

Breast Cancer Awareness

During the month of October, many organizations, groups and individuals across the world increase awareness of breast cancer and raise funds to research the disease and find a cure.

Breast cancer is the second most common kind of cancer in women. About 1 in 8 women born today in the United States will get breast cancer at some point.

The good news is that many women can survive breast cancer if it's found and treated early.

- If you are a woman age 40 to 49, talk with your doctor about when to start getting mammograms and how often to get them.
- If you are a woman age 50 to 74, be sure to get a mammogram every 2 years. You may also choose to get them more often.

Risk factors for breast cancer in women include:

- Increasing age
- Changes in BRCA1, BRCA2, and other cancer genes
- Personal history of breast cancer or a mother or sister has or had breast cancer
- Dense breast tissue (shown on a mammogram)
- Certain abnormal breast changes that are not cancer. These changes are found during a breast biopsy.
- Radiation therapy to the chest before age 30
- Never giving birth or having a first full-term pregnancy after age 30. Never breast-fed a baby.
- Being obese or overweight after menopause
- Hormone therapy (estrogen plus progestin) after menopause
- Alcohol—the more used, the greater the risk.
- Lack of physical activity throughout life

Talk to a doctor about your risk for breast cancer, especially if a close family member of yours had breast or ovarian cancer. Your doctor can help you decide when and how often to get mammograms.

FYI

The third week of October is Male Breast Cancer Awareness Week. Though rare, men can get breast cancer too. For men, the lifetime risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer is about 1 in 1,000. Yearly, about 450 men in the U.S. die from breast cancer. Men should look for and report a lump or other change in a breast to their doctors.

