

The Facts About Breast Cancer

Every. Ten. Minutes.
A woman in the UK is diagnosed with breast cancer every ten minutes.

That's a staggering amount of diagnoses every day, year and month.

What Is Cancer?

Cancer can occur anywhere in the body. Normal / healthy cells divide in an ordered manner and have a certain lifespan. They die when they are damaged or have been worn out. A new cell replaces them. Cancer occurs when cells grow out of control and keep making new cells, which 'crowds out' normal cells.

This makes it hard for the normal cells to function as they should, as every cell in a body has a role to perform and a job to do.

Can Cancer Spread?

Yes, cancer cells can spread to other parts of the body. This is known as Metastatic cancer. It means the cells have spread from the primary (original site) to the new site on the body.

Where Does The Term 'Tumour' Come From?

When cancer cells grow out of control and rapidly replicate, most of



them form a lump, which can be referred to as a tumour or a growth.

So Are All Lumps Cancerous?

No, not all lumps are cancerous. Very often, in the diagnosis of cancer, doctors will take a sample of the lump/growth and analyse it to see if it is cancerous or not. Lumps which are not cancerous are known technically as benign (be-nine) and those which are, are known technically as malignant (ma-lig-nant).

So, What Is Breast Cancer?

Breasts are largely comprised of fatty connective tissue, milk-producing glands and ducts which carry milk from the glands to the nipple. Breast tissue changes naturally throughout a person's life in response to stimuli from hormones at different stages of life.

Examples of this are the onset of breast growth at puberty, pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Most breast cancers develop in the glands or ducts. Whilst there are many factors which cause breast cancer to develop, which will be explored later, the hormone oestrogen is particularly thought to affect the growth of some breast cancers. Therefore changes which affect hormone levels can also affect cancer risk.

Who Can Breast Cancer Affect?

Around one in eight women will have breast cancer at some stage in their lifetime. Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK. It can affect men, but this is a rare.

Lots of women have lumps in their breasts, and 9 out of 10 are not cancerous***, but if you do have a history of cancer in your family, spot anything unusual, or are concerned you may have genes which increase your cancer risk, it is important to speak to your GP as a first port of call.