

What do I need  
to know about  
**breast cancer?**





## Why should I learn about breast cancer?

All women are at risk of breast cancer. But breast cancer can be treated if it is found early. That's why getting screened for breast cancer is so important for all women.

## Am I at risk of getting breast cancer?

Yes, women of all ages are at risk for breast cancer. And the risk gets higher as women get older.

## Why does screening help?

With regular screening, breast cancer can be found early and treated quickly. With early treatment, women can live long, happy and healthy lives.

*"I make sure I get screened. It gives me peace of mind, knowing I am taking charge of my health."*

Felicia, mother of two, age 38



## What can I do to help myself?

### 1. Know your risk.

- Talk to your family. Find out about your family health history.
- Talk to your doctor about the chances that you could get breast cancer.

### 2. Get screened.

- Ask your doctor which tests are right for you.
- If you are under 40, your doctor or nurse should give you a breast exam at least every 3 years starting at age 20.
- If you are 40 or older, you should have a mammogram (breast X-ray) every year.

### 3. Get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts.

- Pay attention to any changes. See your doctor or nurse right away if you notice:
  - A lump, hard knot or thickening
  - Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening
  - A change in the size or shape of the breast
  - Skin that puckers or dimples in a little
  - An itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
  - Any pulling in of your nipple or other parts of the breast
  - Nipple discharge that starts suddenly for no reason
  - Any new pain in one spot that doesn't go away



*“I have learned how my breasts look and feel normally. And I pay attention to any changes in my breasts.”*

**Mariela, college student, age 23**



#### 4. Make healthy choices.

You can make simple changes in your life that can help lower your chances of getting breast cancer:

- Make sure you keep active. For example, take a walk at least 3 times a week.
- Eat healthy foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Don't drink too much alcohol. Have no more than one drink of alcohol a day.

#### What if I'm worried about getting screened?

Some women say they don't want to get screened because they're afraid the doctor will find a problem. It's normal to be afraid. But don't let fear stop you from getting screened.

Getting screened can give you peace of mind. Most often, women find out that they have no signs of cancer at all.

But getting screened can give you a better chance of beating cancer if it is found early. When cancer is found before it has a chance to grow or spread — treatment works better.

Some women may worry about what it's like to get a breast exam or mammogram. But both are easy to do and shouldn't hurt. Ask your doctor to tell you about what to expect. Remember, your health is worth it!

*“Staying active is one way I can help reduce my risk of breast cancer and other diseases. My husband and I take a walk together almost every day.”*

**Lorena, mother of one, age 32**

## What are the FACTS about breast cancer?

**Even if no one in your family has had breast cancer, you are still at risk.**

Most women who get breast cancer have no family history of the disease.

**No one is too young or too old to get breast cancer.**

Older women do have a higher chance of getting breast cancer, but young women can get it too. All women are at risk.

**Mammograms are not just used to check breast lumps.**

A mammogram is the best way to find breast cancer early, even when a lump is too small to feel.

**Mammograms DO NOT cause breast cancer.**

Some people worry that the radiation used in mammograms could cause problems. But the amount of radiation used is very small.

**Bruises or injuries to the breast DO NOT cause breast cancer.**

Some women worry about this. But there is no link between injury to the breast and the chances you'll get breast cancer.

**Breast cancer DOES NOT spread during surgery.**

Some people also worry about this, but there has been no case where breast cancer has spread during breast surgery.

**Herbs cannot cure breast cancer.**

There are no herbs that have been proven to cure cancer.

**Getting breast cancer does not mean death.**

When found early, there is almost 100 percent chance of surviving breast cancer. That's why getting screened is so important.



*“My health is important to me and my whole family. So I make sure I get my mammogram every year.”*

**Isabela, mother of three, age 46**



## What can I do?

Susan G. Komen for the Cure® recommends that you:

- Talk to your family to learn about your family health history and ask your doctor about your chances of getting breast cancer.
- Ask your doctor which tests are right for you.
- Ask your doctor for a breast exam at least every 3 years starting at 20, and every year starting at 40.
- Have a mammogram every year starting at age 40.
- Know how your breasts look and feel. Tell your doctor about any changes right away.
- Make healthy choices that lower your chances of breast cancer.

## What if I cannot afford a mammogram?

- Call our helpline 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) for free or low cost options in your area.
- Our helpline can help you find the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program in your state.

*“My doctor helped me every step of the way. She helped me get the care I needed. It made such a difference.”*

**Teresa, breast cancer survivor, age 54**

## About Susan G. Komen for the Cure®

Nancy G. Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982, that promise became Susan G. Komen for the Cure, which is now the world's largest breast cancer organization and the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer with more than \$1.3 billion invested to date. For more information about Susan G. Komen for the Cure, breast health or breast cancer, visit [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org) or call 1-877 GO KOMEN.

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