

Taking Care of Everyone?include yourself!

As with most health issues, early detection is often the key to a successful outcome. This is certainly true for breast cancer-the earlier the diagnosis, the earlier treatment can begin and the more effective that treatment may be. Fortunately, there are a number of tests available to help ensure the earliest detection possible. The following guidelines are suggested to be proactive in your personal healthcare:

TEST/SCREENING	WHO SHOULD HAVE IT	HOW OFTEN
Breast Self-Examination Includes looking at and feeling your breast for any changes.	All women starting at age 20 should use this tool to learn what is normal for them and be aware of any change.	Every month.
Clinical Breast Exam Your doctor examines your breasts. Doctors are trained to look for subtle signs and changes. Up to 25% of breast lumps are discovered by a physical exam.	The American Cancer Society recommends that all women have this exam as part of their routine physical.	Starting at age 20 women should have a breast exam at least once every three years. Starting at age 40, women should have one every year.
Mammogram An x-ray of the breast, using a special low-radiation camera.	Generally, all women starting at age 40; women at high risk should start as early as 30, based on doctors' recommendations.	Once a year for women of average risk; high-risk women may need to have them more often based on doctors' recommendations.

See your doctor if you notice any of these things in your breasts (www.Komen.org):

- Lump, hard knot or thickening
- Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening
- Change in size or shape
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin
- Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
- Pulling in of your nipple or other parts
- Nipple discharge that starts suddenly
- New pain in one spot that does not go away

Chatham Health District, your local health department is working towards a Cancer-free future! Please contact Vickie Han, Cancer Care Coordinator at (860) 365-0884 for further information, resources for local physicians and resources on how to receive free screenings for those women without health insurance.