

Breast cancer

Thermogram offers new detection tool

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Recent public reports on thermography on Happy Rockefeller and Betty Ford have prompted investigation into the availability locally of this new type of breast cancer detection.

A thermogram traces heat patterns in the body. Experts can read the difference between normal patterns and heat thrown off by a cyst or malignancy.

"A thermogram gives us as much information on breast cancer as the Pap smear does for cervical cancer," said Irwin Posner, D.O., who recently opened the Southfield Cancer Detection Center on Twelve Mile with Dr. Andrew Segel.

But, Posner added, "It took 20 years for Pap tests to be accepted by the public." Now, Pap tests have drastically reduced deaths from uterine cancer and are routinely given.

ALTHOUGH 95 percent of breast cancers are discovered by women themselves, Segel said, "This is already too late." With the full battery of tests available to medical personnel, he argued, breast cancer can and should be detected before a lump can be felt. "It's fear that is the enemy," Segel emphasized. Because of that conviction, Segel and Posner decided to open their center.

Thermography also is available at the Meyer Prentiss Cancer Center and through the American Cancer Society.

Posner said that thermography is a safe test. "The heat comes from the patient's body, not the thermoscan. There is no radiation or heat thrown off by this machine," he explained.

"You can call a thermogram a fingerprint. It stays the same for every woman all her life until disease changes it," Segel added.

"We can pick up an abnormality with up to 96 percent accuracy, a tumor down to one-tenth of an inch can be seen by the bio-physicist who reads the thermogram," he added.

BOTH DOCTORS stressed no one test should be used alone.

The Southfield center uses thermography as only part of a complete set of tests on women referred to them by other doctors or who come in by themselves.

"WE TAKE a complete history," Segel said. "Then we do a physical examination or palpation of the breast, then the thermogram and mammography."

Segel would like to see women take this complete breast cancer exam annually, or semi-annually for those over age 40.

"Self-examination is still very important," he added. "But it isn't made the difference we'd like to see in mortality statistics."

"I still prefer finding lesions by thermography or mammography before they are felt."

"The most frightening statistic of all," Segel said, "is that in the

last 40 years, survival rates for women with breast cancer have not improved.

"SEVEN OUT OF 100 American women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. If you find it before a lump is felt, their chances are infinitely better."

Segel, a practicing dermatolo-

gist, said he had made breast cancer his study for more than a year. "My mother-in-law died of it," he said. "And I have watched friends go through the fear and the breast biopsies."

He cited the case of a woman who went to her doctor because she felt tenderness in one breast. "There was no problem, but we

found a suspicious area in the other breast," he said.

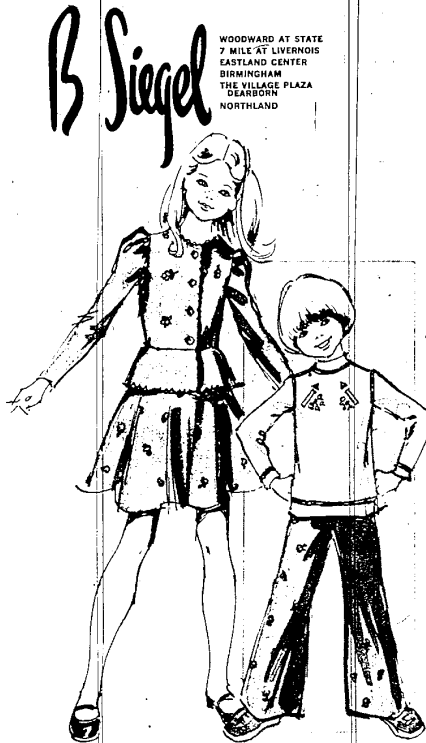
HE EXPLAINED when this occurs, the patient can be watched with testing every three months. "We can't do a biopsy before a mammogram is positive," he said.

Segel said Michigan is way behind other areas in the use of thermography.

"It's used much more in other states," he said.

Women should self examine, doctors should palpate, and thermography and mammography should be regularly used, the doctors urged.

Said Segel: "The tests are safe, simple and rapid and still, fear keeps women away."



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Volunteers

This column describing volunteer needs in Oakland County is co-sponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham and the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau. Those who need volunteers, or who would like to volunteer, may call the bureau at 642-7272.

SERVICE WITH LOVE co-sponsored by Oakland County Office of Economic Opportunity and Pontiac General Hospital provides a daily contact with senior citizens who are unable to leave home. Volunteers are asked to call 10 people a day, one day a week. The program is now operating in Pontiac, Waterford, Clarkston, and Royal Oak.

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE: 1200 North Telegraph, Pontiac, houses wards of the court due to delinquency or neglect. Volunteers are needed to contribute one hour a month in the afternoon or evening to visit or share a talent with the children in the village. Also needed are those willing to take a child home for a weekend. The program particularly needs volunteers for teens to visit.

MARILLAC HALL: 29825 Inkster, Farmington Hills, is a maternity home that needs adult volunteers to serve as drivers for recreational activities, clinic and doctor appointments.

Bazaars

Nov. 15 — The Glen Willows Branch of the National Farm and Garden Association will hold a craft bazaar at the North Hills Christian Reformed Church, 3150 North Adams Road, Troy. The group's handmade items will be for sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Christmas cards also will be sold and the proceeds will go to the Mongoloid Achievement Foundation.

Nov. 16 — The Troy Jaycee Auxiliary will hold its annual "Elf Shelf" arts and craft show, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Troy High School. Dolls, patchwork articles and Christmas ornaments are among items to be sold. Proceeds will be

used to adopt a family for Christmas.

Nov. 19 — The Northwest Child Rescue Women, Junior League, will hold a Holiday Gift Bazaar from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Knob-In-The Woods Clubhouse, 20800 Knob Woods Drive, Southfield. Inexpensive handmade Christmas and Chanukah gifts will be sold.

Nov. 20 — The Troy Branch of the American Association of University Women will hold a "Holiday Boutique Auction" at 8 p.m. in Hill Elementary School, 4600 Forsythe, Troy. Christmas decorations and baked goods are included in the items to be auctioned to the highest bidders.



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