



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Is Real Prevention Possible?



Dr. Kate Thomsen and Silky

Women don't have to be told that breast cancer is the most common cancer in women – it seems we all know at least one friend or family member who has been affected. This is the effect of a cancer that is rampantly common and since the biggest risk factor is age, we continue to see more breast cancer as our friends and family get older. Matter of fact, by the time a woman is 70 years old, her chances of having breast cancer are 1 in 8.

The month of October has been designated Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the media and hospitals focus our attention on new treatments, better diagnostics, and prevention. But when these campaigns use the word prevention – they really mean "early diagnosis" using mammography. Who is addressing real prevention? Is it expected that women will just continue to get breast cancer, generation after generation, and the best one can hope for is to find it early when it is too small to feel?

Creating the conditions for the development of cancer involves the interaction of hormone levels, environmental exposures and

genetic susceptibility. The complexity of these interactions limits our ability to fully understand and interpret risk factors.

Approximately 75% of women with breast cancer have age and gender as their only known risk factors. It has been estimated that inherited risk factors contribute only 27% of the risk while environmental factors contribute 73% of the risk.

The field of epigenetics has shown us that most of our genetic susceptibility to disease can be modified by the way we live our lives. Nutrition, exercise, and applying what I call "decreasing exposure, and increasing protection" are lifestyle behaviors that wash over genes and turn certain genes on and others off. Using "genomic" testing (testing the blood for variations in genes that are unique to an individual) can show vulnerabilities and lead to meaningful lifestyle changes that decrease risk.

Estrogen is a growth factor and its message to the cells is to grow and proliferate. Because estrogen levels fluctuate, the usefulness of testing blood levels is questionable and difficult to associate with breast cancer risk. However, the work of Eleanor Rogan PhD, has provided us with a different approach to reducing hormone related risk. She has been researching the by-products of estrogen, the molecules produced by the body as it clears excess estrogen. Different estrogen by-products can be more or less strongly related to breast cancer risk. We now know that they can be measured and they can be modified.

Dr Rogan's work over the past almost 20 years is fascinating and demands our attention.

Focusing on true prevention of breast cancer will take interdisciplinary strategies within medicine and outside of medicine as we become more and more accustomed to the fact that our health is not only related to the genes our parents gave us, but we are also what our grandmothers ate, what our grandfathers drank, what we breathe, how much we move, how we think and on and on...



Dr Kate Thomsen has a holistic health practice in Pennington, NJ. She is a board certified family medicine physician. For more information see www.drkatethomsen.com. For information about appointments or the upcoming detoxification program call the office at 609-818-9700.



Breast Cancer Risk Reduction Program

- ✿ 3 or 4 evening classes spread over 2 months
- ✿ Group support to make it more FUN!!!
- ✿ Delicious and healthy dinners, snacks and recipes

Individualized measurements include:

- ✿ Comprehensive dietary analysis
- ✿ Body composition analysis
- ✿ Hormone evaluation by estrogen metabolites
- ✿ Your risk factor genes (optional)

Lectures and discussions include:

- ✿ Body composition and its importance
- ✿ Decreasing exposure and increasing protection:
 - Nutrition and exercise for risk reduction
 - Estrogens and how they affect your risk
 - Decreasing environmental exposures
- ✿ Interpreting your genomics (optional)

Dates of program: Tuesdays: Sept 30, Oct 21, Oct 28

An additional (optional) night added for those interested in genomics. Time: 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

Call for details and registration information.

Location: Office of Dr. Kate Thomsen
252 West Delaware Ave, Pennington, NJ 08534

PHONE: 609-818-9700

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8:15 am - Women's and Men's
5 K Run

10:00 am - Co-Ed 2.5 Mile &
1 Mile Health Walks

