

Breast Cancer Screening



What Is Breast Cancer?¹

Breast cancer is a type of cancer that starts in one or both breasts. It mainly occurs in middle-aged and older individuals, with 62 being the median age at the time of diagnosis.

Breast cancer accounts for 12.5% of all new annual cancer cases worldwide, making it the most common cancer in the world.¹

Screening and Detection

Screening refers to tests and exams used to find a disease in people who don't have any symptoms. The goal of screening tests for breast cancer is to find it early before it causes symptoms (like a lump in the breast that can be felt). Early detection means finding and diagnosing a disease earlier than if you'd waited for symptoms to start.

A person is considered to be at average risk if they don't have a personal history of breast cancer, a strong family history of breast cancer, or a genetic mutation known to increase the risk of breast cancer (such as in a BRCA gene) and have not had chest radiation therapy before the age of 30. See below for guidelines for people at high risk.

- People ages 40 to 44 have the option to start screening with a mammogram every year.
- People ages 45 to 54 should get a mammogram every year.
- People 55 and older can switch to a mammogram every other year, or they can choose to continue yearly mammograms. Screening should continue as long as the person is in good health and is expected to live at least 10 more years.
- Everyone should understand what to expect when getting a mammogram for breast cancer screening — what the test can and cannot do.

Clinical breast exams are not recommended for breast cancer screening among average-risk people at any age.

Types of Breast Cancer

Ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS)

Invasive breast cancer

- Invasive (infiltrating) ductal carcinoma (IDC)
- Invasive lobular carcinoma (ILC)

Special types of invasive breast cancer

- Triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC)
- Inflammatory breast cancer (IBC)

Less common types of breast cancer

- Paget's disease of the breast
- Angiosarcoma of the breast
- Phyllodes tumor of the breast

Screening Tests

- 2D and 3D mammograms
- Clinical breast exam (CBE)
- Breast self-exam (BSE)

Did You Know?

In recent years, breast cancer incidence rates have increased by 0.5% per year.

Differences by race and ethnicity

Some variations in breast cancer can be seen in racial and ethnic groups. For example:

- The median age at diagnosis is slightly younger for African American patients (60 years old) compared to white patients (63 years old).
- African American patients have the highest death rate from breast cancer.
- African American patients have a higher chance of developing breast cancer before the age of 40 than white individuals.
- At every age, African American patients are more likely to die from breast cancer than any other race or ethnic group.
- White, Asian, and Pacific Islander individuals are more likely to be diagnosed with localized breast cancer than African American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Alaska Native patients.
- Asian and Pacific Islander patients have the lowest death rate from breast cancer.
- Native American and Alaska Native patients have the lowest rates of developing breast cancer.

Currently, there are more than 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

Your Responsibility

- Do self-breast exams monthly.
- Speak with your primary care provider (PCP).
- Call and schedule your mammogram.



¹<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/about/how-common-is-breast-cancer.html>