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## **October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

*Local HSHS Hospitals emphasize the importance of annual screenings for early cancer detection*

(BREESE, GREENVILLE, HIGHLAND, IL) – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is a national campaign to increase awareness of the disease, encourage women to get their annual mammogram and to offer support to the over three million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

Breast cancer can develop in women of every age, race and ethnic group. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 268,600 women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer this year and approximately 40,000 women will die. Breast cancer in men is not as common, but it does happen, affecting about 2,000 American men each year. The good news is the death rate due to breast cancer has decreased significantly thanks to early detection.

HSHS St. Joseph's Hospitals in Breese and Highland, and HSHS Holy Family in Greenville are encouraging women to take charge of their breast health by following these important breast cancer prevention tips below:

- **Self-check.** Starting at age 20, women should do a monthly self-breast exam.
- **See your physician regularly.** Women ages 20-40 should have a breast exam by a physician or nurse practitioner every three years, and annually thereafter. If you are high risk because of family or personal history, then you should see a physician every six months starting at age 25.
- **Understand your risk factors.** Risk factors include having a family or personal history of breast cancer, having a menstrual period before age 12, being post-menopause, being overweight, or having excess fat around your waist, drinking alcohol every day, not having children, or your first child after age 30, and taking hormone replacement therapy. The more risk factors an individual has, the greater the risk.

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- **Get a mammogram.** Mammograms should be done every one to two years for women age 40 or older and begin at age 30 if you are at high risk.
- **Know your family history.** Women who have a first-degree relative or other close relatives who have had breast cancer may be at increased risk of developing these cancers. When determining your risk due to family history, it is important to look at the number of women and/or men in your family who have been diagnosed and the age at which they were diagnosed. Talk to your physician about your family history and discuss what you should be doing for prevention and screening.
- **Breastfeed.** Women who breastfeed their babies for at least a year in total have a reduced risk of developing breast cancer later in life.
- **Develop healthy habits.** Eat low-fat foods and lots of fruits and vegetables. Stay close to the weight your doctor says is right for you and exercise regularly. Increased physical activity, even when begun later in life, reduces overall breast-cancer risk by about 10 percent to 30 percent. Limit alcohol intake to no more than one drink a day and refrain from tobacco use.

“During National Breast Cancer Awareness month, and all year long, women should remember that early detection is your best defense,” said Stephen Morris, RT(R)(MR), director of Radiology for St. Joseph’s Hospitals in Breese and Highland and Holy Family Hospital in Greenville. “Perform your breast self-exam at the same time each month and know your body; know what is normal for you, and always talk to your physician if you feel an abnormality.”

While the most common symptom of breast cancer is a new lump or mass, additional symptoms of breast cancer can include:

- **Swelling of all or part of a breast** (even if no distinct lump is felt)
- **Skin irritation or dimpling** (sometimes looking like an orange peel)
- **Breast or nipple pain**
- **Nipple retraction** (turning inward)
- **Redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin**
- **Nipple discharge** (other than breast milk)

Although any of these symptoms can be caused by things other than breast cancer, all should be reported to a health care professional so that the cause can be found.

All of the HSHS hospitals in Breese, Greenville and Highland offer advanced 3D mammography. To schedule an annual screening mammogram, see the list of locations and scheduling contact information below:

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- HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Breese, 9515 Holy Cross Lane: Call 618-607-5600
- HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville, 200 Healthcare Drive: Call 618-690-3555
- HSHS St. Joseph's Highland Hospital, 12866 Troxler Avenue: Call 618-607-5600

You can also visit [hshs3dmammography.org](https://hshs3dmammography.org) to request a representative to contact you to schedule your mammography appointment.

To schedule a mammography appointment at St. Joseph's Hospital Breese or Holy Family Hospital Greenville, a physician referral ***is*** required. A physician referral ***is not*** required to schedule an appointment at St. Joseph's Hospital Highland.

The public is reminded that Illinois legislation passed Senate Bill 466 into law in 2016, which requires that all insurance plans throughout the state cover 3D mammography. If a person's individual insurance plans states differently, patients are encouraged to contact their plan administrator.

HSHS St. Joseph's Hospitals in Breese and Highland, and HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville are part of the Southern Illinois Division of Hospital Sisters Health System, which also includes HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon and HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital in Effingham.

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#### **About Hospital Sisters Health System**

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high quality, Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our 15 Local Systems and physician practices in Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville, and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan, and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit [www.hshs.org](http://www.hshs.org). For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit [www.hospitalsisters.org](http://www.hospitalsisters.org).