

WomanKind Breast Center Brochure

Welcome to the WomanKind Breast Center

Here you will find comprehensive, compassionate care from a team of highly regarded, caring medical professionals.

At WomanKind Breast Center, you can be assured you are receiving not only the most advanced care possible, but you also receive individual attention and support throughout all your visits here. Our patient care Nurse Coordinator guides you through your individualized care plan, where state-of-the-art technology enables us to deliver the most accurate detection and diagnostic services, surgical procedures and follow-up support services available.

Pull quote: "Many women may have a wider range of treatment choices than they know. Because we give them the most comprehensive, accurate services available, they often feel more empowered with the knowledge of their condition and the sense of control that comes from being able to make educated choices." - Michael Lagios, MD, Medical Director of Breast Cancer Consultation Service. Internationally renowned pathologist.

We provide the entire spectrum of breast care services, from routine screening mammograms to second opinions for the most appropriate treatment for newly diagnosed breast cancer. Our panel of experts from hospitals around the Bay Area confers weekly to discuss patient treatment plans. Patients are invited to attend the conference and directly interact with these experts in order to gain the confidence of making the most informed treatment decisions possible. Our panel will also address the issues involved in hormone replacement therapy and breast cancer.

Pull quote:

"From the day we opened the WomanKind doors, we have continued to provide not only the most advanced care possible, but also a comfortable environment for women of all ages, cultures and sexual orientations. We take great care in treating the whole person - mind, body and spirit - with dignity and specialized, high-quality care."

- Pam Lewis, MD, General Surgeon specializing in breast disease.

Founding member of WomanKind.

Breast Cancer Panel

At WomanKind Breast Center, women who have already been diagnosed with breast cancer or a pre-cancerous condition have the unique opportunity to consult with several specialists simultaneously. A dedicated mammographer, oncologic and reconstructive surgeons, a pathologist, medical and radiation oncologists, a medical geneticist and risk analyst, a psychologist and a nurse practitioner/patient advocate are all part of the breast cancer panel that meets weekly to discuss patient treatment plans. This rare self-referred service enables you to ask questions directly about your condition and treatment options and to ask questions of other experts. To discuss the possibility of scheduling a meeting, call 415-750-5885.

Breast Cancer Consultation Service

Treatment decisions are based on an accurate pathology report. According to the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, the chances of your tests being interpreted incorrectly make it vitally important to seek a second opinion that includes re-examination of the original biopsy materials. At WomanKind Breast Center, our expert pathologist - who also specializes in ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) - conducts a thorough examination of the

original biopsy slides, not just existing written materials. This meticulous analysis, combined with a personal consultation, could provide new information that may alter your treatment options and decisions. We provide second opinions to self-referred patients as well as requesting physicians. Consultations are available in person or by telephone.

Breast Imaging Services

Early detection is the best defense against breast cancer. WomanKind Breast Center offers comprehensive, state-of-the-art advances in the early detection of breast cancer.

Mammography

Low-dose X-rays, which take high-resolution pictures of breast tissue, detect very small breast cancers before they can be felt through self-exams. When detected at this stage, most cancers can be cured with appropriate treatment. Mammography is also used to evaluate patients who have breast problems such as lumps or pain.

At WomanKind Breast Center, a dedicated mammographer, who has completed a post-graduate fellowship specializing in all aspects of mammography, reads every mammogram. A dedicated mammography expert knows when to request magnified views of particular areas of the breast and when to order additional diagnostic tests, such as a breast ultrasound.

Ultrasound

Sound waves are used to produce pictures of breast tissue, which complement the mammogram images. This method is especially useful for evaluating breast lumps and further evaluating changes seen on a patient's mammogram. Sound waves are safe and radiation-free.

Ductography

A type of highly specialized mammography that images the breast milk ducts, a ductography can help diagnose the cause of an abnormal nipple discharge and is valuable in diagnosing benign tumors in the milk ducts.

Breast MRI

Following the injection of MRI dye into a vein, power magnet gradients and radio waves produce especially high-contrast images of the breast tissue. This clearer image helps evaluate the extent of existing breast cancer prior to treatment planning.

Stereotactic Mammotome™

Using an advanced technique (which is less invasive than traditional methods) called stereotactic Mammotome™ biopsy, our surgeon extracts samples for testing through a tiny incision that requires no stitches and usually leaves a very small scar. The minimally invasive procedure takes only 45 minutes and is performed with local anesthesia. Results are usually available within 24 to 30 hours of the biopsy and are interpreted by our internationally respected pathologist.

Sentinel Node Biopsy

Sentinel node biopsy is a more accurate way to remove lymph nodes under the armpit than the traditional method. It also affords a less painful, speedier recovery. In such a procedure, the surgeon removes only one to four lymph nodes that predict whether cancer is present in the rest, rather than the 10 to 20 nodes removed in a traditional biopsy. Sentinel node biopsy spares the patient from the painful lymphedema (swelling of the arm

lymph region) that sometimes occurs when many nodes are removed. It can be a same-day procedure performed with local anesthesia.

Cancer Risk Assessment

Our nationally recognized geneticist counsels women at risk and those with breast cancer regarding their level of risk, the need for treatment, and the appropriateness of genetic testing. You can learn how cancer cells develop, and about the issues to consider in making a decision about genetic testing. Many women and their families find that the information they receive in their cancer risk assessment helps them to make more informed treatment and follow-up decisions with the confidence that they've made the best possible choice.

Breast Cancer Support

Recognizing that emotional well-being is essential to healing, we offer both group and individual support services. A licensed clinical psychologist leads weekly support group meetings to help women give each other emotional support while learning to cope with their condition.

Each woman in our program is also offered an opportunity to be paired with another woman (called a "veteran") who has completed breast cancer treatment herself. Our veterans receive training in peer counseling and provide you with one-to-one support throughout your treatment and recovery. We match women on the basis of a similar diagnosis and treatment and other factors such as age or ethnicity.

Surgical Advances

Twenty years ago, most women with breast cancer were treated with a radical mastectomy. Today, however, technological advances in detection

and surgical techniques have made much more conservative treatment possible. A lumpectomy - which removes the malignant tumor and some surrounding tissue, not the entire breast - combined with radiation therapy is as effective a treatment as mastectomy in most cases. In those rare cases where a mastectomy is necessary, a modified radical mastectomy - which removes the breast and nearby lymph nodes, but preserves the muscles of the chest wall - may be performed. Preserving the muscles provides for improved reconstruction options as well.

Post-Surgical Rehabilitation

Women who have had a mastectomy, axillary lymph node dissection or major breast reconstruction may receive post-surgical education, personal therapeutic exercise instruction and counseling through this rehabilitation service. Gentle physical therapy helps hasten patients' recovery following a lumpectomy or mastectomy. Our physical therapist guides you through mild exercise and activities of daily living so that you gradually regain use of your affected arm.

Professional Clinical Advocacy

Often, navigating the system of appointments for tests, consultations, second opinions and treatment decisions are confusing and distressing for women just diagnosed with breast cancer. Our breast care nurse works with each patient individually to guide her through the process. She explains clinical information and treatment options in everyday language. She also offers emotional support and referrals to other medical and support services when appropriate. In addition, you are given a folder in which all your medical tests are organized for easy reference.