



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Cancer. It was one of the scariest words to ever come out of my dad's mouth when he told me he had cancer during my visit home. I was shocked, not to mention scared. It was a disease, I found in later months that would not only affect him but the emotional and sometimes physical wellbeing of my entire family evidenced when my mom started losing weight and neglecting herself.

This was a struggle that our entire family had to fight, not just my dad. It is a struggle that isn't unique to our family but one fought by families across the nation every day. October is breast cancer awareness month and, though my dad didn't have breast cancer, the early detection of his cancer was key in his survival. Knowing the signs of breast cancer is important for early detection. It is also important to note that men can get breast cancer as well as women.

The most common way breast cancer is detected is by finding a lump or mass on the breast or near the under arm area. Interestingly enough, there are other signs that doctor's notice as well. Regular trips to the doctor and annual mammograms are important but here are a few signs you can be aware of:

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

No one wants to hear the word cancer come from their doctor's (or Dad's) mouth. Thankfully, early detection has a 83%-93% survival rate. Stay informed, know your body and tell your doctor when something does not feel right. Breast Cancer can affect you at any age.

Here are a few sources to check out to learn more about Breast Cancer:

[Cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)

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