

BREAST CANCER: Early Detection Saves Lives

All women are at risk for breast cancer. While breast cancer cannot be prevented, studies show that early detection saves lives. Women can protect themselves with:

- **Mammograms:** Women, age 40 or as directed by a physician, should have annual mammograms.
- **Clinical Breast Exams:** Women, beginning at age 20, should have regular exams by a health care provider.
- **Breast Self Examinations:** Women should learn the normal feel of their breasts and check them regularly for changes.



What Is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a malignant (cancerous) tumor that starts from cells of the breast. The disease occurs mostly in women, but men can get breast cancer as well.

The breast is made up of lobules, ducts, fatty and connective tissue, blood vessels and lymph vessels.

The most common type of breast cancer begins in the lining of the ducts and is called ductal carcinoma. Another type, called lobular carcinoma, arises in the lobules. There are other types of breast cancer, but they are very rare.

What Are the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?

Early stage breast cancer usually does not cause pain. In fact, when breast cancer first develops, there may be no symptoms at all. But as the cancer grows, it may cause changes that women should watch for:

- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area;
- A change in the size or shape of the breast;
- A discharge from the nipple; or
- A change in the color or feel of the skin of the breast, areola or nipple (dimpled, puckered or scaly).

A woman should see her doctor if she notices any of these changes. Most often, they are not cancer, but only a doctor can tell for sure.

Screening & Early Detection

The earlier breast cancer is found, the better the chances that treatment will work. It is recommended that women with no symptoms follow these early detection guidelines:

Mammograms: Women age 40 and older should have mammograms every year. Women at increased risk (e.g. family history, genetic tendency, past breast cancer) should speak with their physician about the benefits and risks of starting mammograms when they are younger.

Clinical Breast Exam (CBE): Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast examination (CBE) as part of a regular exam by a health care provider preferably every three years. After age 40, women should have a breast exam by a health care provider every year.

Breast Self Exam (BSE): Women should learn the normal feel of their breasts and check them regularly for any changes.

*If detected & treated early,
the 5-year survival rate
for localized
breast cancer is 98%.¹*



Get Active & Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk with Exercise²

Studies show that exercise has real benefits for preventing breast cancer. Physically active women have up to a 40 percent reduced risk of developing breast cancer. Although a lifetime of regular, vigorous activity is thought to be of greatest benefit, women who occasionally engage in physical activity also experience a reduced risk.

^{1,2}American Cancer Society. www.cancer.org. *Cancer Facts and Figures 2008*.

For more information about breast cancer, contact your health care provider or
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center
about a free breast cancer screening.

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www.marybird.org

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