

Breast cancer awareness month

Breast cancer originates in your breast tissue. It occurs when breast cells mutate and grow out of control creating a mass of tissue, known as a tumor. Like other forms of cancer, breast cancer can invade and grow into the tissue surrounding your breast. It can also travel to other parts of your body and form new tumors. When this happens, it's called metastasis. There are different symptoms of breast cancer, and some people will have no symptoms at all. Some signs of breast cancer may include feeling a lump in your breast or underarm, changes in the size, shape, or skin on your breast, pain in any area of the breast, or nipple discharge other than breast milk (including blood).

What can I do to find breast cancer early?

Breast cancer screening involves checking a woman's breasts for cancer before there are signs or symptoms of the disease. A mammogram is an X-ray picture of the breast. Doctors use a mammogram to look for early signs of breast cancer. The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that most women who are at average risk and are 50 to 74 years old get one every 2 years. USPSTF recommendations state that women with a parent, sibling, or child with breast cancer are at a higher risk for breast cancer and may benefit from beginning screening in their 40s. Weighing the benefits and risks of screening is important when considering your screening options. If you're 40 to 49 years old, talk to your health care provider about when to start screening.



Increased risk factors

Genetics

Inherited DNA changes in genes



Family history

Mother, sister, or daughter has had breast cancer



Gender

Being female



Breast density

High density breasts



Age

Getting older



Help lower your risks



Breastfeed

Breastfeeding reduces estrogen exposure that helps prevent breast cancer



Exercise

Exercising 3 days per week may lower your risk



Regular mammograms

Women 40+ should have the option to have a mammogram once a year



Regular breast exams

Speak to your health care provider for options



Limit alcohol use

Alcohol can increase estrogen which may increase risk



Breast cancer in men

It is important to remember breast cancer can occur in men as well, although less common. Signs of breast cancer in men may include a lump in the breast that is usually painless and does not move around within the breast, the nipple turning inwards, fluid oozing from the nipple which may be streaked with blood, and a sore rash around the nipple that does not away.



Approximately 15% of women who get breast cancer have a family member diagnosed with it. A woman's risk of breast cancer nearly doubles if she has a first degree relative (mother, daughter, sister) who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

A man's lifetime risk of breast cancer is about 1 in 833.

