



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
September 30, 2014

Provincial Health Services Authority
BC Cancer Agency
Ministry of Health

BC cancer organizations launch website about steps to reduce breast cancer risk

Vancouver –Thanks to research and new treatments for breast cancer, more women are surviving, and thriving, than ever before. But it's also important for women to know that they can take steps to reduce their risk of getting this type of cancer.

BC's leading cancer organizations have joined forces to create Five Plus (www.fiveplusbc.ca), a new website that encourages women to take five steps that may help to prevent breast cancer, plus two actions for possible early detection:

Five:

1. Maintain a healthy body weight.
2. Maintain an active lifestyle.
3. Limit alcohol consumption.
4. Breastfeed if possible.
5. Weigh the risks and benefits of hormone therapy.

Plus:

1. Be aware of the look and feel of your breasts so you notice any changes.
2. Book a mammogram every two years if you are between the ages of 50 to 74. Mammograms for women age 40-49 or over 74 can also be considered. Talk to your doctor.

The Five Plus actions are based on current research and were developed by a team of BC's foremost experts in breast health. The website, www.fiveplusbc.ca, contains detailed information about how these five risk factors affect breast health and how best to detect breast cancer early.

Led by the BC Cancer Agency, the Five Plus initiative is a part of the Provincial Breast Health Strategy, which unites various health agencies and partners to improve breast cancer screening, diagnosis and prevention across BC.

Project Partners include Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Services Authority (and its agencies the BC Cancer Agency and BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre), the regional health authorities, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society, and the University of British Columbia.

Quotes:**Terry Lake, Minister of Health –**

“British Columbia is fortunate to have some of the top experts in breast cancer research, treatment and prevention and I’m thrilled they’ve come together to create this valuable resource. Prevention and early detection are two of our most important tools in the battle against breast cancer, and an educational website like Five Plus is a key part of that.”

Dr. Carolyn Gotay, Cancer Prevention Centre, University of British Columbia –

“There are some common misconceptions when it comes to breast cancer. We know, for example, many women believe that there is nothing that can be done to reduce their risk of getting breast cancer. What we’re trying to do with Five Plus is dispel those inaccurate beliefs about breast cancer and encourage behaviours and lifestyle choices that really make a difference.”

Dr. Christine Wilson, Medical Director, Screening Mammography Program, BC Cancer Agency –

“It’s important that all women know that their risk of breast cancer can be reduced. Women should also be focused on early detection – they should be aware of how their breasts look and feel so that they notice any changes and raise those to their family doctor. And, if they are between the ages of 50 to 74, they should get a mammogram every two years.”

Wendy Slavin, CEO, Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, BC/Yukon Region –

“CBCF is proud to be a partner in Five Plus. The website will be a valuable resource, reinforcing the importance of knowing your personal risk for breast cancer and taking actions to lower it through healthy lifestyle choices and regular participation in mammography. The collaboration between the partner organizations will ensure uniform and up-to-date information.”

Barbara Kaminsky, CEO, Canadian Cancer Society –

“Even though British Columbia excels in healthy living, thousands of BC women continue to be affected annually by breast cancer. Many women mistakenly believe that breast cancer risk is primarily driven by family history, when in fact simply being a woman and aging are the two most significant risk factors. But there are a number of ways that women can be empowered to reduce their risk and stop cancer before it even starts.”

Quick Facts:

- Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer diagnosed in Canadian women.
- Up to 42% of breast cancers are linked to lifestyle factors.
- BC has one of the lowest incidence rates and has the second lowest mortality rate of breast cancer in the country for those women who do get breast cancer.
- In 2014, an estimated 3,500 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in British Columbia, and approximately 600 will die from the disease.
- Over 80 per cent of new breast cancers diagnosed each year in BC are in women age 50 or over.
- Mammograms help find cancer in its earliest stages – when there are more treatment options and a better chance for successful treatment.
- Research has shown a 25 per cent reduction in deaths from breast cancer among women who are screened through the BC Cancer Agency’s Screening Mammography Program.

The BC Cancer Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, is committed to reducing the incidence of cancer, reducing the mortality from cancer, and improving the quality of life of those living with cancer. It provides a comprehensive cancer control program for the people of British Columbia by working with community partners to deliver a range of oncology services, including prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, research, education, supportive care, rehabilitation and palliative care. For more information, visit www.bccancer.bc.ca.

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