



BLUEWATER
HEALTH

News Release

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Test Local: Bluewater Health Fights Breast Cancer

Women Aged 50 to 54 Particularly Encouraged to Book First-time Mammogram

SARNIA & PETROLIA – October 11, 2018 – Bluewater Health in partnership with the Erie St. Clair Regional Cancer Program and Cancer Care Ontario, is encouraging women to schedule an appointment for a mammogram. The average mammogram takes just five minutes to book and less than 10 minutes to complete, and it can help detect cancer early.

“Breast cancer is the single leading cause of cancer death in women under age 60,” says Dr. Youssef Almalki, Medical Director, Diagnostic Imaging, Bluewater Health. “One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and over 80% of women diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a family history of breast cancer. If caught early, the five-year survival rate is 100%. If breast cancer is caught late, then the survival rate is 23% at five years.”

The best way to help avoid dying of breast cancer is regular screening, provided locally at Bluewater Health. Women should get a ‘baseline’ mammogram and have follow-up mammograms every one to two years depending on their unique health needs.

Karen Linder had missed her 2015 routine mammogram and might otherwise not have gone for her next appointment at Bluewater Health in November 2017. It’s a good thing she did: in January 2018 she received a diagnosis of breast cancer. A February lumpectomy was successful, so she could start radiation in the spring. “I was enveloped in care,” she says. “Everyone was so kind and the fear I had was quickly crushed. The patient navigator answered questions for me that I didn’t even know to ask. It was hugely important to have that care locally, where my oncologist, Dr. Ghate and the rest of my care team, could work with my family doctor. I had as much support as I could possibly hope for.”

Bluewater Health, Sarnia, is designated as an Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) by Cancer Care Ontario. OBSPs assure high quality mammography screening, follow-up of abnormal screens and a reminder letter when it’s time to return. The service is free and a doctor’s referral is not needed.

Sarnia-Lambton women aged 50 to 54 in particular are invited to book a first-time mammogram appointment at Bluewater Health. No referral from a doctor is required. Just call **519-464-4515** to book an appointment for a day in October that suits their availability.

Local breast cancer expertise

In addition to his role at Bluewater Health, Dr. Almalki was recently appointed the Regional Breast Imaging Lead for the Erie St. Clair Regional Cancer Program. In that role, he will fulfill a critical role in improving the quality, safety, consistency and accessibility of breast imaging from screening to diagnosis. Regional Breast Imaging Leads are radiologists who provide advice and leadership at a regional level for the Ontario Breast Screening Program and the Mammography Quality Management Program. Dr. Almalki is also the Regional Cancer Imaging Lead for the Erie St Clair Regional Cancer Program. With this dual role as Breast Imaging and Cancer Imaging Lead, Dr. Almalki will be able to provide the clinical leadership needed to build, foster and maintain an effective and efficient regional cancer imaging program as an integral component of the Regional Cancer Program (RCP).

“Breast cancer occurs most commonly in women 50 to 74 years of age, so now is the time for women on the younger end of this age range to start thinking about screening and booking regular mammograms. It is very helpful for women to have a baseline mammogram in case breast symptoms occur in the future,” adds Dr. Almalki. “Even if you are outside of the 50 to 54 age group, we will book an appointment for you at the earliest possible date.”

Other special events in the Mammography department are planned throughout October to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Diagnostic Imaging staff will wear pink to participate in Dress for the Cause on Friday, October 19, and all Bluewater Health staff are invited to dress in pink each Friday in October to help raise awareness of breast cancer and raise funds for two new mammography machines for the hospital. Again this year, women from local Indigenous communities are travelling to Bluewater Health together by bus for breast screening. Kettle & Stony Point First Nation women visited the Mammography suite October 11, and Aamjiwnaang First Nation will do so on October 12.

The Erie St. Clair Regional Cancer Program ([ESC RCP](#)) is a network of stakeholders, healthcare professionals and organizations involved in cancer prevention and care across the Erie St. Clair LHIN (Chatham-Kent, Sarnia/Lambton and Windsor/Essex) and is one of 14 Regional Cancer Programs created and funded through Cancer Care Ontario. The ESC RCP regional leadership is provided through Windsor Regional Hospital’s Cancer Program.

Bluewater Health, with locations in Sarnia and Petrolia, cares for the residents of Sarnia-Lambton. With close to 2,500 staff, Professional Staff and volunteers, Bluewater Health provides an array of specialized acute, complex continuing care, allied health and ambulatory care services. Bluewater Health’s Mission is: *We create exemplary healthcare experiences with patients and families every time.* For more information about Bluewater Health, visit www.bluewaterhealth.ca or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

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For more information contact:

Birgit Lacey
Communications Coordinator
Bluewater Health
519-464-4453

