

## Breast Cancer Prevention Begins with You

Did you know that according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women in the United States?

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month and OAOHN would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to care for yourself, and your loved ones, by reminding you of the importance of preventive care.

Thankfully, breast cancer prevention begins with a variety of factors you can control. Including:

- **Managing a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese increases the risk of breast cancer. Eating a healthy diet and getting plenty of exercise can help reduce your risk.
- **Breast-feeding.** Breast-feeding your children may offer some protection against breast cancer.
- **Hormone therapy.** If you're currently taking hormone therapy for menopausal symptoms, ask your doctor about options. According to the National Cancer Institute, long-term combination hormone therapy increases the risk of breast cancer.
- **Restricting alcohol consumption.** Your risk of developing breast cancer rises with an increase in alcohol consumption. Limit yourself to no more than one drink a day.

While taking care of your physical health is a great way to help prevent any disease, so is maintaining a healthy spirit. For example:

- **Staying positive.** Research shows that happiness and optimism are associated with lower rates of breast cancer. Focus on your thoughts — stop negative ones and replace them with positive ones.
- **Managing stress.** Utilizing a few stress relievers, like deep breathing, muscle relaxation and keeping a journal, can be helpful in controlling the impact stress has on your body.
- **Maintaining a balanced lifestyle.** Don't stretch yourself too thin – make sure to have time for proper nutrition, sleep, work and play.
- **Creating a circle of support.** Maintaining a close network of family and friends can provide you with emotional support when you need it.

Lastly, getting health screenings and tests from your doctor is key in sustaining your health and helping prevent diseases like breast cancer.

Having a Primary Care Physician (PCP) who can coordinate your care is vital to your good health. If you don't have a PCP, finding one is easy! Just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.