



October 2023 Quabbin Health District Public Health Nurse Newsletter

www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com

Did you know?

The average patient forgets 40 to 80% of the critical information shared during a doctor's visit immediately after leaving the appointment.

The CDC defines health literacy as “the ability to obtain and understand standard health information and services in order to make informed decisions.”

When health literacy was last measured by the U.S. Department of Education, only 12% of Americans were considered “proficient” in this skill.

So why is health literacy so important? Individuals need to understand how to prevent chronic health conditions, manage those that occur, locate and access medical care, communicate their needs, understand their options, and make informed decisions about their health and treatment.

October is Health Literacy Month!

Every October, we highlight the importance of increasing understanding of health information and improving health system navigation to increase an individual's ability to make informed medical decisions.

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) has a tool to guide that is a resource for individuals and families to help improve their health literacy while exploring and learning about health conditions, healthy living, doctor visits, pregnancy, and more! It can be found online at: [Health.gov/myhealthfinder](https://www.health.gov/myhealthfinder).

Quabbin Health District

Serving the towns of Belchertown, Pelham, and
Ware





OCTOBER

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AWARENESS MONTH

"Domestic violence (DV) (also referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV), dating abuse, or relationship abuse) is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.

Domestic violence doesn't discriminate. People of any race, age, gender, sexuality, religion, education level, or economic status can be a victim — or perpetrator — of domestic violence. That includes behaviors that physically harm, intimidate, manipulate or control a partner, or otherwise force them to behave in ways they don't want to, including through physical violence, threats, emotional abuse, or financial control." - National Domestic Violence Hotline

DV-associated stigma can multiply the risk by preventing victims from help-seeking.

People who stay in DV relationships do so for a number of reasons – fear, shame, lack of resources, immigration status, culture, children, and others. It is a complex situation that deserves support, not shame or stigma.

Leaving is often the most dangerous period of time for a domestic violence survivor.

Regardless of the circumstances, survivors deserve to be empowered to reclaim control over their lives, be safe and valued, and be supported in their decision-making.

About **1 in 3** and **1 in 4**
women men



report having experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

About **1 in 5**
women

and **1 in 13** men

have experienced contact sexual violence by an intimate partner.

14% of women
and
5% of men
report having been stalked by an intimate partner.



***"You are not the darkness you endured. You are the light that refused to surrender."
— John Mark Green***

Top 10 Breast Cancer Myths

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Breast lump = cancer

Some studies estimate as many as **80% of breast lumps are benign**. Non-cancerous breast conditions, such as fibrosis and/or cysts, are very common.
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If a lump is painful, it's not cancer

Between 2-7% of patients with a painful breast lump will be diagnosed with breast cancer.
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Only older women get breast cancer

Approximately **14,500 women age 45 and younger** are diagnosed with breast cancer in the U.S. each year.
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Most breast cancer is hereditary

The majority of breast cancer cases are not caused by inherited gene mutations, and only **5-10% of breast cancer is associated with a gene that is identified**, such as BRCA1 or BRCA2.
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Deodorant/antiperspirant causes breast cancer

Research has found **no conclusive evidence** of a connection between deodorant/antiperspirant and breast cancer.
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Men don't get breast cancer

More than **2,000 men** are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the U.S.
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You should avoid sugar and soy if you have breast cancer

There is **no evidence** that eating sugar or soy has any clinical effect on breast cancer.
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Self-screening is the most important factor in early diagnosis

Many guidelines recommend self-exams, but **they should complement and not replace** appropriate screenings from your doctor.
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Exposing the tumor to air during surgery can cause cancer to spread

There is **no evidence** in breast cancer that air causes cancer to spread, or that needle core biopsies cause cancer to spread.
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A mastectomy is the best therapy

Studies have shown that a lumpectomy, followed by radiation therapy, is **just as effective** as a mastectomy, and **much less invasive**.

Sources:

- <http://www.cancer.org/treatment/understandingyourdiagnosis/examsandtestsdescriptions/forwomentestings/breastbiopsy/breast-biopsy-benign-breast-conditions>
- <http://blog.dana-farber.org/insight/2011/12/16-a-breast-lump-is-painful-is-it-not-cancer/>
- <http://blog.dana-farber.org/insight/2014/07/five-myths-about-breast-cancer/>
- <http://blog.dana-farber.org/insight/2014/02/does-deodorant-antiperspirant-cause-breast-cancer/>
- <http://blog.dana-farber.org/insight/2013/02/can-men-get-breast-cancer/>
- <http://blog.dana-farber.org/insight/2014/10/five-things-young-women-with-breast-cancer-should-know/>

SUSAN F. SMITH
CENTER FOR
WOMEN'S CANCERS

DANA-FARBER
CANCER INSTITUTE



There is no absolute way to prevent breast cancer, but there are ways to decrease your risk:

Stay at a healthy weight: (work with your medical provider to determine what is a healthy weight for you), balance food intake with physical activity

Be physically active: The American Cancer Society recommends that adults get at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week (or a combination of these), preferably spread throughout the week.

Alcohol: Avoid or limit alcohol intake.

Other factors that might lower risk: Women who choose to breastfeed for at least several months after childbirth may also get an added benefit of reducing their breast cancer risk.

Using hormone therapy after menopause can increase your risk of breast cancer. To avoid this, talk to your health care provider about non-hormonal options to treat menopausal symptoms.

