing breast cancer but thanks mainly to the awareness, early detection can be an effective 'cure'! For early detection, personal experience (self breast examination) is most important. Breast screening can be effective and recent results with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are most encouraging, although not (yet) widely available. The main

symptoms of breast cancer are the following: A lump or a thickening in the breast or in the armpit, a change in size or shape of the mature breast, fluid (not milk) leaking from the nipple, change in size or shape of the nipple, changes of colour, shape or texture of the nipple or areola, and unusual pain in the breast or armpit. As for preventing breast cancer, the following are the top 10 strategies: proper diet (organic, as much as possible), exercise, staying slim, not smoking, drinking in moderation, having a regular check-up, taking advantage of early detection (including self examination), avoiding HRT wherever possible, breastfeeding and, finally, maintaining good emotional health.

In London, PCRFB is marking the breast cancer awareness month with a walk in Trent Park on Sunday, 21st October (11 am for 12 noon). Please come and join us and support the effort to beat breast cancer. Further information can be obtained from Umut (0208 886 5111 / pcrfund@btinternet.com) or Sabire (0795 612 9304).

We wish you all a healthy living.

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