

Think About Pink: It's breast cancer awareness month by Zivame

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Did you know October is called the 'Pink Month'? Let's start there! Pink is the colour associated with Breast Cancer Awareness. When it comes to our day-to-day lives, we may pay attention to our diet and lifestyle, but not as much about the diseases we are prone to. Think about it – when was the last time you discussed breast cancer with your friends or family? It may not generally come up, so we're debunking some common myths to break the stigma that surrounds this discourse.

While it's important to have this conversation, it's also vital to understand why. Statistically, somewhere in the world, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer every 4 minutes. The lack of awareness means the diagnosis happens at a later stage than the other statistics studied.

We've listed out some of the most common risk factors of breast cancer:

- *Obesity*
- *Lack of physical activity*
- *Alcohol consumption*
- *Family history of breast cancer*
- *Hormone therapy after menopause*

Let's closely look at some of the most common breast cancer myths that we've often heard doing the rounds –

If I don't have a family history of breast cancer, I will definitely not get it

Many people believe that breast cancer is hereditary. However, only about 5-10% of types of breast cancers are thought to be hereditary, which means they are caused by abnormal changes (or mutations) in specific genes passed down from parent to child. 1 The vast majority of people who develop breast cancer have no family history, implying that other factors, such as environment and lifestyle, must be at play.

Remind your loved ones to get mammograms on a regular basis. These breast screenings detect problems early when they are easiest to treat.

Wearing a bra can cause breast cancer

Wearing bras cannot cause or prevent breast cancer. We've heard of this myth being associated with wearing bras all day and night or wearing wired bras. The reasoning behind this myth is that the wire may restrict the flow of lymphatic fluids, causing toxic build-up. But the truth is, there has been no substantial evidence to back this claim.

Breast cancer only happens to middle-aged women over the age of 40

Breast cancer can and does affect young women. While it is true that getting older is one of the major risk factors for developing breast cancer, studies have shown that age has no bearing on who gets the disease. Women of all ages should ideally pay attention to their breasts, perform regular self-exams, and report any unusual changes to their doctors.

If you maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, you definitely cannot get breast cancer

Leading a "plain Jane" lifestyle along with a healthy diet has been shown to reduce breast cancer risks. That said, they cannot guarantee that you will never contract the disease. There are multiple examples of people who do everything right and still develop breast cancer.

What helps? You could manage the risk factors that you have control over. Watch what you eat and drink and how physically active you are. Make sure to also schedule regular screenings, perform breast self-exams, and be aware of any unusual changes in your body.

Breast cancer does not affect men

Breast cancer is even more uncommon in men, but it does occur. Men are frequently told that they cannot get breast cancer because they do not have breasts, but they do have breast tissue. Even though male breast cancer is uncommon, it is often diagnosed at a later stage because breast changes and lumps do not usually cause men or their doctors to think "breast cancer." Unusual changes in male breasts should also be investigated.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is celebrated in October each year to raise awareness about the causes and effects of breast cancer. Zivame encourages you to Think About Pink and support this cause and understand the importance of spreading the word about breast cancer.