



OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Special Section of The Bulletin

Risk factors leading to breast cancer

From the CDC

Studies have shown that your risk for breast cancer is due to a combination of factors. The main factors that influence your risk include being a woman and getting older. Most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 years old or older.

Some women will get breast cancer even without any other risk factors that they know of. Having a risk factor does not mean you will get the disease, and not all risk factors have the same effect. Most women have some risk factors, but most women do not get breast cancer.

If you have breast cancer risk factors like the ones below, talk with your doctor about ways you can lower your risk and about screening for breast cancer.

Getting older. The risk for breast cancer increases with age; most breast cancers are diagnosed after age 50.

Genetic mutations. Inherited changes (mutations) to certain genes, such as BRCA1 and BRCA2. Women who have inherited these genetic changes are at higher risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Reproductive history. Early menstrual periods before age 12 and starting menopause after age 55 expose women to hormones longer, raising their risk of getting breast cancer.

Having dense breasts. Dense breasts have more connective tissue than fatty tissue, which can sometimes make it hard to see tumors on a mammogram. Women with dense breasts are more likely to get breast cancer.

Personal history of breast cancer or certain non-cancerous breast diseases. Women

who have had breast cancer are more likely to get breast cancer a second time.

Some non-cancerous breast diseases such as atypical hyperplasia or lobular carcinoma in situ are associated with a higher risk of getting breast cancer.

Family history of breast or ovarian cancer. A woman's risk for breast cancer is higher if she has a mother, sister, or daughter (first-degree relative) or multiple family members on either her mother's or father's side of the family who have had breast or ovarian cancer.

Having a first-degree male relative with breast cancer also raises a woman's risk.

There are risk factors that you can change your lifestyle in order to decrease your risk of getting breast cancer.

Not being physically active. Women who are not physically active have a higher risk of getting breast cancer.

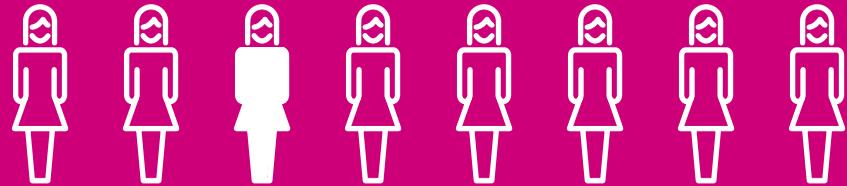
Being overweight or obese after menopause. Older women who are overweight or obese have a higher risk of getting breast cancer than those at a normal weight.

Taking hormones. Some forms of hormone replacement therapy (those that include both estrogen and progesterone) taken during menopause can raise risk for breast cancer when taken for more than five years.

Reproductive history. Having the first pregnancy after age 30, not breastfeeding, and never having a full-term pregnancy can raise breast cancer risk.

Drinking alcohol. Studies show that a woman's risk for breast cancer increases with the more alcohol she drinks.

1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.



*According to the American Cancer Society.

Mammograms Save Lives

When detected early, breast cancer has a 99% survival rate. With locations local and across the Greater Houston area and board-certified breast radiologist who are specially trained to detect breast cancer when it's at its most treatable, St. Luke's Health provides compassionate care for our communities. Plus, as home to the Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center and partner to Baylor College of Medicine we're able to provide our patients with access to leading-edge research that is rapidly translated into groundbreaking cancer care.



Prioritize your health. Schedule your mammogram today at [StLukesHealth.org/Mammo](https://www.stlukeshealth.org/Mammo)

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Important breast cancer facts to know

- In 2021, an estimated 281,550 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the U.S. as well as 49,290 new cases of non-invasive (in situ) breast cancer.

- 63% of breast cancer cases are diagnosed at a localized stage (there is no sign that the cancer has spread outside of the breast), for which the 5-year survival rate is 99%.

- This year, an estimated 43,600 women will die from breast cancer in the U.S.

- Although rare, men get breast cancer, too. In 2021, an estimated 2,650 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year in the U.S., and approximately 530 will die.

- 1 in 8 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women, except for skin cancers. It is estimated that in 2021, approximately 30% of all new women cancer diagnoses will be breast cancer.

- There are over 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

- On average, every 2 minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States.

- According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of women each year and affecting countries at all levels of modernization.

- Breast cancer is not contagious; you can't contract cancer from a person who has the disease.

- Breast cancer is not caused by wearing underwire bras, implants, deodorants, antiperspirants, mammograms, caffeine, plastic food serving items, microwaves or cell phones, as myths often suggest.

- In recent years, perhaps coinciding with the decline in prescriptive hormone replacement therapy after menopause, we have seen a gradual reduction in female breast cancer incidence rates among women aged 50 and older. Death

rates from breast cancer have been declining since about 1990, in part due to better screening and early detection, increased awareness,

and continually improving treatment options.

- A tumor is a mass of abnormal tissue. There are two types of

breast cancer tumors: those that are non-cancerous, or 'benign', and those that are cancerous, which are 'malignant'.



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During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, BASF wants to remind you that early detection - of all cancers - saves lives.

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SCHEDULE YOUR MAMMOGRAM

From the National Breast Cancer Foundation

According to the American Cancer Society, when breast cancer is detected early, and is in the localized stage, the 5-year relative survival rate is 99%. Early detection includes doing monthly breast self-exams, and scheduling regular clinical breast exams and mammograms.

A mammogram is an x-ray that allows a qualified specialist to examine the breast tissue for any suspicious areas. The breast is exposed to a small dose of ionizing radiation that produces an image of the breast tissue.

Mammograms can often show a

breast lump before it can be felt. They also can show tiny clusters of calcium called micro-calcifications. Lumps or specks can be caused by cancer, fatty cells, or other conditions like cysts. Further tests are needed to find out if abnormal cells are present.

- Women 40 and older should have mammograms every 1 or 2 years.

- Women who are younger than 40 and have risk factors for breast cancer should ask their healthcare professional whether mammograms are advisable and how often to have them.

Even women who have no symptoms and no known risks for

breast cancer should have regularly scheduled mammograms to help detect potential breast cancer at the earliest possible time.

If the mammogram shows an abnormal area of the breast, your doctor will order additional tests offering clearer, more detailed images of that area.

Although lumps are usually non-cancerous, the only way to be certain is to perform additional tests, such as an ultrasound or MRI. If further tests show that the mass is solid, your radiologist may recommend a biopsy, a procedure in which cells are removed from a suspicious area to check for the presence of cancer.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

From the National Breast Cancer Foundation

Everyone should know the symptoms and signs of breast cancer, and any time an abnormality is discovered, it should be investigated by a healthcare professional.

Most people who have breast cancer symptoms and signs will initially notice only one or two, and the presence of these symptoms and signs do not automatically mean that you have breast cancer.

By performing monthly breast self-exams, you will be able to more easily identify any changes in your breast. Be sure to talk to your healthcare professional if you notice anything unusual.

A Change In How The Breast Or Nipple Looks Or Feels

- Nipple tenderness or a lump or thickening in or near the breast or underarm area;

- A change in the skin texture or an enlargement of pores in the

skin of the breast (some describe this as similar to an orange peel's texture);

- A lump in the breast (It's important to remember that all lumps should be investigated by a healthcare professional, but not all lumps are cancerous.)

A Change In The Breast Or Nipple Appearance

- Any unexplained change in the size or shape of the breast;

- Dimpling anywhere on the breast;

- Unexplained swelling of the breast (especially if on one side only);

- Unexplained shrinkage of the breast (especially if on one side only);

- Recent asymmetry (unequal or lack of sameness) of the breasts. Although it is common for women to have one breast that is slightly larger than the other, if the onset of asymmetry is recent, it should be checked.

- Nipple that is turned slightly inward or inverted;

- Skin of the breast, areola, or nipple that becomes scaly, red, or swollen or may have ridges or pitting resembling the skin of an orange;

- Any Nipple Discharge - Particularly Clear Discharge Or Bloody Discharge.

It is also important to note that a milky discharge that is present when a woman is not breastfeeding should be checked by her doctor, although it is not linked with breast cancer.

Let your doctor know about any nipple discharge, clear, bloody or milky. The most concerning discharges are bloody or clear.

If I have some symptoms, is it likely to be cancer?

Most often, symptoms are not due to cancer, but any breast cancer symptom you notice should be investigated as soon as it is discovered.

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