

American Breast Cancer Foundation



breast cancer
awareness

Many organizations are involved in fighting breast cancer. Each has its own unique goal, but overall, the focus is ultimately on ending the deadly disease.

Breast cancer can strike anyone. Having to deal with a financial burden on top of the disease can cause stress that may affect your chances of recovery. Fortunately, advocates across the country have built prestigious organizations dedicated to lessening the emotional and financial blow of breast cancer.

The American Breast Cancer Foundation centers its attention on providing financial assistance for screenings and testing for uninsured individuals. The ABCF offers several programs that benefit the fight against breast cancer. From financial assistance to emotional support and cancer education, it's easy to see why the ABCF is such an influential force in the fight against breast cancer.

History of ABCF

Formed in 1997, the ABCF uses more than 65 percent of its donations to assist with medical fees and fund fundraisers. In 2014, the ABCF was awarded a Gold Level Rating by the GuideStar Exchange for its strides to implement a best practice model.

When deciding on which organization deserves your support — and money — it's important to look for these types of credentials. Most breast cancer awareness organizations are legitimately committed to the cause, but unfortunately there are dishonest groups out there, too. Do your homework and choose an organization with the history, testimonials and track record to make sure you're putting your efforts and dollars in good hands.

ABCF Programs

Through its Breast Cancer Assistance Program, ABCF provides cancer screenings for individuals who would otherwise not be able to afford them. By providing 45,700 screenings, 1,300 recipients have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

The group's Community Partnership Program works with medical clinics to provide discounted breast cancer services, such as mammograms and ultrasounds.

Like most charities, ABCF is donation driven. Through its website or 24/7 hotline, you can even donate your vehicle. They also accept cash donations, allowing you to make your donation in memory of those who lost their battle with breast cancer.

RISK-REDUCTION SURGERIES

A long family history of cancer may put you at a greater risk of contracting the disease. Usually, when cancer is hereditary, a family passes down mutated genes. These genes can become out of control and are likely to cause cancer.

If you do have a long-running history of cancer in your family, you should have regular check-ups with your doctor. Susan G. Komen reports that patients who discover their cancer during Stage I have a 90 percent survival rate. This statistic underscores the importance of staying on top of your health as you age.

One of the keys to beating breast cancer is catching it before it is able to spread to your lymph nodes.

If you are at high risk, there are many options to consider to remain cancer free. Risk-reduction surgeries are becoming a common option for those who are at the highest risk level for breast cancer.

Effectiveness of Risk-Reduction Surgery

Bilateral prophylactic mastectomy — the surgery to remove both breasts in order to reduce the risk of breast cancer — has been shown to drop the risk of cancer by 95 percent, according to Cancer.gov.

This surgery is usually meant for women with family histories showing the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene. According to the National Cancer Institute, these two genes account for 20 to 25 percent of hereditary breast cancers.

Your doctor will be able to determine if you have these gene mutations with a simple blood test, and can then walk you through your options.

Risk Involved

As with all major surgeries, the removal of both breasts is one with many factors to consider. Potential harms that may arise are similar to any major surgery, including major bleeding or infection.

Experts also note that receiving this surgery may cause anxiety concerning body image. Speak with your physician about the psychological side effects while you are deciding to commit to this surgery.

Other Options

If you decide that preventative major surgery is not the path you want to travel, there are still ways to keep your risk down.

Frequent check-ups will let you and your health professional know exactly where you stand. Talk with your physician or oncologist about how frequently they recommend you be tested.

Chemoprevention is the use of drugs to delay cancer's development in high-risk patients. The Food and Drug Administration has approved several of these drugs and shows that they will reduce the risk of breast cancer in patients at higher risk.

Again, always consult with your physician to discuss the specifics of your health in relation to starting new drugs or treatments.



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