



Mark Parkinson, Governor
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT

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KDHE Recognizes October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month

One out of every eight women will develop breast cancer at some point in her life. While this is a very sobering statistic, screening and early detection can help identify cancer in its early stages when the disease is most treatable. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and KDHE encourages women to be informed about the effectiveness of screening and early diagnosis.

“Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among American women, other than skin cancer,” stated Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

In 2005 in Kansas (the most recent year for which statistics are available), 1,871 women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and 386 women died of the disease.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), an estimated 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed among women in the United States this year. An estimated 40,170 women are expected to die from the disease in 2009 alone. Today, about 2.5 million breast cancer survivors live in the United States.

Men can also get breast cancer. However, it is very rare. For every 100 cases of breast cancer, less than one is in men.

“A mammogram is the best way to detect breast cancer,” said Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, State Health Officer and Director of Health for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). “Regular mammograms should begin at the age of 40 and be done every one to two years.”

A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast that can detect cancer as small as a grain of salt, long before it can be felt, at an early, highly treatable stage. For women in their 20s and 30s an annual clinical breast exam performed by a nurse, physician or other health care professional is recommended. This is an examination to feel for lumps or other changes in the breasts.

The National Cancer Institute and ACS have issued several lifestyle recommendations that may reduce the risk of breast cancer. These include avoiding tobacco, staying active (for instance, a 30 minute walk most days), and maintaining a healthy body weight. Also, if a woman uses hormone replacement therapy, it is usually best to use it for the shortest time and at the lowest

dose possible. Additional recommendations include limiting alcohol intake to one or fewer drinks per day, and increasing fiber intake with whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.

KDHE promotes breast cancer screening for all women and provides services for age appropriate, low income, uninsured women through its Early Detection Works program. An estimated 27,000 women in Kansas between the ages of 40 and 64 are eligible for this program, which serves about 6,000 women each year, providing clinical breast exams and mammograms through a network of providers across the state. Should breast cancer be diagnosed through this program, Medicaid through the Federal Treatment Act pays for treatment.

For more information about the program, visit www.preventionworkskansas.com . Women seeking these services may call toll free 1-877-277-1368 to see if they qualify. For more Kansas Cancer Information and resources, visit www.cancerkansas.org.

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As the state's environmental protection and public health agency, KDHE promotes responsible choices to protect the health and environment for all Kansans.

Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.