Cancer is a group of diseases that cause cells in the body to change and grow out of control. Most types of cancer cells form a lump called a tumor, which is named for the part of the body where the tumor originates.

“You have breast cancer” can be the most disturbing words a woman will hear in her lifetime. About 1 in 8 women will get this diagnosis. That’s why it’s important to know as much as you can about breast cancer.

Early breast cancer typically has no symptoms. Breast cancer usually produces no symptoms when the tumor is small and most easily treated. Therefore, it is very important for women to follow recommended screening guidelines to catch the disease in its earliest stage.

Exercise can lower your risk. Medical experts think exercise may affect the levels of estrogen in the body as well as fat percentages. One study found that women who were active and exercised regularly lowered their risk by as much as 30% as compared to sedentary women. Even walking can be beneficial.

Breastfeeding lowers the risk. One study found that women who breastfed their babies were up to 25% less likely to develop pre-menopausal breast cancer.

Drinking alcohol increases risk. Even moderate use of alcohol has been shown to elevate breast cancer risk. This is especially the case for younger women. Women between their first period and their first pregnancy who consumed just on average 7 alcoholic drinks per week had an 11% increased risk of developing breast cancer, according to one study.

A conversation with your doctor can save your life. What’s the next step? Talk to your doctor to assess your personal risk.

Sources: The National Breast Cancer Foundation; www.breastcancer.org; Komen.org
A number of life-saving treatments exist, depending on the different cancer stages:

- **Mastectomy** is the removal of all breast tissue.
- **Lumpectomy** is surgery in which only the tumor and some surrounding tissue is removed.
- **Chemotherapy** is a treatment that uses medicine to weaken and destroy cancer cells. It is a systemic therapy, which means it affects the whole body by going through the bloodstream.
- **Radiation therapy**, called radiotherapy, is a highly targeted and highly effective way to destroy cancer cells in the breast that may remain following surgery.
- **Hormonal therapy** helps to treat hormone-receptor-positive breast cancers in two ways: by lowering the amount of the hormone estrogen in the body and by blocking the action of estrogen on breast cancer cells.
- **Targeted therapy** targets specific characteristics of cancer cells and is less likely to harm normal, healthy cells.
HEALTH TEST

How Much Do You Know About Breast Cancer?

1. Only women can be diagnosed with breast cancer. Men are exempt.
   - FALSE

2. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death in women.
   - TRUE

3. If your mother or sister has breast cancer, you will get it, too.
   - FALSE

4. Finding a lump in your breast means you have breast cancer.
   - FALSE

HEALTHY BITES

Waistline-friendly Chicken Chili

INGREDIENTS

- 3 skinless chicken breast halves, bone intact
- 6 cups water
- 1 large onion, sliced lengthwise
- 2 tablespoons cilantro
- 2 cups fat-free chicken broth
- 4 corn tortillas, cut into 1-inch strips
- 1 4-1/2-ounce can diced green chiles
- 1 15-ounce can corn, drained
- 2 15-ounce cans Great Northern beans (or other white bean)
- 1 cup green tomatoes or tomatillos, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon fajita seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

This chili freezes well and is great for cold winter days. Double or triple the recipe if you are entertaining guests.

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring chicken, water, onion, and cilantro to a boil in a large stockpot. Reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes. Remove chicken and cool.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, bring chicken broth to a boil, stir in tortillas, and turn off heat.
3. Pull chicken off the bone and cut into bite-sized pieces. Return to stockpot.
4. Add chiles, corn, beans, tomatoes, fajita seasoning, and garlic salt.
5. Add tortilla/broth mixture to stockpot and simmer 15 minutes.
6. Add lime juice to chili and serve.

NUTRITION

Serves 8
Calories: 330
Total Fat: 5 g

Recipe: Published on the American Cancer Society website.

Answers to the Health Test!

1. False. While breast cancer is most common among women, both men and women can be diagnosed with the disease.
2. True. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death in women, behind heart disease.
3. False. Although a family history of breast cancer heightens your risk, it is not a guarantee that you will get the disease.
4. False. Only a small percentage of breast lumps turn out to be cancerous. However, if you find a lump contact your physician.

Sources: The National Breast Cancer Foundation; cancer.org