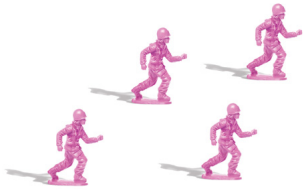


Take Charge of Your Breast Health

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

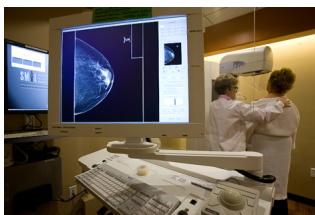
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Breast cancer awareness month has arrived. The pink ribbons we see everywhere are a reminder of the importance of early detection – if detected early, there is a 96 percent chance of survival.



Recent technological advancements allow for earlier, more accurate detection and reduced discomfort. Women should feel empowered to take charge of their breast health and schedule their mammogram – it's the best defense against breast cancer.

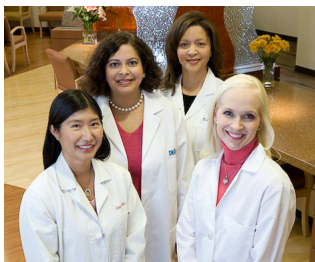
Digital mammography, the gold standard in breast cancer detection, is one of many new technologies. Traditional mammography uses film, whereas digital mammography converts x-rays to electronic images which are viewed, optimized and stored on a computer. This more precise technology results in fewer false positives, call-backs and unnecessary radiation over time. In addition, digital mammography is faster, meaning procedures are more comfortable.



The American Cancer Society recommends that women considered at-risk of breast cancer (have a family history or the mutated BRCA1/BRCA2 gene) receive a breast MRI in addition to their annual mammogram. A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine (2007) advised that all women newly diagnosed with breast cancer in one breast should have an MRI of the opposite breast. In three percent of the study participants, MRI detected very early signs of breast cancer that had been missed by mammography alone.

Also for women newly diagnosed with cancer, PEM (positron emission mammography) is a new technology allowing doctors to detect breast tumors as small as a grain of rice. Not only does PEM reveal the size, shape and location of a suspicious mass, it is over 90 percent accurate in identifying if it is cancerous. Armed with this information, doctors can better determine candidates for breast-conserving surgery or lumpectomy.

Currently being researched to gain FDA approval is breast tomosynthesis (toe-moe-SIN-tha-sis), a technology that provides 3D images, different from mammography's 2D images. This allows for a more detailed look at the breast and easier detection of cancer. Additionally, it is more comfortable because it requires less pressure than a mammogram.



In addition to these imaging technologies, there are several resources available to help women take charge of their breast health. This year, Scottsdale Medical Imaging, Ltd. launched GetaMammo.com, a micro-site created to educate women about the importance of early breast cancer detection, offering links to valuable resources and the convenience of scheduling their mammogram online.

So don't put off that important mammogram. Join the fight and take charge! Get screened.