



Department of Health
140 County Highway 33W
Suite 3
Cooperstown, NY 13326
Phone: (607) 547-6483
Fax: (607) 547-4385

NEWS RELEASE

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October will again see the country observing Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, many of the organizations and agencies that provide breast cancer screening, education, information and support offer expanded services and special programs.

“This is an excellent time for women to learn about their risk and get screened for breast cancer. All women 40 and over should get an annual mammogram and clinical breast exam. Women 20 to 39 should get a clinical breast exam at least once every three years,” said Sue Smith, Deputy Director of the Otsego County Department of Health.

“A mammogram along with a clinical breast exam is an effective tool to detect breast cancer in its early stage and has been successful in reducing overall cancer and mortality,” she said.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death among women in New York State. Each year, nearly 14,000 New York women are diagnosed with breast cancer and about 3,000 die from the disease.

Women are at increased risk for breast cancer if they have had their first pregnancy over the age of 30, began their period at a very young age, have a first degree relative (maternal or paternal side of the family) diagnosed with breast cancer, have a genetic predisposition, or have been previously diagnosed with cancer.

“We encourage women to be vigilant, to learn about personal risk and get screened for breast cancer,” said Sue Smith.

“When caught early, the chance of survival is high. Talk with your health care provider to schedule your mammogram and clinical breast exam.

If you are uninsured and over 40 there are community programs that provide access to free mammograms for women without insurance. Call 1-866-442-CANCER (2262) to find a cancer screening program near you.

You can also call this number to locate a genetic counselor if you are concerned about your personal or family history of cancer and want to learn if genetic testing is right for you. The cancer hotline also has information about many programs that provide support to women with breast cancer and their families, including such services as counseling, education, outreach, support and legal advice.

Early detection of breast cancer through mammography and clinical breast examination has led to a significant increase in the numbers of individuals who survive this disease. Improved treatment options have also led to increased survival among those diagnosed with breast cancer.

For more information on breast cancer, call the Otsego County Department of Health at 607-547-4230 or visit the New York State Department of Health web site at www.nyhealth.gov.

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