

BREAST AWARENESS MONTH

The designation of the month of October as "Breast Cancer Awareness Month" in South Africa reflects a nationwide drive by public and private healthcare structures to raise awareness of this debilitating disease across all races and class structures.



The Breast Cancer Awareness Month, marked in countries across the world every October, helps to increase attention and support for the awareness, **early detection** and treatment as well as **palliative care** of this disease.

The incidence of breast cancer among South African woman is **increasing** and it is one of the most common cancers among women in South Africa.

Facts about breast cancer

- Early detection of the condition can lead to effective treatment and a positive prognosis. About 90% of patients survive for many years after diagnosis when breast cancer is detected at the early stages.
- Regular self-breast examination and regular mammograms are key to early detection.
- Presenting yourself early for treatment may result in more effective treatment, leading to a reduction in pain and suffering and a significant decrease in the loss of life.

COVID-19 IMPACT SCREENING BENEFITS



MAMMOGRAM

Early detection saves lives

Most medical schemes in South Africa offer invaluable screening benefits like mammograms relevant to age. The largest medical scheme in SA released alarming statistics indicating a 51% reduction in breast-screening mammograms resulting in a 44% reduction in breast cancer diagnosis. Members are encouraged to contact their medical scheme or healthcare broker for more information.

EARLY DETECTION SO IMPORTANT

Breast cancer it's a scary thought and all too many women assume that it won't happen to them. Fact is though, **every ten minutes** a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. So, don't be ignorant, during breast cancer awareness month 2020 go for a medical check-up, it might save your life.

Early signs of breast cancer can be a lump in a breast, a painful breast or armpit, or a discharge from the nipple. Even if none of these symptoms presents themselves, a doctor should be visited to be sure. A doctor will most likely perform a manual exam and send you for a **mammogram**. A mammogram examination is painless and only takes about ten minutes.

If any of these symptoms do present themselves there's **no need to panic**. Most of the time, pain or a lump in a breast can be perfectly harmless. The pain can be a sign of a cyst or the lump can be benign. It's always better to be sure though.

If the mammogram shows a lump, your doctor will order a **biopsy**. This test will show if the lump is **benign** (harmless) or **malignant** (cancerous). If the lump is **cancerous** there's still **no reason to panic**. Early detection is a **lifesaver**. By way of a simple operation, the lump is removed after which the doctor will discuss further options with you.

If you've never had a **mammogram**, make an **appointment** during breast cancer awareness month 2020. You can take a friend or family member with you and afterwards you'll have peace of mind.

WHY THE PINK RIBBON?

So here then is the real story and the true link to the Pink

Charlotte Haley, who had battled breast cancer, introduced the concept of a peach-coloured breast cancer awareness ribbon. In the early 1990s, the 68-year-old Haley began making peach ribbons by hand in her home. Her daughter, sister and grandmother had breast cancer. She distributed thousands of ribbons at supermarkets with cards that read: "The National Cancer Institute annual budget is \$1.8 billion, only 5 percent goes for cancer prevention. Help us wake up our legislators and America by wearing this ribbon."

As the word spread, executives from Estée Lauder and Self Magazine asked Haley for permission to use her ribbon. Haley refused to say the companies were too commercial. But "Self" really wanted to have her ribbon. The magazine consulted its lawyers and was advised to come up with another colour. It chose pink, a colour that focus groups say is soothing, comforting and healing — a far cry from what breast cancer really is. Soon Charlotte Haley's grassroots peach ribbon was history, and her original idea became the pink ribbon that has come to be known as the worldwide symbol for breast cancer.

The breast cancer movement is much bigger than October. And it isn't only about finding a cure or getting a mammogram or raising money. It's about prevention and education and guaranteed treatment for everyone — women and men, rich or poor.

It's a crusade that should unite all of us at every level. That pink ribbon, after all, is just the pretty tie that sits atop the box in which the gift of life has been wrapped, and where the hope of a cure has been waiting to be released—to become the perfect gift for each of us who knows cancer all too well.

www.BreastCancerSpeaker.com





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[ht https://www.gov.za/BreastCancerAwarenessMonth2020](https://www.gov.za/BreastCancerAwarenessMonth2020)

<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/breast-cancer-awareness-month-2021/>

<https://www.utmedicalcenter.org/8-tips-for-breast-health/>

<https://www.curetoday.com/view/the-story-behind-the-pink-ribbon>

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