

Support Breast Cancer Research in Florida

Purchase Specialty License Plate

By Pamela Mason

Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in women in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, it's estimated that about 178,480 women in the United States will be found to have invasive breast cancer in 2007. About 40,460 women, and 450 men will die from the disease this year. Right now there are slightly over 2 million women living in the United States who have been treated for breast cancer. In Florida, an estimated 11,710 new cases of breast cancer in women will be diagnosed and 2,700 will die of the disease.

If you're worried about developing breast cancer, or if you know someone who has been diagnosed with the disease, one way to deal with your concerns is to get as much information as possible. Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that grows in one or both of the breasts. Breast cancer usually develops in the ducts or lobules, also known as the milk-producing areas of the breast.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women (after lung cancer). Although African-American women have a slightly lower incidence of breast cancer after age 40 than Caucasian women, they have a slightly higher incidence rate of breast cancer before age 40. However, African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer at every age. Breast cancer is much less common in males; however, The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2007 some 2,030 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among men in the United States.

One of the earliest signs of breast cancer can be an abnormality that shows up on a mammogram before it can be felt. The most common signs of breast cancer are a lump in the breast; abnormal thickening of the

breast; or a change in the shape or color of the breast. Finding a lump or change in your breast does not necessarily mean you have breast cancer. Additional changes that may also be signs of breast cancer include:

- Any new, hard lump or thickening in any part of the breast
- Change in breast size or shape
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin
- Swelling, redness or warmth that does not go away
- Pain in one spot that does not vary with your monthly cycle
- Pulling in of the nipple
- Nipple discharge that starts suddenly and appears only in one breast
- An itchy, sore or scaling area on one nipple



Mammography screening remains the best available method to detect breast cancer early. It is important for women to practice the elements of good breast health. It is suggested women:

- Obtain regular mammography screening starting at the age of 40
- Obtain annual clinical breast exam
- Perform monthly breast self exam
- Obtain a risk assessment from a physician

In 2003, the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition Research Foundation (FBCCRF) created the "**End Breast Cancer**" specialty license plate. The funds from the sale of the plate go to support breast cancer research in Florida. Purchasing this specialty license plate is a visible way to show your support in helping end breast cancer.

Pamela Mason is Chair of Public Relations for the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation.

Resources: American Cancer Society; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Cancer Institute

For more information, please visit the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition Research Foundation's website at www.fbccrf.org.