

Your Health Matters!



The National Breast Cancer Awareness Month of October is a chance to raise awareness about the importance of early detection of breast cancer. Make a difference! Spread the word about mammograms and encourage communities, organizations, families, and individuals to get involved

Breast Cancer Awareness Month celebrates the 2.8 million survivors of breast cancer and emphasizes the need to continue research to cure the disease.

Beyond the pink ribbons, special product fundraisers, and the pastel sea of color that marks October, *Breast Cancer Awareness Month* offers a reason to celebrate and to reflect.

More than 2.8 million breast cancer survivors live in the U.S. They are survivors of the second most-common cancer in women, behind skin cancer, and survival rates continue to climb due to better treatments and increased screening that finds cancers when they are most treatable.

Another reason credited for the increased survival rates: *Awareness*. With women more knowledgeable about warning signs, the importance of self-exams, treatment options and second opinions, they are better prepared than ever before to confront a breast cancer diagnosis – something an estimated one in eight women will do in her lifetime.

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.

What Are the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?

The [symptoms of breast cancer](#) include:

- Lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm that persists through the menstrual cycle.
- A mass or lump, which may feel as small as a pea.
- A change in the size, shape, or contour of the breast.
- A blood-stained or clear fluid discharge from the nipple.
- A change in the feel or appearance of the skin on the breast or nipple (dimpled, puckered, scaly, or inflamed).
- Redness of the skin on the breast or nipple.
- A change in shape or position of the nipple
- An area that is distinctly different from any other area on either breast.
- A marble-like hardened area under the skin.

The good news is that most women can survive breast cancer if it's found and treated early. A mammogram – the screening test for breast cancer – can help find breast cancer early when it's easier to treat.



FOR OCTOBER: HERE ARE 31 FACTS (ONE A DAY) ABOUT BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer remains a leading cause of cancer death in women, second only to lung cancer. So, in the spirit of heightening awareness – and screening, we offer one fact about breast cancer for every day in October:

1. The leading risk factor for breast cancer is simply being a woman. Though breast cancer does occur in men, the disease is [100 times more common in women](#) than in men and women are at 200 times the risk of developing the disease compared to risk in men.
2. Most breast cancer – about 85 percent – occurs in women who have no family history of breast cancer.

3. About [5 to 10 percent of breast cancers](#) can be traced to specific, inherited gene mutations, such as the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations.
4. Men can also get breast cancer. About 2,150 are diagnosed annually – or about [1 in 1,000 men](#).
5. A woman born today has about a one in eight chance of being diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime, according to the [National Cancer Institute](#).
6. The [American Cancer Society](#) estimates about 2.8 million women with a history of breast cancer live in the U.S.
7. While much progress has been made in breast cancer treatment and research, more work remains: Breast cancer remains the second-leading cause of cancer death after lung cancer. Overall, cancer deaths are the second most-common cause of death for U.S. women, after heart disease.
8. Another top risk factor for breast cancer: Simply getting older – 79 percent of new cases and 88 percent of deaths occurred in women age 50 and older, according to the American Cancer Society. Just fewer than 11,000 invasive cases occurred in women younger than 40, and just under 49,000 in women under 50. In women ages 50 to 64, invasive breast cancer was even more prevalent with more than 84,000 cases. Women over age 65 accounted for more than 99,000 cases last year.
9. According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer accounts for 29 percent of newly diagnosed cancers.
10. In the 1970s, breast cancer lifetime risk was one in 11 – compared to today's one in eight. The good news is part of the reason is due to longer life expectancy and more detection through screening. Other factors include menopausal hormone use, changes in reproductive patterns and the increased prevalence of obesity.
11. The oft-repeated one in eight statistic may mean something different than you think. The lifetime risk for women born today of being diagnosed with breast cancer is one in eight. But lifetime risk reflects an average woman's risk over her entire lifetime, including the possibility that she may die from another cause before she would have been diagnosed with breast cancer.
12. While non-Hispanic white women have higher rates of breast cancer incidence, African-American women have a higher incidence rate before age 40 and are more likely to die from breast cancer at every age.
13. Women who are diagnosed with cancer before age 40 have a nearly 4.5-fold increased risk of developing another breast cancer.

14. Women of Ashkenazi Jewish heritage are at higher risk of having BRCA mutation. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends testing for BRCA mutations for Ashkenazi Jewish women if they have a first-degree relative with breast or ovarian cancer or two second-degree relatives on the same side of the family with breast or ovarian cancer.
15. Not everyone needs genetic screening for breast cancer. Only about 2 percent of women meet the guidelines for screening.
16. Fewer than 1 percent of the general population have a BRCA mutation.
17. Research suggests breastfeeding for a year or more slightly reduces overall risk of breast cancer – about a 4.3 percent reduction for every 12 months of breastfeeding. Why? One possible explanation: Breastfeeding often interrupts periods, meaning fewer menstrual cycles and less estrogen exposure. Others suggest that the reduced risk can be credited to structural changes in the breast after lactation and weaning.
18. The risk of overweight women developing breast cancer after menopause is 1.5 times higher than in lean women. Obese women are at twice the risk of lean women.
19. Herceptin, a breast cancer “smart drug,” can trace its roots to City of Hope: Scientists here developed engineered human proteins that led to monoclonal antibodies, the basis of multiple cancer drugs.
20. The movement away from one-size-fits all screening doesn’t mean you should skip your mammogram. Talk with your physician to evaluate your personal risk of breast cancer. The American Cancer Society continues to recommend yearly mammograms beginning at age 40.
21. Exercise reduces breast cancer risk for women of all body types – even lean women, according to Leslie Bernstein, Ph.D., director of cancer etiology at City of Hope.
22. While the American Cancer Society recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise per week to manage risk, for some, even 30 minutes per week has been found to be beneficial, Bernstein’s research has found.
23. Minimize alcohol intake to control risk. That means one glass of wine, one beer or one hard liquor drink per day. (Drinking seven drinks in one day and none the rest of the week is not OK.)

24. The discovery of the BRCA mutation and its link to breast cancer celebrates its 20th anniversary this year – the same year scientists reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.
25. Only about 42 percent of women who undergo mastectomy choose to have reconstructive surgery, according to a recent *JAMA Surgery* study.
26. With eight out of 10 breast lumps discovered by women themselves, don't underestimate the importance of a monthly breast self-exam. By becoming more familiar with your breast tissue and appearance, you will be more likely to notice changes should they occur.
27. If you've been diagnosed with breast cancer, you're up to four times more likely to develop a new cancer in the same breast or in the other breast.
28. Quit smoking to control risk of many diseases, including breast cancer. Younger women who smoke have a higher risk of breast cancer than their nonsmoking peers.
29. According to the National Institutes for Health, breast cancer survivors are at an [increased risk of osteoporosis](#). Estrogen has a protective effect on bones, and reduced estrogen levels can trigger bone loss.
30. Exercise is beneficial to breast cancer survivors. A [June study in Cancer](#) found only a third of survivors meet recommended activity levels.
31. If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, a second opinion could save your life. NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers, such as City of Hope, have higher rates of survival for breast cancer.

<http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-awareness-month>
<http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/>
<https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/OctoberToolkit.aspx>
<http://www.cancer.net/research-and-advocacy/cancer-awareness-dates>

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