

Nutrition for Your Health

Your guide to better living

Dr. Dale Kelly, DC

January, 2006

Mammogram Myths



*"Mammograms are safe." "Mammograms catch cancer in it's early stages."
"Mammograms save lives." Although there is no solid evidence proving mammograms have any benefit, just read your typical news articles or breast cancer awareness publications and you'll hear the same ole' rhetoric that does nothing more than support the same old line.*

"Mammograms are safe." In fact, they're not. Because mammograms are taken with X-rays, they expose your body to needless radiation that can cause cancer. Screening mammography poses significant and cumulative risks of breast cancer for premenopausal women. The routine practice of taking four films of each breast annually results in approximately 1 rad (radiation absorbed dose) exposure, about 1,000 times greater than that from a chest x-ray. In fact, on Wednesday June 28, 2005, a report by a National Academy of Sciences Panel on Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation stated that the preponderance of scientific evidence shows that even very low doses of radiation pose a risk of cancer or other health problems and there is NO threshold below which exposure can be viewed as harmless. This is critical because it addresses radiation amounts commonly use in medical treatment and scans [i.e. Mammograms, chest x-rays and CT scans]. In addition to radiation exposure, compression of the breast from a mammogram may prompt cancer to spread. The compression required for mammograms can actually break down cancer tissue and rupture small blood vessels that support the cancer, causing it to spread. This is known as the "compression contradiction". In the January 2002 issue of his *Real Health Breakthroughs Newsletter*, William Campbell Douglass II, M.D., said: *"I find it maddeningly contradictory that medical students are taught to examine breasts gently to keep any possible cancer from spreading, yet radiologists are allowed to manhandle them for a mammogram."* Since 1928, physicians have been warned to handle "cancerous breasts with care -- for fear of accidentally disseminating cells" and spreading the cancer. Nevertheless, mammography entails tight and often painful breast compression, which could lead to distant and lethal spread of

malignant cells by rupturing small blood vessels in or around small-undetected breast cancers.

"Mammograms catch cancer at an early stage." In fact, if a tumor is large enough to be detected by a mammogram it's most likely already in an advanced state. As proven by a unique large-scale screening study by University of Toronto epidemiologists, monthly breast self-examination (BSE) following brief training, coupled with annual clinical breast examination (CBE) by a trained health care professional, is at least as effective as mammography in detecting early tumors, and also safe [no radiation!].

"Mammograms save lives." Inevitably, when I talk about mammograms, I will hear comments/messages from women who feel they owe their lives to cancer detected by mammograms. I have serious doubts about this belief. Read my lips...*Early detection does not translate into increased survival rates!* In fact, studies have shown that women who have mammograms suffer about the same rate of death due to breast cancer as women who do not have mammograms. [*Journal of the National Cancer Institute* September 20, 2000; 92:1490-1499] This is not published in some "no-name" journal or press release. This is from the *National Cancer Institute*. Their analysis confirms what we have suspected for some time...that mammograms are not a good idea.

So why do your physicians still recommend them? One word... "Lawsuit". Most physicians recommend them for fear of being sued by a woman who developed breast cancer in which he did not advise to get one. It is interesting how mammograms can be found to provide absolutely no benefit, yet it is the "standard of care" of

mainstream medicine. "Quackbusters" like Stephen Barrett love to jump on alternative medical practices as essentially being worthless, yet I don't hear him referring to the tens of thousands of doctors ordering mammograms as "quacks". If this were some "alternative" or "natural" therapy in questions, he and the government would be looking to shut down all alternative medical practices across the country. I think in a very short time, the medical establishment is going to look back at mammograms and view it as a barbaric and ineffective dark time of medicine.

Options: We usually recommend thermograms instead of mammogram for breast evaluations, which are becoming more popular although there are only a few places that do them. Blood testing will usually detect cancers that are metastasized or growing rapidly. Very early small or early tumors are enclosed in a membrane and all of the cancer cells are inside this membrane. This is why tumor markers will be normal. Biopsy or anything that ruptures the membrane will spread the cancer or allow a few cancer cells to migrate. This is why I recommend that if you have a lump in the breast to either leave it alone or take it out...don't biopsy it.

If you do have a lump, it is very important that you improve your immune system as much as possible; sometimes the lumps get smaller and even go away without medical treatment. This is why testing is so important to determine deficiencies, imbalances or toxicities that could affect the immune system and lower the body's natural ability to fight cancer.

Much of the documentation in this newsletter is taken from Samuel S. Epstein, M.D., Professor Emeritus Environmental and Occupational Medicine Chairman, Cancer Prevention Coalition, University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health
312-996-2297; Web site: <http://www.preventcancer.com>

For further details and supporting documentation, see "Dangers and Unreliability of Mammography: Breast Examination is a Safe, Effective and Practical Alternative," by Samuel S. Epstein, Barbara Seaman and Rosalie Bertell, International Journal of Health Services, volume 31(3):605-615, 2001.

Federal Law requires that we warn you of the following:

1. The information provided in this article is for educational purposes only.
2. Your individual health status and any required health care treatments can only be properly addressed by a professional healthcare provider of your choice. Remember: There is no adequate substitution for a personal consultation with your chosen health care provider. Therefore, we encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.

If you are receiving duplicates of this email or would like to be removed from this distribution list, please email mail@nutrition4yourhealth.com and we can solve the issue.

**Don't Guess About Your Health...
Schedule a Nutritional Consultation Today!**

To make an appointment for a nutritional consultation,
please call 775-358-6824