



BREAST CARE & BREAST CANCER AT THE TIME OF COVID19

Breast cancer, is by itself associated with a lot of anxiety and apprehension. The COVID19 crisis has added to this existing tension amongst the women having Breast cancer and the women who are having new Breast problems now, especially with the lockdown and an advisory for not going to the hospital, unless it is an emergency.

Doctors also advising not to visit or operate unless it is absolute necessary.

You can protect yourselves from this deadly disease without compromising your cancer screening and/or treatment!

As most things in life, it is simply a matter of achieving the right balance, along with a few changes to how we do things. It is a game of learning pros and cons and choosing the better option under the present circumstances.

It is important to understand that our Breast cancer care team will continue to be at your service 24x7 and use every tool at their disposal to help keep you safe, healthy and informed.

We recommend that you do a **Tele consultation** -call us and talk to us, if we can resolve your issue by talking or if required video calling, we shall be too happy, so that you are not exposed to any source of infection.

Routine appointments will be kept to a minimum, as per the Government Health Advisory and directive. This will reduce your risk for exposure by keeping you out of the hospital as much as possible.

Your treatment/screening schedule may change.

It is important to understand that, in a majority of cases, breast cancer is not an urgent or emergency care situation. While it certainly feels like an emergency, it is important for you to understand that we are here to guide you when your treatment schedule should begin, looking to the present circumstances, without compromising the efficacy of your treatment.

There are no clear guidelines from ICMR or any International Cancer Institutes, but these are some guidelines/suggestions to be followed:

The surgery can wait till an appropriate time comes, we need to weigh the benefits vs risk, under the existing COVID19 crisis.

WE DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE AT RISK!

If required, Chemotherapy or Hormonal therapy can be given.

During the COVID-19 crisis, it can help us plan your surgery for a time when it is safer for you and safer for our medical facilities, **UNLESS IT IS A MUST!**
If you are waiting for Radiation therapy, it can certainly wait for a few weeks, if required.

If you already have undergone Breast cancer treatment, you can safely delay a follow-up screening protocol for some time. If you have any symptoms,

DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL,

We are here to help you!

If you have pain in the breasts, especially if on both sides, it is highly unlikely to be because of cancer. Wait a few months until the COVID-19 crisis passes, and if it is still a problem, then you should call us and we shall let you know if you are required to come to the hospital to consult us.

If you have discovered a new lump in your breast, please call us, you need to be examined and diagnosed.

Stay home as much as possible!

If each one contributes to do their duty towards the society, being good citizens, we can all fight this deadly disease and win over this incredibly challenging health pandemic.

More importantly, if you are unwell and have a fever and/or a cough, make sure you call your physician first. Get their advice, and get tested if appropriate.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay hopeful!

Dr. Shefali Desai
Breast Surgeon

(Article inspired by- Laura Esserman)

Disclaimer- There are no clear guidelines from ICMR or any International Cancer Institutes regarding Management of Breast Cancer in COVID19, but these are some guidelines/suggestions to be followed.