

**SOME THINK IT'S A BLUE WHALE OR A ZEBRA!**



'How is it possible to confuse a Blue Whale with a Zebra?' you may ask. After all, Blue Whales are very large sea mammals with fins and swim around the oceans feeding on fish, whereas Zebras are land-based herbivores, with four legs and stripes, usually found on the Savannah in Africa. Strange though it may sound, to some they both seem to share the same accolade.



Both have been attributed as having the largest mammary gland. Comedians, rather sarcastically, vocalise that Z-bras must have the largest breast (get it?). Biologists, quite rightly, refute this as female Blue Whales have a mammary gland the size of a baby elephant. Interestingly, the Blue Whale does not have a nipple as their calf do not possess lips and cannot suckle – the milk is simply ejected into the sea for the calf to drink it.

Both the male and female of our species possess nipples. What some individuals do not realise is that both also have breast tissue behind the nipple – adult men having less than one percent of the tissue present in mature ladies. Teenage boys can experience an uncomfortable swelling behind the nipple during puberty as the breast tissue swells, known as gynaecomastia, which is quite normal and usually resolves spontaneously.

October was Breast Cancer Awareness month and the fact that it is now Movember, we need to highlight that men can develop breast cancer as well as women:

*1-in-8 women will develop Breast Cancer in their life-time  
whilst the rate with male breast cancer is just under 1-in-1,000*



The symptoms are very similar in both sexes:

- *A lump or nodularity in the Breast*
- *Dimpling or puckering of the skin over part of the Breast*
- *A nipple discharge, particularly if it is bloody or brown*
- *Rash or crusting affecting the nipple*
- *Occasionally pain or redness / inflammation of the Breast*

It is important for both men and women to examine their breast tissue regularly – every three weeks or so, best after a hot bath or shower when the tissues are more supple. Think **TLC....**

**Touch:** *can you feel anything unusual?*

**Look:** *is there any change in shape or texture?*

**Check** *anything unusual with your Doctor or Practice Nurse*

Treatment for breast cancer has improved over the past decades. The 10-year survival rate overall is around 83% for both men and women – one of the best for all types of cancer. However, diagnosis in the early stages of the disease can lead to even better outcomes – so vigilance about taking care of yourself, and participation by women in the breast screening programme, reaps even better results.



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