

Breast Cancer

What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a type of cancer that starts in one or both breasts. It occurs almost entirely in women, but men can also get breast cancer.

It is important to understand that lumps can be a normal part of breast tissue, but any lump or lump changes should be checked out by a health care professional to find out if it is benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

[What Is Breast Cancer? | American Cancer Society](#)

[Breast Cancer—Patient Version - NCI](#)

Can Breast Cancer be Prevented?

There is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, but you can lower your risk by addressing things that are within your control.

THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF BREAST CANCER IS BEING FEMALE AND GROWING OLDER. HOWEVER, WHEN CAUGHT EARLY, BREAST CANCER IS MUCH EASIER TO TREAT. GET SCREENED.

Risk Factors You Can Control

- Alcohol Use - The risk increases with the amount of alcohol you drink per day. Women who have 2 to 3 drinks a day can have about a 20% increase in risk compared to those who do not drink. Alcohol can increase your risk of other types of cancer as well.
- Healthy Weight - Being overweight or obese after menopause can increase breast cancer risk.

Risk Factors You Cannot Control

- Age and Gender - The biggest risk factor for breast cancer is being female and aging. Most breast cancers are found in women 55 and older. **Men can also get breast cancer**, but it is much more common in women.
- Gene Mutations - Up to 10% of breast cancer cases can be connected to gene changes passed on from a parent. The most common cause is an inherited mutation in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene. This can be inherited from either parent and can have up to a 7 in 10 chance of getting breast cancer by age 80.
- Personal or Family History - Having a family or personal history of breast cancer can also increase your chances of developing breast cancer. Having an immediate family member with breast cancer almost doubles a woman's chances of developing breast cancer. Similarly, women who have had breast cancer in one breast have a higher risk of developing cancer in the other breast.

[Breast Cancer Risk Factors You Can't Change | American Cancer Society](#)

What is Breast Cancer Screening?

Finding breast cancer early is the best way to prevent death from cancer. It is also much easier to treat when it is small and has not spread. The most common screening method is a mammogram. A screening mammogram is an imaging technique used to look for signs of breast cancer in those with no symptoms/problems.

A breast ultrasound is not usually used as a routine screening test for breast cancer but can be useful for looking at some breast changes. It is especially helpful in women with dense breast tissue, making it harder to see abnormal areas on mammograms.

Who Should Get Screened for Breast Cancer?

Ages 25-39: Determine lifetime risk for breast cancer with help from a health care provider. Those not at high risk do not need screening at this point. Any changes in the look or feel of your breasts should be communicated with your health care provider immediately.

Ages 40-49: Women ages 40-44 should discuss the pros and cons of screening with their health care provider. Annual screening should begin by age 45. Any changes in the look and feel of your breast tissue should be communicated to your health care provider immediately.

Ages 50 and over: Women ages 50-54 with normal risk should get an annual mammogram. For those at low to average risk, screening mammograms can be performed every other year or may continue yearly starting at age 55. Screening should continue for life.

Men are also at risk for breast cancer and should talk with their health care provider about any screening needs based on breast tissue changes.

What if I can't afford to get screened?

The worry about the cost of screening and potential treatment can be overwhelming, however Oklahoma has programs to help women who are uninsured or underinsured.

[Oklahoma Project Woman](#)

[Take Charge](#)