

1 in 8 women in the United States will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.

Breast Cancer Awareness

As little as 30 minutes of exercise a day can begin to reduce a woman's risk of breast cancer.

Learn the signs, get regular exams, minimize your risk

When cells found in the breast start growing out of control, cancer can start to take root. Typically, these cells form a tumor that you can feel as a lump. Benign tumors (non-cancerous) are not life-threatening but can increase the risk of future breast cancer. Malignant (cancerous) tumors are those that spread into surrounding tissues and other areas of the body. Learn the signs and symptoms, and if you have any concerns, don't hesitate to contact your doctor.

Pay attention to symptoms

Knowing what to look for is critical to discovering cancer early. The most common symptom is a painless, hard mass with irregular edges. Other symptoms may include:

- Swelling of any kind
- Skin irritation or dimpling pattern
- Pain in the breast/nipple
- Nipple retraction (turning inward)
- Redness, thickening or scaling of the breast/nipple skin
- Nipple discharge (other than breast milk)
- Swollen lymph nodes under the arm and/or collarbone

Get a mammogram

A mammogram, an X-ray image of the breast, is a safe and effective way to detect cancerous tumors. The procedure is non-invasive, takes only a few minutes, and saves lives. Beginning at age 40, women should get a mammogram every one or two years. No matter your age, if any of the following factors apply to you, discuss with your doctor whether a mammogram is appropriate:

- Personal or family history of breast cancer
- Menstrual periods occurring before age 12 or after age 55
- You have never given birth or had your first child after age 30
- Dense breast tissue
- Radiation therapy to the chest before age 30
- Alcohol use
- Any lumps, nipple discharge, breast pain or dimpling of breast skin
- Obesity or lack of exercise

Environmental factors at work

There are genes that can increase your risk of breast cancer—the BRCA1 and BRCA2 are the most common—but most breast cancers are caused by environmental sources. Some of these may be under your control, including:

- Excessive alcohol use
- Smoking
- Ionizing radiation exposure
- Use of combination hormone therapies
- Being overweight or obese, especially after menopause
- Taking diethylstilbestrol (DES), a synthetic estrogen product that pregnant women took in the 1940s through 1970s to prevent miscarriage/premature delivery

Healthy habits can make a difference

There are actions you can take to promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce your risk of developing breast cancer, such as being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight. Eat a healthy diet, including five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Limit your alcohol intake to one drink per day and don't smoke.

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Sources:
https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/conditions/breast-cancer/index.cfm
https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/about/breast-cancer-signs-and-symptoms.html
https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-faqs

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