

Free Workshop for Women Focuses on Breast Health, Cancer Prevention, Estrogen

In recognition of national Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the VCU Health System is offering a free public seminar highlighting three key areas specific to women's health—including how to reduce cancer risk. Seminar participants may choose from four educational sessions:

- **Taking Control: How to Lessen Cancer Risk in Women**
- **Breast Health**
- **Estrogen: Truths & Fallacies**
- **New Alternatives to Estrogen Replacement Therapy (ERT)**

The workshop series is scheduled for Thursday, October 26, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the brand-new VCU Massey Cancer Center at Stony Point, 9000 Stony Point Parkway. The evening will begin with a half-hour reception during which participants can view special healthcare exhibits. Following the reception, all four sessions will be offered twice, once at 6:30 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m. Each workshop session will take about one hour.

Due to limited space, pre-registration is recommended. For registration,

recorded directions to VCU's Massey Cancer Center at Stony Point, and other details, please call 560-8996.

The workshop is sponsored by VCU's Massey Cancer Center—the Richmond area's only National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center—in addition to MCV Women's Health-Care, the VCU Institute for Women's Health, the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service, and the American Cancer Society.

Breast Cancer Research Continues to Make Progress

New therapies, research, and medication, plus improvements in surgical procedures, mean the outlook for prevention and treatment of breast cancer is improving every day. VCU's Massey Cancer Center team of researchers is proud to be on the leading edge of several important recent advances, including:

Fewer side effects of surgery: VCU's Massey Cancer Center researchers are investigating ways to avoid removing all lymph nodes during breast cancer surgery, which can cause complications. The focus of the trial is sentinel lymph node mapping—a technique new to breast cancer—which

may help determine which nodes, if any, need to be removed.

The possibility of avoiding surgery: A recent study co-authored by Dr. Harry Bear, VCU's Chairman of Surgical Oncology, found that even with some large tumors, it's safe to first shrink the tumor with chemotherapy—minimizing the extensiveness of surgery. Dr. Bear is national chairman of a follow-up study investigating whether some large tumors may be eliminated with chemotherapy. These discoveries could lead to decreased need for surgery and increased chances of patient survival.

Vaccine investigation: VCU's Massey Cancer Center has been involved in a trial of a potential breast cancer vaccine. The hope is that the medication will induce the immune system to attack breast cancers that metastasize.

While studies take time, breast cancer research is active and making progress. Women still need to do their part by getting regular mammograms and an annual breast exam.

“With all the new developments in trial stages—and potential new treatments on the horizon—it's truly an exciting time for all of us who treat breast cancer,” says Dr. Bear.

For more information, contact VCU's Massey Cancer Center at 828-5116.