

Media statement

1 February 2018

World Cancer Day: *I am and I will*. Taking positive action against cancer

Monday 4 February is World Cancer Day, uniting us around the globe in the fight against cancer.

Every year 9.6 million people die from cancer worldwide; out of which, at least one third could have been prevented.

The theme of this year's World Cancer Day is 'I am and I will'. It explores how we can all show support, raise our collective voice and take personal action.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) encourages you to take personal action and make healthy lifestyle choices to reduce your risk of cancer.

SCHHS Director of Oncology, Dr Jeremy Long said just as cancer affected everyone in different ways, we all had the power to reduce our risk of many common cancers by maintaining a healthy weight, quitting smoking, moderating alcohol consumption and making physical activity part of our everyday lives.

"Being overweight or obese increases the risk of 10 cancers—bowel, breast, uterine, ovarian, pancreatic, oesophagus, kidney, liver, prostate and gallbladder cancers," Dr Long said.

"We can also choose to be tested and screened for those cancers where screening has been shown to be of benefit like breast and bowel cancer."

Dr Long said diagnosing cancer wasn't always easy, but for a number of cancers, increasing awareness of signs and symptoms and the importance of timely treatment had been shown to improve survival from cancer.

"Finding cancer early almost always makes it easier to treat or even cure," Dr Long said.

Jenny Inggs can vouch first-hand for the benefits of making sure women have regular breast checks.

"Four years ago I started visiting the BreastScreen Queensland mobile van when it was in our local area. My last scan showed an irregularity which was dealt with swiftly. If I hadn't had the scan there is no way I would have even known there was a problem, I had no lumps or any other symptoms.

"The scan takes less than half-an-hour, that small amount of time could end up saving your life," Mrs Inggs said.

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A breast screen every two years is the best way to detect breast cancer early, well before you or your doctor can feel anything.

Women aged 40 years and over are eligible for a free breast screen every two year at a Breast Screen Queensland Service.

Health promotion officer Kelly Hart said early detection could save your life.

“One in eight Queensland women will develop breast cancer at some stage in their life. As there is currently no means of preventing breast cancer, the focus in reducing deaths from this disease has been on finding breast cancer as early as possible.

“There is no need for women to put off having a breast screen any longer. It’s quick, simple, convenient and free. A doctor’s referral is not required,” she said.

Call 13 20 50 to make an appointment or for further information.

For more information on World Cancer Day visit <http://www.worldcancerday.org/>

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