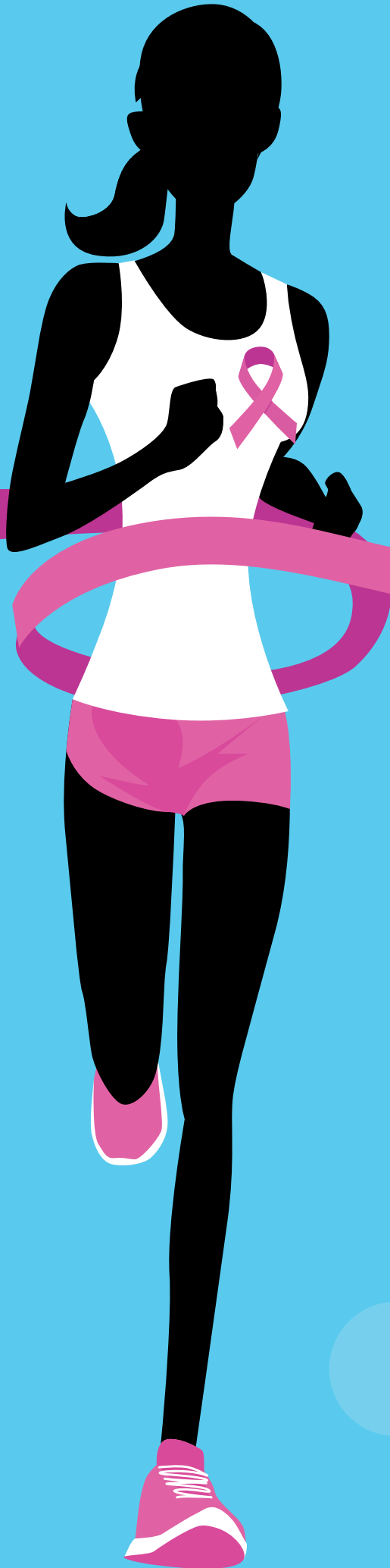




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breast cancer
awareness



Walk for Awareness

Looking to make a statement in the fight against breast cancer? Look no further than your legs.

There are numerous organizations across the country devoted to setting up charity walks for breast cancer awareness. One such group, Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, encourages all races, ages and sexes to come together and raise money and draw attention to the disease.

Throughout the United States, nearly 300 Making Strides walks take place each year. This makes it the largest network of breast cancer fundraising and awareness events in the nation. The group's initiatives put many helpful dollars into research that can end breast cancer.

MAKING STRIDES PROGRAM

Since its inception in 1993, Making Strides has raised more than \$528 million in the fight against breast cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. The money has been raised by more than 9 million walkers across the country.

Making Strides relies on its walkers finding sponsors for donations, so why not convince your employer to take part in the national effort? Many companies offer a matching gift program, according to Making Strides. This

means that your contribution can be doubled.

If you're not feeling up for the walk, Making Strides also looks for volunteers to donate their time to help with registration, water stations and other activities.

Sponsors are always welcome in the Making Strides program. Your individual or business donation is tax-deductible and you will have the satisfaction of assisting in the fight against breast cancer.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

What better time than October to join Making Strides or a similarly focused organization in your neck of the woods? October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, giving advocates everywhere the opportunity to unite for a common cause.

You can wear a pink breast cancer ribbon during the month to show your support. You also can join a walk or personally show your support with a kind deed for a survivor.

During October and beyond, it's important to show your respect to those who have lost the fight against breast cancer. Consult with your local advocacy organization for specific or unique ways to get involved.

Being a Caregiver

Coping with illness can be a difficult undertaking, especially with something as serious as breast cancer. When someone close to you is suddenly diagnosed with breast cancer, you may be left wondering how to help.

Whether you're giving emotional support, assisting with doctor appointments or doing everyday chores that your loved one is unable to complete, you are a caregiver.

Accepting the new role of caregiver may be tough. You may experience a total lifestyle change and try to put your loved one before your own needs. Ignoring your own needs can cause you to become less effective as a caregiver.

A CAREGIVER'S ROLE

The role of a caregiver varies by situation. The National Cancer Institute defines a caregiver as “the person who most often helps the person with cancer and is not paid to do so.”

Caregivers typically serve as aides or companions and assist with cooking, transportation and everyday chores. A good caregiver is crucial to the emotional and physical support system for a cancer patient.

CARING FOR YOURSELF

It may seem that your wants and needs are second-tier to those of your affected loved one. The experts at The National Cancer Institute point out that fulfilling your own needs will make you a more effective caretaker.



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It may be hard to talk to your loved one about how you're feeling when you know that they are dealing with so much already. But having an outlet to

express yourself and your feelings can help you maximize your ability as a caregiver.

Support groups can offer a great amount of therapy as you

can discuss your feelings with people in similar situations. Talking with others can be a way of forcing yourself to relax. This can be difficult with the

amount of stress and feelings you may be experiencing, but even a weekly group setting can help you put things in perspective.

Start Your Own Group

Have you asked yourself how you can help in the fight to stop breast cancer? Maybe your family members or friends have been affected by the disease. The good news is that it is easy to start your own group to help raise donations and awareness for breast cancer.

A smart thing to sort out before planning your group is how often you want your group to meet. Consider planning your meetings on a weekly or bi-weekly schedule. Once a month may be easier for everyone to plan around but may make it difficult to keep the group's momentum going.

MAKE YOUR GROUP UNIQUE

Check to see if a similar group already exists in your area. It may be counter-productive to begin a new group instead of assisting an already established group. Consider joining forces with like-minded groups to enhance your capabilities.

Your local oncology nurse or social worker can assist you in finding existing groups, or you can call the Cancer Support Community Helpline (888-793-9355) to locate other local groups.

Look for ways to differentiate your group's activities. This can include inviting educated guest speakers to offer their insights on the disease and how to overcome it.

BECOMING A GREAT LEADER

If starting a group is your idea, you may be looked to as the leader. There are many factors to consider when deciding whether you should be a leader, or whether another member should take the helm of your group.

If you've got the passion for the group objective and are skilled in coaching others to success, a leadership role may be the perfect fit.

If you're looking for someone else in the group to step into a director-type role, a current patient or survivor of breast cancer can make a great candidate. Someone who has experienced cancer can share in other's struggles and convey their perspective of how to cope with the disease.



Healthier Fats

Simply put, your body needs fat. It is crucial to supplying energy, helps process vitamins and delivers essential fatty acids that your body needs but cannot make itself.

While much debated in the healthcare and dietary sectors, the fact that fat is a helpful part of your diet is starting to gain major traction.

Where the dietary recommendations get muddled is in just how much fat you need, as well as what kinds are suggested as regular additions to your intake. When it comes to breast cancer, researchers have not been able to pinpoint a certain behavior that causes the disease. However, many have determined that a diet containing healthy fats can have great benefits in reducing your risk.

WHY FAT IS IMPORTANT

In the past, many studies concluded that it's best to avoid fats when it comes to your diet. Did you know that there are certain fats that can promote your well-being?

Your body counts on vitamins A, D, E and K to operate properly. The only way these vitamins are able to be absorbed is with the help of fats. Eating foods that boast "unsaturated fats" will allow your body to process the vitamins without the harmful risks of a diet high in "saturated fats."

INCORPORATING HEALTHY FATS

While diet alone will likely not cause or cure cancer, it is a factor that needs to be on your healthcare radar.

The Harvard School of Public Health has compiled the following tips on how to use fats to your advantage;

- Avoid packaged food that is labeled "0g of Trans Fat."
- At least one meal a day should be packed with Omega-3, which can be found in salmon, walnuts and tuna.
- Lower your intake of saturated fat by eating chicken and fish instead of red meat and cheese.
- Read labels. Even if a food claims to be low fat, it may still include bad fats such as saturated and trans fats.



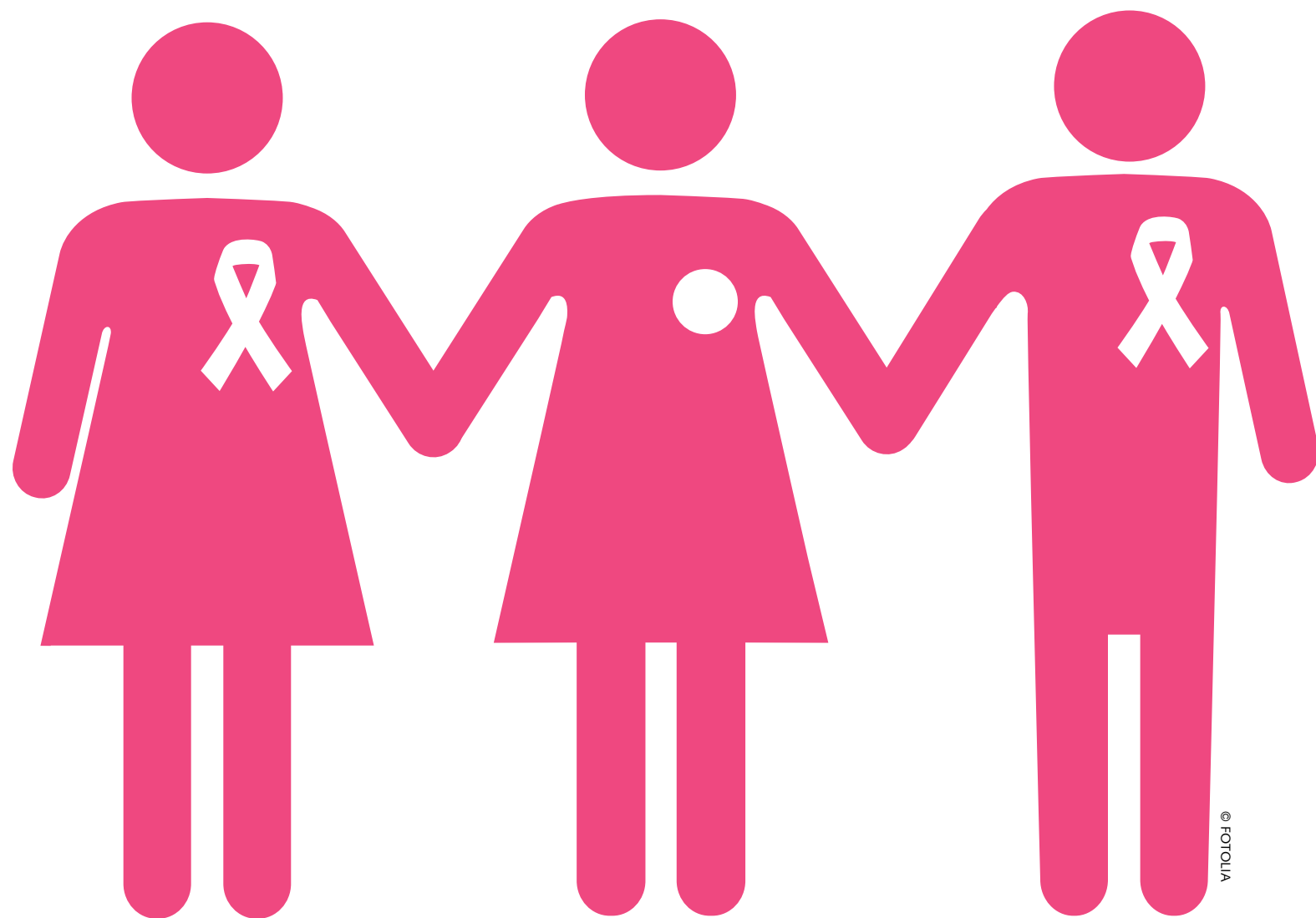
By The Numbers

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2016, there will be 246,660 new cases of invasive breast cancer in U.S. women. When looking at a number that large, it is important to consider it as more than just a statistic.

These “numbers” could be your close family members, friends or colleagues. Some of these diagnoses may be more serious than others, but one thing is constant: These patients need our support and love as they work through the difficult process of survivorship.

Consider the following numbers compiled by Susan G. Komen and pledge to make a donation or become involved in the fight against breast cancer.

- Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer developed during a pregnancy. About one in 3,000 pregnant women will be diagnosed with breast cancer each year.
- Breast cancer incidences have increased slightly each year in African-American women.
- African-American women have the highest breast cancer mortality rate, while Asian-Americans have the lowest.
- Breast cancer causes more deaths than any other type of cancer in women ages 20-59.
- Cases of breast cancer in men has slightly increased in the past 30 years.
- Mortality rates are highest in Washington, D.C., Louisiana and Mississippi.
- 30,700 new cases of breast cancer are expected in African-American women this year.
- From 1990-2013 mortality rates have decreased by 37 percent.
- Most breast cancer diagnoses and deaths occur in women over age 50.
- Diagnoses in younger women usually have a mutated BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene that has mutated.



These patients need our support and love as they work through the difficult process of survivorship.

American Breast Cancer Foundation

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.