

Mugg & Bean's in the pink

For most women, one of life's most treasured treats is a heart-to-heart with a close girlfriend over a delicious cup of coffee. During October, coffee-loving bosom buddies who pop in to a Mugg & Bean coffee shop will be in for a 'pink' surprise. Throughout the month, Mugg & Bean stores nationwide will be serving 'pink' cappuccinos in support of breast cancer awareness and education.



Known as the 'Pink Mugg Shot', the initiative is a partnership between Novartis Oncology and Mugg & Bean coffee shops. These organisations joined forces on the initiative in a bid to find a novel but meaningful way of encouraging South Africans to think about breast cancer*.

"Breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting women in South Africa¹," says breast health expert, Carol Benn. "But it is also a curable disease if detected and treated early²."

Dr Benn says about one in nine women in South Africa will get cancer of the breast at some time in their lives.

Talk about it, share information, learn!

Talking about the disease with your girlfriends is one way of sharing information and tips about how to detect it. "Nine out of ten breast lumps are detected by women themselves¹; so breast self-examination once a month is vitally important," says Dr Benn. "It's also important to remember that 90% of breast lumps are not cancer¹, so if you find a lump in your breast, do not be afraid to go to your doctor."

You should also endeavour to ask for a second opinion when it comes to breast cancer. "The treatment of breast cancer should be suited to you as an individual," says Dr Benn. "It's a good idea to consider all treatment options before deciding on any specific treatment."

She says breast cancer can be treated in various ways, including chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery. "Breast cancer patients may experience fears around their treatment; fear of being sick; in pain, of the side effects; disfigurement and death," says Dr Benn. "You should discuss these issues with your doctor as many side effects of treatment and surgery can be alleviated³."

Many women may also worry that treating breast cancer involves losing their femininity, especially if they have to undergo a mastectomy to remove one or both breasts. However, Dr Benn says there have been major advances in treatment so that women can be offered breast reconstruction at the time of cancer surgery irrespective of the type of cancer surgery done.

"The more you know about breast cancer and the treatment options available, the better equipped you will be to cope³," says Dr Benn. "Try and speak openly about it with your partner, family, friends and doctor rather than keeping your feelings bottled up³."

Dr Benn says that nine out of ten women diagnosed with early breast cancer will be alive after five years; and those who survive for five years, will very likely live their normal lifespan¹.

Show your support for breast cancer awareness by rustling up some girlfriends and heading off to your favourite Mugg & Bean for a round of pink cappuccinos. While enjoying the Mugg & Bean's fragrant brew, you can show your solidarity with your gal pals by SMS-ing the word 'PINK' to 38584. Every SMS received raises R10 for the Breast Health Foundation.

For more information on the Pink Mugg Shot campaign and how you can support breast cancer awareness please visit the Breast Health Foundation's website on: www.mybreast.org.za.

Women at high risk

You may be at higher risk of developing breast cancer if there is a history in your family. Know your family history either on your mother or your father's side. If a mother or sister has or had breast cancer at a young age (30-40 years), then a woman's risk of developing the disease is doubled⁴. Studies have demonstrated too that the risk of breast cancer increases after using hormone replacement therapy for over five years⁵. Women who have their first pregnancy in their thirties are also at higher risk of developing breast cancer⁴.

Signs and symptoms

If you discover a lump in your breast, it doesn't necessarily mean cancer. An ultrasound is used to tell what kind of a lump it is⁶. Cancerous lumps are also not always painful and only 10% of breast cancer patients experience a constant pain in a specific area of the breast⁷. If there is clear, blood tinged or bloody discharge spontaneously coming from one of the ducts leading to your nipple, visit your doctor as soon as possible, as this can be a sign of breast cancer⁸.

Prevention is better than cure

There is a correlation between the intake of saturated fats and the incidence of breast cancer⁴, so cut down on fatty, salty food and stock up on fibre⁹. Also try to exercise regularly and avoid smoking and stress. "It's almost impossible to avoid stress completely," says Dr Benn. "But you can control it by listening to relaxing music, taking time out to do an activity that you enjoy or treating yourself to a facial." Cut down on alcohol, to more than two units for women as this raises cancer risk too⁹.

Always get a second opinion

Ideally breast cancer should be treated by a team of specialists, including oncologists, psychologists, pathologists, radiographers, breast surgeons and plastic surgeons. "This way the patient is treated in a holistic way," says Dr Benn. "Never rush into a treatment option or feel that you must have surgery as a matter of urgency without checking with another doctor first."

Dr Benn's top ten tips all women should know for better breast health

- 1. All women are at risk of developing breast cancer especially those with a history of cancer in the family.**
- 2. Examine your breasts regularly to ensure early detection of lumps or discharge which may be a sign of breast cancer.**
- 3. Regular exercise decreases your risk of breast cancer by 42%.**
- 4. A breast cancer vaccine will be available in the future.**

5. You are exposed to more radiation from a shopping mall than you are from a mammogram.
 6. Breast reconstruction can be performed at the time of cancer surgery.
 7. Future Pac-man like, targeted therapies offer promising hope for breast cancer patients.
 8. A multi-disciplinary care centre management approach to breast cancer is recommended. Seek advice and treatment options from a team of specialists.
 9. Extract of broccoli, and I 3 Complex (a natural supplement) are good protectors against breast cancer.
10. Enjoy everything in moderation i.e. limit alcohol intake, exercise regularly, avoid smoking and decrease stress.

About Novartis

Novartis has an oncology portfolio which provides cancer patients with a range of therapies and solutions. The company's goal is to relieve the burden of cancer for the greatest number of patients. Everything it does is aimed at discovering and developing medicines that will give new hope to millions of patients around the world. In the last five years, Novartis Oncology products have helped improve, extend, and save the lives of more than 2 million people with breast cancer, chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML), gastrointestinal stromal tumour (GIST), multiple myeloma, prostate cancer, carcinoid syndrome, and other cancers. Its range of multi-targeted approaches to cancer therapy including treatment for breast cancer, reflects Novartis continued commitment to cancer care.

****Bear in mind that while breast cancer is often thought of as a "women-only" disease, this is a fallacy: men can also get breast cancer.***

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