

DEDICATED EXPERIENCED SUPPORT

SHARE

sharecancersupport.org

Information for Everyone About Breast Cancer



Welcome to SHARE!

SHARE is a national nonprofit that supports, educates, and empowers anyone who has been diagnosed with women's cancers, and provides outreach to the general public about signs and symptoms. We are a compassionate community of knowledgeable survivors, women living with cancer, and healthcare professionals. We are ready to listen to your concerns, respond to your questions, and provide education to help you make sense of your diagnosis and treatment.

SHARE is dedicated to serving women of all races, cultures, backgrounds, and identities. Because no one should have to face breast cancer alone.

SHARE is here for you and all of our services are free.

Breast Cancer: Information for Everyone

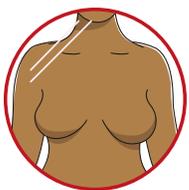
Breast cancer is a common disease that affects 1 in every 8 women. There are reliable screening methods that can detect breast cancer early when it is easier to treat. Fortunately, there are many options available to treat breast cancer that can be very successful.

Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast grow out of control. Most breast cancers begin in the ducts or lobules of the breast. Sometimes these cancerous cells can spread outside of the breast. When breast cancer spreads to other parts of the body, it is said to have metastasized.

Did You Know?

- Not all breast cancer forms a lump.
- Black women have a higher rate of dying from breast cancer than any other racial or ethnic group in the US. And among women younger than age 45, the breast cancer incidence is higher in Black women than White women.
- Less than 1% of all breast cancers occur in men.

Breast Cancer Signs and Symptoms



- New lump in the breast or underarm (armpit)
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood
- Any change in the size or the shape of the breast
- Pain in any area of the breast

Please keep in mind that these symptoms can happen with other conditions that are not cancer, but if you have signs or symptoms that worry you, be sure to see your doctor right away.

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

A risk factor is anything that increases a person's chance of developing a certain illness. Having one or more risk factors associated with a disease does not mean you will definitely develop that disease. Discussing risk factors with your doctor may help you make informed lifestyle choices including preventative measures appropriate to your risk.

- **Age** - Breast cancer risk increases with age.
- **Genetics** - Inherited changes in certain genes such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 have a higher risk of getting breast cancer.
- **Family History** - Risk for breast cancer is higher if a first degree relative (mother, father, sibling, child) or multiple family members had breast cancer.
- **Reproductive History** - Menstruation before age 12 and menopause after age 55 may result in higher lifetime exposure of the breast to hormones thereby increasing breast cancer risk.
- **Obesity** - Being overweight or obese after menopause.

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer (cont'd)

- **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)** - Some forms of HRT may significantly increase the risk of developing cancer in the first 2-3 years of taking it.
- **Alcohol Consumption** - Studies show that a woman's risk for breast cancer increases with the more alcohol she drinks.
- **Breast Biopsy Patterns Indicating Presence of Overactive Tissue** - Some benign breast biopsy patterns (such as "atypia" or "lobular carcinoma in situ") indicate a higher future risk of breast cancer.



Screening for Breast Cancer

There are many types of screenings that help detect breast cancer early. The most common is a mammogram. If you have dense breasts, you may require another type of screening. Check with your doctor about when to begin screening and what type of screening is best for you.

Mammogram - A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast and is the best way for most women to find breast cancer early when it is easier to treat - before it is big enough to be felt or cause symptoms.

Blood Testing - A few cc's of blood can test for 30 or 40 different types of mutations for many cancers.

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) - A breast MRI uses magnets and radio waves to take pictures of the breast. MRIs are often used with mammograms for women who are at high risk for developing breast cancer.

Clinical Breast Exam - A clinical breast exam is performed by a health care provider who feels for lumps or other changes in the breasts.

Breast Self-Awareness - Being familiar with how your breasts look and feel can help you notice symptoms like lumps, changes in size of a breast, redness, swelling and other symptoms.

How to Be Your Own Best Advocate

- Visit a doctor regularly and get screened.
- Maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly.
- Eat foods low on the food chain, with a focus on vegetables, grains and fish, and limit processed foods and sugars that break down easily.
- Know your family history of cancer.
- Know your breasts and talk to a doctor about any changes you see or feel.
- Call SHARE to speak with someone who can provide information, guidance and support.

If you've been recently diagnosed with breast cancer, or if you're a survivor, we're here to help you.

Toll Free Breast Cancer Helpline: 844.ASK.SHARE (844.275.7427)
sharecancersupport.org



Check out SHARE's Educational Programs & Support Groups

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