



Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women other than skin cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 230,480 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed this year, and 1 in 8 women run the risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Although breast cancer is predominantly diagnosed in women, men can get breast cancer too ⁽¹⁾.

Breast cancer symptoms affect people differently. While some do not show any signs at all, others may experience some of the following warning signs ⁽²⁾:

- New lump in the breast or underarm area
- Thickening or swelling of the breast
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area
- Nipple discharge
- Change in the size or shape of the breast
- Pain in any area of the breast

Some key factors that may increase your breast cancer risk include ⁽³⁾:

- Age (risk increases with age)
- Genes (BRCA1 and BRCA2)
- Family history of breast cancer
- Menstruation before age 12
- Menopause after age 55

- Use of Hormone Replacement Therapy
- Use of birth control pills
- Not having children
- Having dense breast tissue

Early detection and treatment of breast cancer helps save thousands of lives. To help detect breast cancer early, the American Cancer Society recommends the following ⁽¹⁾:

- Women age 40 and older should have a yearly screening mammogram and clinical breast exam by their doctor
- Women age 20 and older should have a clinical breast exam as part of their regular health checkup

Breast self exam also plays a role in detection of breast cancer and should be discussed with your doctor ⁽¹⁾.

Women who are concerned about symptoms they are experiencing should see their doctor. For more information on breast cancer, please visit the following web-links:

Breast Cancer Information:

- [Breast Cancer and You: What You Need to Know](#)
- [Breast Cancer Risk Questionnaire](#)
- [Breast Cancer Interactive Tutorial](#)
- [Facts About Male Breast Cancer](#)

References:

1. [American Cancer Society](#)
2. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
3. [U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health](#)

Author: Karen Hulsmeyer, R.N.