



Breast cancer: Know your risk and when to get screened

Breast cancer can strike anyone, of any gender and any age, and whether or not there's a family history of the disease. [Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is](#) the most common cancer among American women. It's important for you to visit your doctor and follow the measures below to stay on top of your health. That way, if any issues are found during screening, you can begin treatment as soon as possible.

Know the risks. There are risk factors you can't control (such as family history and your age) and some that you can control (like your physical activity level, diet, and tobacco usage). Your doctor can help you determine your personal risks. Be sure to let them know if a family member has or had breast cancer and if these family members or you have been found to carry genes related to breast cancer.

Be alert to changes. Perform a [breast self-exam](#) at least once a month. Tell your doctor about any changes you may see or feel in your breasts—including a lump, pain, discoloration, or anything else that concerns you.

Get screened. Ask your doctor about getting a mammogram. [Mammograms](#) are the best way to find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat and before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms. Mammograms are recommended annually for women over 40 years of age.

Adopt healthy lifestyle changes. There are no sure ways to prevent breast cancer, but making certain lifestyle changes may reduce your risk. Exercise regularly, eat a variety of nutritious foods, maintain a healthy weight, avoid or limit alcohol, and stop using tobacco.

For more information

Learn more about breast cancer by visiting the [American Cancer Society](#) online.

Concerned about the cost of getting a mammogram? For those who have low incomes or are uninsured or underinsured, the CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program offers free or low-cost mammograms. [Find out if you qualify.](#)

Especially if Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a difficult time for you, we encourage you to [read these tips honor of those still fighting and those who have passed away.](#)