

# Men & Breast cancer

With October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, ER24 is urging men to have themselves checked regularly

Most men do not have themselves checked for breast cancer and many delay seeing their doctors if they notice unusual signs such as a breast lump. As a result, many male breast cancers are diagnosed when the disease is more advanced.

## Risk factors

Factors that increase the risk of male breast cancer include:

- Older age - breast cancer is most common in men between the ages of 40 to 80.
- Exposure to oestrogen.
- Family history of breast cancer.
- Being a heavy user of alcohol.
- If one has liver disease, such as cirrhosis of the liver, the male hormones may be reduced and female hormones may be increased. This can increase the risk of breast cancer.
- Obesity may be a risk factor for breast cancer in men because it increases the number of fat cells in the body. Fat cells convert androgens into oestrogen,

which may increase the amount of oestrogen in the body and therefore the increased risk of breast cancer.

- If one has received radiation treatments to the chest, such as those used to treat cancers in the chest, one is more likely to develop breast cancer.

(Mayo Clinic; MacMillan Cancer Support; Breastcancer.org)

## Types of breast cancer in men

The most common type of male breast cancer is infiltrating ductal carcinoma. Ductal carcinoma refers to cancers with origins in the ducts of the breast. The term infiltrating means that the cancer cells have spread beyond the ducts into the surrounding tissue. Other cancers of the breast reported in men include ductal carcinoma in situ (cancer in the ducts that has not spread beyond the ducts themselves), cystosarcoma phylloides (a type of cancer of the connective tissue surrounding the ducts) and Paget's Disease

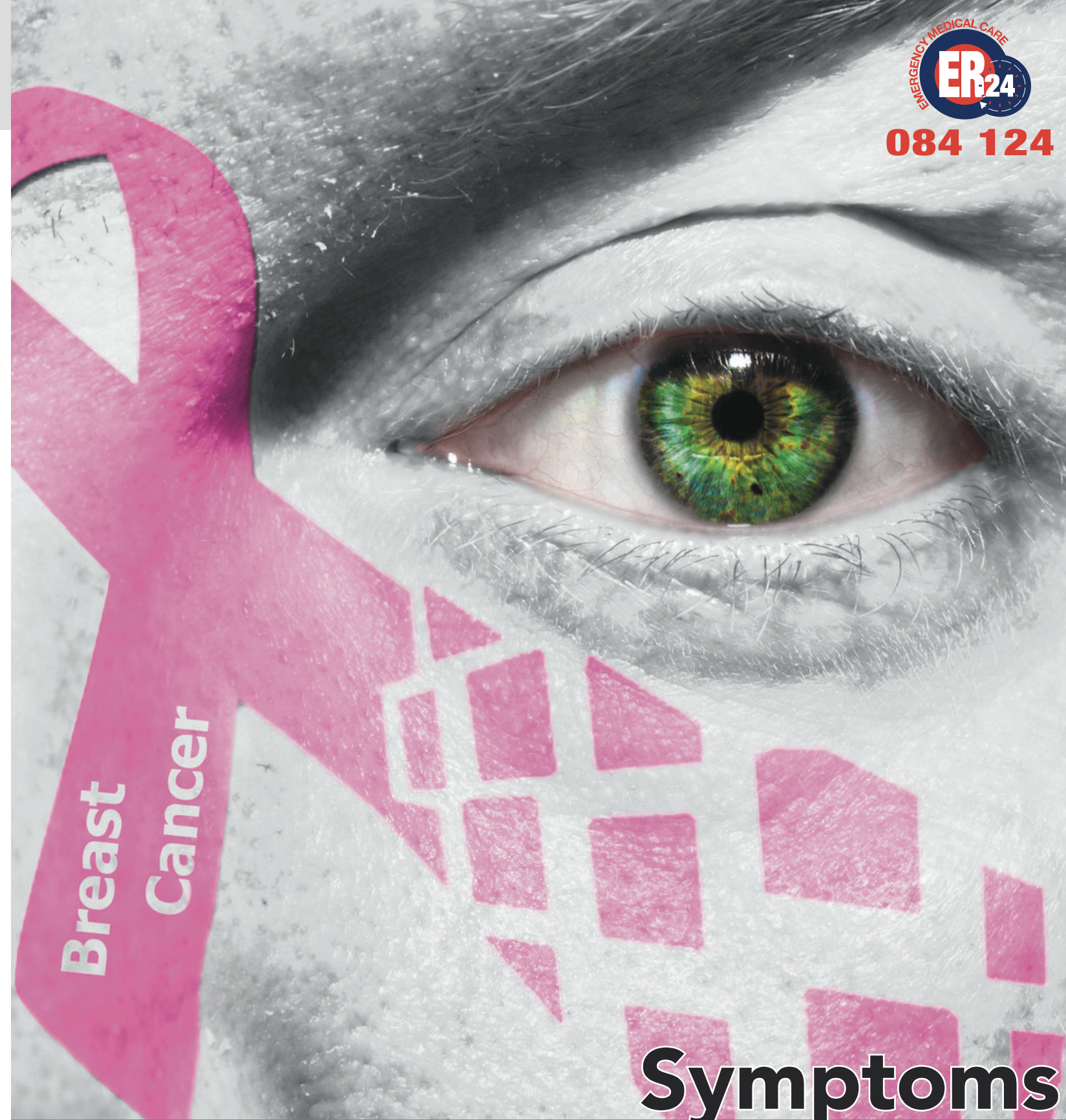
All lumps should be checked by a medical professional

of the breast (a cancer involving the skin of the nipple). Some other types of breast cancer that occur in men are named for their growth patterns and microscopic appearance of the cancer cells, including papillary carcinoma, inflammatory carcinoma and medullary carcinoma. About 85 percent of breast cancers in men have oestrogen receptors on their cell membranes. Oestrogen receptors on the cell membranes allow oestrogen molecules to bind to the cancer cells. Oestrogen binding to the cancer cells can stimulate cell growth and multiplication. (MedicineNet.com)

## Diagnosis and treatment

Breast cancer in men is diagnosed through physical exams, tests, mammography and biopsies. Treatment options include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapy and hormone therapy.

*Early detection of male breast cancer enables a better chance of recovery*



## Symptoms

The most common sign of breast cancer in men is a firm, non-painful mass located just below the nipple. There may not be other associated symptoms. The average size of breast cancer in men when first discovered is about 2.5 centimetres in diameter. The cancer may cause skin changes in

the area of the nipple. These changes can include ulceration of the skin, puckering or dimpling, redness or scaling of the nipple or retraction (turning inward) of the nipple. Bloody or opaque discharge from the nipple may also occur. Breast cancer that has spread (metastasised) to the bones may also

produce bone pain at the sites of metastases. Advanced breast cancer can also produce symptoms such as malaise, weakness and weight loss. Breast cancer in men can spread to other organs and cause other symptoms. (WebMD; MedicineNet.com; Breastcancer.org)