



Cell Phone and Breast Cancer Update

Let me start this update by first noting that there is no conclusive evidence that cell phones can cause breast cancer. That being said, I would like to provide some recent information that adds to my concern regarding the possible link between placing cell phones in direct contact with the breast and the risk of developing a breast cancer.

In a previous article I reviewed the limited literature on the subject and presented two cases of young women who placed their cell phones in their bras for a number of years. Each woman developed multiple small breast cancers directly below the area where the cell phone was placed on their breast. In the past year I have learned of numerous similar cases including one male who placed his cell phone in his shirt pocket (he had no family history of breast cancer).

Recently, I received an email from a mother whose 22 year old daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer. The daughter had been storing her cell phone in her bra since she was 18 years old. She developed a lump directly below the spot where she placed her cell phone and a biopsy was positive for invasive breast cancer. The mastectomy specimen showed multiple cancers below where the cell phone was placed. This young girl has no family history of breast cancer and she has no other known risk factors. (For more information on this patient please see email below and the link to the family's website).

Although there is no proof that prolonged cell phone contact with breast skin produces an increase in cancer risk, I think there is sufficient reason for caution. First of all, the manufacturers state that cell phones should not be placed in direct contact with the skin. Also of note, is that younger women may be at greater risk than older women.

We know with certainty that teenage girls are at major increased risk for breast cancer if they are exposed to multiple chest x-rays during their teen years (as is the case for girls with scoliosis). It took many years to prove that x-ray exposure at a young age is a risk factor for early onset breast cancer. If in fact there is such a relationship with cell phones, it is likely to also take years to prove it, and by then the damage will have been done.

As we all know, cell phone use among teenagers is increasing rapidly. One alarming trend is for teenaged girls to hide their cell phones in their bra during school hours. It will not be easy to get these young girls to change their behavior without more convincing evidence of harm. I am appealing to parents to share this information with their teenage daughters and to do whatever they can to convince them not to participate in this potentially risky behavior.

I received the following email a few months ago and I think it should be required reading for every teenage girl who stores her cell phone in her bra. I hope that readers will share this information with friends and family members. If you have any questions, feel free to Ask The Doctor.

Email received from Traci Frantz:

Dr. West: I am commenting on the article about cell phones and breast cancer. My daughter discovered a lump above her left breast last December. She has undergone an ultrasound, an MRI and a biopsy which resulted in showing she had 4 masses and pathology reports that tested positive for breast cancer. What followed was a single left mastectomy and we are in the confines of radiation and chemo treatments. ALL genetic testing came back NEGATIVE which leads my motherly intuition



to blame it on storing her cell phone in her bra for the past 4+ years.

She is now 22 and for a person of that age to have breast cancer is VERY unusual. She has had all treatments and surgery done at John's Hopkins in Baltimore and I have all doctors noting the fact about her cell phone, but none of them are ready to even possibly acknowledge the fact that her cell phone was the cause.

Joeybra is making a bra that lets a person store their cell phone in their bra. Ever since she was diagnosed with cancer exactly where her cell phone was kept, I have been advocating for her in the awareness of the dangers of storing cell phones in bras. As frustrating as it is to try to convince people that this is a huge possibility and even a probability I will continue to advocate in order to save other young women from having to endure unnecessary breast cancer.

My daughter's story and my journal entries can be found at www.caringbridge.org/visit/tiffanyfrantz. I too would LOVE to get the word out and hopefully more people will read this and my website I created for Tiffany's journey in order to educate themselves of such dangers.

*My best,
Traci
frantzfamily3@gmail.com*

If you have any questions on breast cancer, feel free to Ask The Doctor or contact us.