

# Bariatric *focus*

HELPING PATIENTS STAY FOCUSED ON WEIGHT LOSS EVERY DAY

## October Is Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Know Your Risk Factors And Control Them By Leading A Healthy Lifestyle **Overweight Women At Greater Risk Of Breast Cancer**

One of the most devastating diagnoses to get is that of breast cancer. The numbers are staggering as one out of every eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their life. While there isn't anything we can do about genetics in breast cancer, there are a number of things you can do to help decrease your risk of breast cancer.

A recent study published in the *Journal of Cancer Epidemiology* has reinforced the correlation between being overweight, smoking and breast cancer. This study is unique in that women with BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations, which predispose women to breast cancer, were excluded to allow researchers to concentrate on lifestyle factors such as smoking, exercise, nutrition and weight.

The study found that weight gains after the age of 20 increases the risk of breast cancer. If the weight gain is more than 15.5 kilos, the risk increases by an average of 68 percent. Risk increases depending on how late in life the weight gain occurs. A woman who gains more than 10 kilos after age 30 or more than

5.5 kilos after age 40 is almost twice as likely to suffer from breast cancer as a woman whose weight is stable. The risk triples if the body mass index is at its maximum after age 50.

The research team also found that smoking a pack a day for nine years increases breast cancer risks by 59 percent. The impact of smoking decreases for menopausal women but remains at 50 percent. The correlation between smoking and breast cancer requires however more research.

The investigation also found that moderate physical activity decreased cancer risks by 52 percent for pre-menopausal and post-menopausal women. The correlation is also observed for women who do intense physical activity but the difference isn't significant. This is because women who do moderate physical activity are more likely to do it regularly, while women who do intense physical activity are likely to quit after a few weeks.

In addition, other studies have shown that limiting alcohol consumption is important as women who consume alcoholic beverages on a regular basis are more

likely to develop cancer. For instance, women who drink 2 to 5 alcoholic drinks a day are one and half times more likely than a woman who doesn't drink at all.



Family history is very important as well. Breast cancer on your mom's or dad's side of the family increases your risk and you need to talk to your doctor about it.

Breast cancer is a complex disease and can be latent for several years. It is important to know your family history and work on the factors you can control which means watching one's weight, avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol and doing regular exercise.

### **Be Proactive...**

No one else knows your body like you do. Make sure that you are doing your monthly self breast exams. It is one way for you to know how your breasts normally look and feel, and to notice and report any changes. Women should also have a clinical breast exam by a health professional as part of a periodic health exam, preferably every 3 years in their 20s and 30s and every year after age 40.



### **... And Get That Mammogram.**

Women age 40 and older should have a screening mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health. Women at high risk (greater than 20% lifetime risk) should also get an MRI every year...

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

*Surgical Associates* have expertise in the various diseases of the breast including work-up and management of breast lumps, breast cancer and other conditions. Do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions regarding your breast health.

### **Support Group Meeting**

**Thursday**  
**15**  
Our next gastric banding support group meeting is Thursday, October 15 at 7 pm. See you there!