Dear Editor: We have an important message to all devoted mothers, sisters, daughters, and grandmothers.

We share and acknowledge the joy, fulfillment — and sometimes stress — that you may feel when giving much of yourself to take care of the loved ones around you. But now it’s time to take care of yourself too.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Ask yourself: Are you at risk for breast cancer? For most, the answer is yes. Even if you don’t have a genetic predisposition, you still face a risk of developing this devastating illness. But you can help ward it off.

Start your journey toward putting yourself first with these simple lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your risk:

- **Exercise.** Decades of research shows that even moderate exercise, including walking and taking the stairs instead of an elevator, plays a role in helping to prevent cancer.
- **Monitor.** Pay close attention to your body, and if you notice any lumps or abnormalities, schedule an appointment with your doctor immediately.
- **Schedule.** Be vigilant about scheduling check-ups and mammogram screenings at the interval you and your women’s health doctor determine together. Early detection is one of your most important tools.

“Breast cancer is not just a women’s issue — it affects all of us.” – Ralph Lauren

Nothing truer could be said. Women, please make the time to take care of yourself. Schedule your annual physical and stay on top of routine breast cancer screenings.

And men, please remind the women in your life that they are loved, appreciated, and empowered to take control of their health.

We’re all in this together.

**Dr. Ken Ostermann and Dr. Effie Siomos**
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