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Spotlight on Breast Thermography

By Tracy Rubert

Lauren Feder, MD, offers advice for breast cancer screening as well as prevention.

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Just in time for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, *Better Nutrition* caught up with Lauren Feder, MD, author of *Natural Baby and Childcare* and *The Parents' Concise Guide to Childhood Vaccinations*, and advocate for a relatively new test for early detection of breast cancer called breast thermography. Here, Feder, known for her work as a homeopath and children's health expert, explains what breast thermography is and offers advice for breast cancer screening as well as prevention.

Q: What is breast thermography?

A: Breast thermography, also known as Digital Infrared Thermal Imaging (DITI), is a simple, safe, non-invasive test of the breast. Thermography works by taking infrared images of the breast that detect minute temperature changes associated with breast inflammation and tumors. Having this information allows for the earliest possible intervention and treatment. It involves no radiation, discomfort or pain, and the entire thermography scan takes about 15 minutes. Thermography can provide early detection of breast conditions beyond what is possible through monthly self-exam, doctor exam, or mammogram.

Q: How is thermography different from mammography?

A: Breast thermography plays a role in early detection and monitoring of abnormal physiology, including breast cancer, and is considered a screening device. Mammograms, on the other hand, are used to precisely locate an abnormal area and are considered a diagnostic tool. Breast thermography does not replace mammography. Rather, the two are considered complementary to each other.

Q: Can thermography detect breast cancer?

A: It takes years for a tumor to grow, thus the earliest possible indication of abnormality will allow for the earliest possible treatment and intervention. Thermography can play an important role in monitoring breast health and assisting in early detection. The faster a malignant tumor grows, the more infrared radiation it generates. For younger women in particular, results from thermography screening can lead to earlier detection and, ultimately, longer life.

Doctors do not yet know how to prevent breast cancer. However, you can increase your chances of detecting breast cancer in its earliest stages by understanding the need for and participating in an early detection program.



About 20 percent of biopsied breast lumps are cancerous. If you find a lump, act quickly—when cancer is found early there are choices for treatment, and with prompt treatment the outlook is good. In fact, most women treated for early breast cancer will be free from breast cancer for the rest of their lives. So be sure to maintain an early breast cancer detection regimen that includes annual mammograms and monthly self-exams. And consider whether adding thermography to your regimen is the right choice for you.

Q: There is an ongoing debate over mammograms and their guidelines. What is your opinion?

A: By age 40, every two years. There is no single method for the early detection of breast cancer. Using a combination of methods will increase your chances of detecting cancer in an early stage. These methods include: mammography for all women aged 40 or older, regular DITI screening for adult women of all ages, regular breast examination by a health professional, monthly breast self-examination, personal awareness of changes in the breasts, and readiness to promptly discuss any such changes with a doctor.

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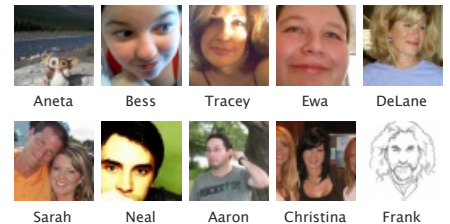


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