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US scientists develop pill for better cancer detection

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Scientists at the University of Michigan have developed a pill that carries a dye to ‘light up’ tumours upon exposure to infrared light, helping with diagnosis of breast cancer.

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According to the university, mammograms fail to identify benign tumours that do not need surgery or chemotherapy, and detect those present in dense tissue.

In order to address these concerns, researchers turned to molecular imaging and used a dye that tags a molecule found on cancer cells, in the blood vessels that feed tumours and also in inflamed tissue.

Information on the types of molecules on the tumour surface facilitates better differentiation between malignant cancer and a benign tumour.

When tested in mice with breast cancer, the new pill is reported to have demonstrated the ability to fluoresce the tumours using infrared light.