



BROWN MEDICINE

Insider

Fall 2025

Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Know the Signs and Stay Proactive

Breast cancer remains one of the most common cancers among women in the United States, however **early detection saves lives.** October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a reminder for all of us to stay informed and proactive.



Be familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel and **contact your health care provider if you notice:**

A new lump, thickening, or swelling in the breast or underarm

Changes in breast size or shape

Skin dimpling or puckering

Nipple discharge (other than breast milk) or a newly inverted nipple

Redness, scaling, or persistent pain in the breast or nipple area

Most major guidelines, including those from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, recommend that women at average risk begin regular mammogram screenings at age 40, continuing every 1–2 years. **Women with a family history of breast cancer or other risk factors should discuss an earlier or more frequent screening schedule with their provider.**

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle such as eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, limiting alcohol, and avoiding smoking **can all help reduce risk.**

When breast cancer is found at an early stage, treatment is often less invasive and survival rates are higher. Raising awareness, encouraging screenings, and reminding patients to seek care promptly if they notice changes are essential steps in improving health and saving lives.

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease: What You Should Know

Alzheimer's disease is the **most common form of dementia**. Unlike typical age-related memory changes, it involves progressive damage to brain cells that disrupts memory, thinking, and the ability to carry out daily activities.



While occasional forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging, Alzheimer's causes memory lapses that persist and worsen over time.

Early signs may include forgetting recently learned information or important dates, struggling with planning or problem-solving, difficulty completing familiar tasks, confusion about time or place, or new problems with language. Mood or personality changes, such as withdrawal from social activities, can also occur.

"The incidence of Alzheimer's disease approximately doubles every 10 years after the age of 60," explains Dr. Aman Nanda of Brown Medicine. "Overall, about 85 percent of dementia cases occur in adults 75 years of age and older."

Genetics and family history can increase risk, but lifestyle choices also play a role. Research suggests that regular physical activity, a healthy diet, managing blood pressure and diabetes, and avoiding smoking may reduce risk or delay onset.

Recognizing the signs early is critical. "Some early warning signs include short-term memory loss, such as forgetting recent events or the names of friends, and difficulty finding everyday items like keys," says Dr. Nanda. "In addition, people may develop problems managing finances and other instrumental daily activities."

Early diagnosis provides valuable time to explore treatment options, participate in clinical trials, and plan for future care. While there is currently no cure, available treatments can help manage symptoms and, in some cases, slow disease progression when started early. Supportive care such as occupational therapy, structured daily routines, and memory aids can also help preserve independence and quality of life. Research is advancing quickly, with promising developments in antibody-based medications that target amyloid and tau proteins.

Equally important is supporting caregivers. Families often face significant stress and limited resources while caring for loved ones with dementia. To address this, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services launched the GUIDE (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience) program in 2024. This initiative aims to help patients with dementia and reduce caregiver stress by offering resources, care coordination, and respite services, up to \$2,500 annually for home or adult day care. The program also seeks to avoid unnecessary emergency visits, support patients in remaining at home, and delay nursing home placement.

Brown Medicine's Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Care is proud to be an approved GUIDE participant site in Rhode Island, helping patients and families navigate the challenges of dementia with greater support and resources.

Celebrate Healthy Aging Month: Tips for Staying Well at Every Stage of Life

September is Healthy Aging Month, a national observance created to inspire older adults to **take charge of their health and embrace the positive aspects of aging.**

By focusing on physical, mental, and social well-being, you can build habits today that help you stay active, engaged, and independent for years to come.

Support Your Physical Health

Eat a balanced diet. Choose colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and heart-healthy fats to give your body the nutrients it needs.

Stay active. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week—walking, swimming, or gentle strength training can help maintain muscle and bone strength.

Prioritize sleep. Consistent, restful sleep supports immunity, memory, and energy.

Care for Your Mind

Challenge your brain. Reading, puzzles, or learning a new skill can help keep your mind sharp.

Manage stress. Practices such as meditation, yoga, or spending time in nature can improve mood and resilience.

Seek support. If you experience persistent sadness or anxiety, reach out to a healthcare provider.

Stay Connected

Engage with your community. Volunteer, join clubs, or attend local events to build meaningful connections.

Nurture relationships. Regular contact with friends and family can reduce feelings of loneliness and support emotional well-being.

Protect Your Eyes

Schedule regular eye exams. Early detection of conditions such as cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration can help preserve vision.

Wear sunglasses and protective eyewear to guard against harmful UV rays and injury.

Flu Season Is Here!

Protect yourself and those around you by scheduling your flu shot today.

The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months of age and older. It's especially important for individuals at higher risk of complications, including adults 65 and older, pregnant women, and people with chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes.

If you are a patient of Brown Medicine, call our provider's office to schedule your appointment, or visit your local pharmacy for added convenience.



7th Annual Tour de Rhody

The 7th Annual Tour de Rhody took place on **Sunday, September 14, in North Scituate, RI.**

The bicycle ride supports the Brown University Office of Cancer Research and the clinical trials developed by the Brown University Oncology Research Group.

With **175 participants** and a perfectly sunny day, this year's ride has already raised nearly **\$65,000** for cancer research with donations still coming in.

We're deeply grateful to everyone who joined us in support of the fight against cancer. A special thank-you goes to our **Brown Medicine volunteers** for helping make the event a success, and to **Keane's Wood Fire Food Truck** for generously donating the event's food.



Gloria Gemma 5k

Gloria Gemma's Flames of Hope: A Celebration of Life™ was created to honor **Breast Cancer Awareness Month** and to inspire awareness, compassion, and support within the community.

The weekend concludes with the **Gloria Gemma 5K**, where thousands come together for the Foundation's largest fundraiser. Proceeds help sustain the free programs and services offered to individuals and families touched by cancer.

Joanne Kovich and **Abigail Thistle** from Endocrine, and **Heidi Orellana-Lopez** from Gastroenterology, proudly represented Brown Medicine at the event alongside their families, supporting this meaningful cause.



Employee of the Quarter

Brown Medicine proudly recognizes **Michele Dowling** as our Employee of the Quarter for April through June 2025. Michele's dedication, professionalism, and exceptional attention to detail as a medical secretary make her an invaluable part of the East Greenwich Internal Medicine team.

Her colleagues praise her for going above and beyond to support both patients and providers. As one coworker shared, "What I also find so incredible is how well she knows my patients specifically. She works with so many patients and many doctors and yet, she manages to deliver personalized service to all!"

Michele exemplifies Brown Medicine's commitment to compassionate, patient-centered care. **Congratulations, Michele, and thank you for all you do!**

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