Women’s bodies come in many shapes and sizes. It is what makes us so distinct from one another. Although we are different in our own unique ways, we share many similar physical features. All women have breasts, but do we know everything there is know about them?

Although most people believe that breasts are simply composed of fatty tissue and ligaments that just provide support and shape, breasts are much more complicated than that. So, what else are they composed of?

Breasts have a circular surface with a pigmented center called an areola. In the middle of the areola is the nipple, which is a round protruding structure.1

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Developed females have a set of ducts that begin at the nipple and extend to the internal surface of the breasts. These ducts end in a group of cells called lobules. The main purpose of the lobules is to produce milk.

Breasts, also known as mammary glands, are a pair of organs. The prime function is for secreting milk for newborns and infants.1 Men’s breasts remain flat and immature whereas women’s breasts naturally develop into round-shaped glands. Mature women are the only ones who can produce breast milk. Breast milk aids in the growth and development of a newborn by providing nutrients and antibodies.2

Breast development varies among women depending on her age, and whether she is going through a menstrual cycle, or if she is pregnant. Breasts usually develop in young females between 10-12 years of age and stop growing by the ages of 16-18.1 Once the development of breasts is complete, they undergo monthly changes due to altered hormone levels in the blood.2 This is what usually causes swolleness and tenderness in the breasts. Once a woman goes through menopause, the breasts are no longer stimulated by estrogen, which causes the milk-producing ducts and lobules to be replaced with fatty tissue.1

Breasts also have a secondary function. This function is rarely mentioned or discussed. Breasts are secondary sexual characteristics, which are triggered by the ovaries when they release growth hormones.3

No matter the shape and size of breasts you may have, make sure that you take care of them. It is important to do monthly self-breast examinations, so that you can become familiar with your breasts. This should be done in case any changes occur that may require a physician to examine. All women should be proud of their breasts whether large or small and should learn everything there is to know about them.

References:
1. www.encarta.msn.com
2. www.intelihealth.com

Common problems include cyst formation, fibrocystic disease, fat necrosis, and breast cancer.2 Men who undergo breast enlargement could possibly be developing testicular cancer. In addition, men who are over 40 and develop lumps should see a physician because such lumps could be an indication of breast cancer formation.

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All breasts are lumpy by nature. Although this is common, women need to pay close attention to lumps due to the serious possible causes.
Have you ever felt a bumpy, painless, hard “lump or mass” in your breasts or any of the other following symptoms:

- lumps, hard knot or thickening in any part of the breast
- unusual swelling, warmth, redness or darkening that does not go away
- change in size or shape of your breast
- dimpling or puckering of the skin of your breast
- an itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
- pulling in of the nipple or other parts of the breast
- nipple discharge that starts suddenly
- pain in one spot that does not vary with your monthly cycle

Most lumps are caused by fibrocystic changes. If you do experience any of these symptoms, you should see your doctor immediately, whether you think it is serious or not. Here are important facts that you may want to learn about the risks of breast cancer. Cancer is a group accountable for more than 100 different diseases. Cancer primarily occurs when cells become abnormal and divide without control or order. The change from normal to cancerous cells requires several separate, different gene alterations. Altered genes and uncontrolled growth may produce a tumor that can either be benign (not cancerous) or malignant (cancerous). A benign tumor does not spread to other parts of the body; however, local tissue may be damaged and the growth may need to be removed. Malignant tumors are very serious due to the fact that it can invade, damage, and destroy nearby tissues and spread to other parts of the body.

There are many types of breast cancer, but certainly the most common is ductal carcinoma, which begins in the lining of the milk ducts of the breast. The disease occurs mostly in women, but can also occur in men. If a malignant tumor invades nearby tissues, it is known as invasive cancer. This year alone, an estimated 203,500 women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and 54,300 with DCIS (ductal carcinoma in situ, non-invasive tumors contained in the milk ducts). An estimated 40,000 will die from the disease.

Medical researchers are making great strides in determining what causes cancer in cells. They have found that breast cells contain a variety of genes that normally work cooperatively with a woman’s natural hormones, diet, and environment to keep her breasts healthy. There are certain genes that you have in your body that routinely keep breast cells from dividing and growing out of control and forming tumors. However, when these genes for some reason become altered, changes occur and a cell no longer can grow correctly. Researchers don’t know exactly what causes cancer, but they do know certain risk factors that are associated with breast cancer. Here are a few risks factors that may increase a woman’s chances of acquiring this disease:

- Gender: simply being a woman will increase your chance of having breast cancer
- Age: the chance of getting breast cancer goes up as a woman gets older.
- Genetic risk factor: if a woman has inherited a changed gene from either parent, she is more likely to get breast cancer.
- Family history: breast cancer risk is higher among women whose close blood relatives have this disease.
- Race: Caucasian women are slightly more likely to get breast cancer than are African-American women. African-Americans are more likely to die of this cancer. Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian women have a lower risk of getting breast cancer.
Breast Self-Examination

The best time to examine your breasts (Breast Self Exam) is one week after the end of your period, when they are least likely to be tender or swollen.

1. Lie down with a pillow under your right shoulder. Raise your right arm and place it behind your head. Use your left hand to examine your right breast.
2. Use the sensitive finger pads (where your fingerprints are, not the tips) of the middle three fingers on your left hand. Feel for lumps using a circular, rubbing motion in small dime-sized circles without lifting your fingers. You can also use an up-and-down pattern or wedge pattern, but be sure to use the same pattern every time.
3. Press firmly enough to feel different breast tissues, using three different pressures. First, light pressure to move the skin without jostling the tissue beneath, then medium pressure pressing midway into the tissue, and finally deep pressure to probe down to the ribs.
4. Completely feel all of the breast and chest area up to the collarbone and all the way over your shoulder to cover breast tissues that extends toward the shoulder. Remember how the breast feels from month to month.
5. Don’t forget to examine both breasts.
6. Repeat the examination of both breasts while standing, with one arm behind your head. The upright position makes it easier to check the upper outer part of the breasts (toward your armpit). This is where about half of breast cancers are found. You may want to perform the upright part of the breast self-examination (BSE) while you are in the shower. Your soapy hands will make it easier to check.
7. Also, check your breasts in front of a mirror looking for changes in size, contour, any lumps, redness, or swelling, dimpling of the skin, or spontaneous nipple discharge.
8. If you find any lumps, thickenings, or changes tell your physician immediately. Most breast lumps are not cancerous, but early detection can save your life.

TIPS:
- If you are not sure how to perform a BSE, ask your health care provider to show you or try to copy the way the doctor or nurse does it.
- If you are not having regular periods, do BSE on the same day every month. Women who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or have breast implants also need to do regular breast self-examinations.
- Men are also at risk for breast cancer. They too, need to perform a monthly BSE.
- Utilizing BSE, clinical breast examination (CBE), and mammography offers women the best opportunity for reducing the breast cancer death rate through early detection.

References:
1. www.cancer.org

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<th>Breast Self Exam (BSE)</th>
<th>American Cancer Society Guidelines</th>
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How to Cope with Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women of all ages. Did you know that in 1999 over 175,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer (one every 3 minutes), and 43,000 died (one every 12 minutes)? It happens to be the leading cause of death for women between the ages of 35 and 54.

As women, these days more than ever, we are hearing about breast cancer. We are told startling facts and figures about the disease, and how to conduct breast self-examinations. But what happens if we are diagnosed? What then? How do we go about coping with it, and what treatments are being administered to patients with this disease?

Before we jump into the different types of treatments for breast cancer, some things have to be taken into consideration. First of all, treatment of breast cancer largely depends on! Women’s health, age, as well as the extent, type, and location of the tumor. Another factor physicians take into consideration is if the cancer has remained in the breast or if it has spread to other parts of the body. Current treatments may include: surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, or even a combination of these treatments.

Most women who have breast cancer will undergo some form of surgery. Removing the lump and possibly surrounding tissues, the whole breast and even parts of the muscles in the chest cavity might take place. Accompanying this surgery might be radiation therapy for some patients. Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays that destroy any existing cancer cells that may still be present in the breast, chest wall, or the underarm area after the surgery takes place.

Another type of treatment is chemotherapy. A physician may recommend this if cancer cells have spread to the lymph nodes. Chemotherapy is when a patient receives cancer-fighting drugs that will travel through the body to slow the growth of the cancer cells, or kill them off. Chemotherapy may also be administered to patients who have more advanced cases in order to reduce the size of the tumor to a more manageable size for future surgical procedures.

Hormone therapy is also another type of treatment for breast cancer. Hormone therapy slows the growth of some of the body’s natural chemicals, such as estrogen (the female hormone). One of the drugs typically used is called Tamoxifen, which can prevent breast cancer from recurring in a large majority of women.

Now that some of the many treatments for breast cancer have been briefly discussed, what about the emotional side of experiencing breast cancer? Well, it is good to know that there are many options that can help one cope with this disease. Many self-help books are very popular that can help one deal with the emotional aspect of a stress such as this. Bookstores such as “Borders” and “Barnes & Noble” are two such places that have many reading sources that one could research. Talking to a person who has experienced the battle with breast cancer, or someone who is currently coping with it is also a huge emotional support. A local support group in the Long Beach area is at the following location: Y-ME South Bay/ Long Beach, 4403 Tulane Ave, Long Beach 90808. Local support groups can be a haven of hope and support. There are also many online support groups nationwide that are excellent sources of information. If you, a friend, or a relative has breast cancer, please consider a support group for help, because there are many women who are experiencing this same disease. Just because you have breast cancer doesn’t mean that you have to fight the battle alone.

References:
1. www.encarta.msn.com
2. www.nabco.org
3. Y-ME Long Beach/South Bay Breast Cancer Support Group, Long Beach, CA 90808
   (562) 498-3008 to talk with a live person
   (562) 809-2408 a recording of events and meeting times for the group
(Continued from Page 2)

**Male Breast Cancer**

Many people do not realize that men have breast tissue and can also develop breast cancer. Until young boys reach puberty, they have a small amount of breast tissue consisting of ducts located under the nipple. Enlargement of the male breast due to growth of the ducts and supporting tissues is known as gynecomastia, the most common male breast disorder. All of the many types of breast cancer seen in women can definitely occur in men; however, some are quite rare. Breast cancer in men may be rare, but it does happen. It is tremendously important that men and women be aware of the signs and symptoms of breast cancer, and pay special attention to changes in their body.

**References:**
1. www.breastcancerfund.org
2. www.cancer.org
3. www.healthlink.mcs.edu

**The Brava Bra**

The Brava Bra has been on the market for over a year now and yet not a lot of women know about it. Imagine increasing your breast size about one cup larger without implanting anything into your breasts. The new breast size is gained through new breast tissue growth. This is accomplished by having the patient wear the Brava Bra for 10 hours everyday for 10 weeks. After 10 weeks, those who have been wearing the bra claim to have grown at least a half cup larger. Some continue to wear the bra longer in order for more breast cells to grow and to keep breasts at a constant lift.

**How does the Brava Bra work?**

The Brava Bra works like a suction bra. It consists of two semi-rigid domes with specially engineered silicone gel rims, and a self-regulating microprocessor that creates and regulates the tension within the domes. The system is held in place by a sports bra. This sports bra is worn for 10 hours everyday. A small pressure pump is placed under the bra where it pumps air to the bra. The air into the bra creates pressure so that the breasts can grow. Tension induced tissue growth has been widely used by the medical profession in tissue regeneration for more than 30 years in several procedures including tissue expansion, limb lengthening and breast reconstruction.

**Where can I purchase this bra?**

The Brava Bra is available by certified doctors in your area. The average cost of the bra is $2,500. This includes the doctor screening fees and monitoring of the patient. The doctor first screens the potential patient to make sure that the person is an adequate patient for using this system. Then, after properly fitting the bra the doctor asks the patient to come in a few times during the 10-week period to check on the progress.

**What is Breast Cancer?**

**Michelle Biba**

“Just because you have breast cancer doesn’t mean that you have to fight the battle alone.”

“Imagine increasing your breast size about one cup larger without implanting anything into your breasts.”

**Are there any side effects?**

Some patients have reported allergic reactions, including skin rashes, from wearing the Brava Bra. If this happens, the patient should visit the doctor and find out what can be changed on the bra or possibly readjust the way she is wearing it. Either way, the bra will create a small pressure on the breasts; therefore, some discomfort may occur while wearing the bra.

**References:**
HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER PROGRAMS

SHAW
Sexual Health Awareness Workshop helps enhance your knowledge of contraception, STDs, breast and testicular self-examination

HIV Testing & Counseling
Free and confidential

Nutrition Counseling
Individual counseling to meet your nutritional needs.

Outreach Presentations
Presentations on alcohol, tobacco, drugs, STDs, birth control, and eating disorders are available upon request for all classes.

Men’s Health Clinic
Physical exam, laboratory testing and counseling are available for men who are seeking the attention needed for healing their minds and bodies.

Breast Cancer Awareness Workshop

Tuesday, October 8th at the Student Health Center, Rm 118
12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.
Wednesday, October 9th at the Women’s Resource Center
12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

This workshop is designed to talk about the risk factors, prevention and detection of breast cancer.

- It is also a safe place to ask questions and gather information
- A medical doctor will answer questions and share information
- An educational breast model and a video explaining the self-examination process
- An opportunity to learn ways to safeguard yourself, your friends, and your family
- A chance to have a dialogue about ways you can help others

Both men and women can come to this workshop and learn about Breast Cancer!