**EARLY DETECTION OF BREAST CANCER MEANS THERE’S A GOOD CHANCE OF RECOVERY**

The most common type of cancer in the UK is breast cancer. It occurs mainly in women over the age of 50, but younger women can get it too. If it is detected and treated early the chance of recovery is good, so it’s vital that women check their breasts regularly for any changes, for example daily in the shower.

Symptoms to look out for are:

* a change in the size or shape of one or both breasts
* a lump or thickening of breast tissue
* discharge from either nipple, which may be streaked with blood
* a lump or swelling in either of your armpits
* dimpling on the skin of your breast
* a rash on around the nipple
* a change in the appearance of the nipple, such as becoming sunken into your breast.

Any changes must always be examined by a GP. After examining you, your GP may refer you to a specialist breast cancer clinic for further screening. Most breast lumps are not cancerous, but it’s always best to have them checked. If cancer is found it will be treated using a combination of surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy depending on the type of cancer.

Women from the age of 50 up to their 71st birthday will be invited for a mammogram every three years. This can detect abnormalities that you can’t find yourself so it’s important to go.

Much more rarely, men can also have breast cancer, and the symptoms are very similar to those in women, so it’s important for men to get checked by a GP if symptoms are found. The key message is to check regularly and act immediately because it’s usually curable if found and treated early.

*Sent by Drs Virmani and Bedi’s patient participation group*