



# Breast Cancer

## American Cancer Society

Reviewed February 2014





# What we'll be talking about

- How common is breast cancer?
- What is breast cancer?
- What causes it?
- What are the risk factors?
- Can breast cancer be prevented?
- Tests to find breast cancer early
- What you can do
- More information



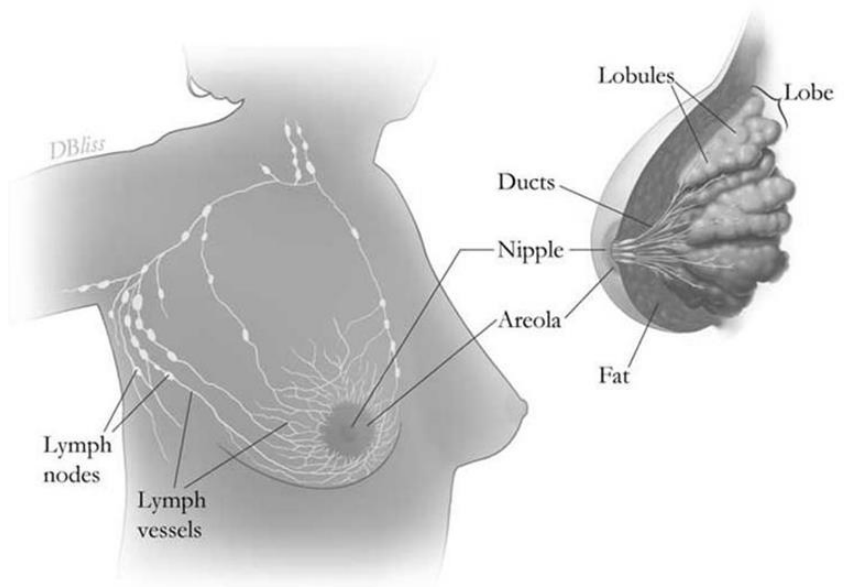
# Breast cancer: How common is it?

- The most common cancer in women in the U.S.
- 2nd leading cause of cancer-related death in women in the U.S.
- Death rates have been steadily going down since 1989.

# What is breast cancer?

The female breast is made up mainly of:

- **Lobules** – the milk-producing glands
- **Ducts** – tiny tubes that carry the milk from the lobules to the nipple
- **Stroma** – fatty tissue and connective tissue surrounding the ducts and lobules, blood vessels, and lymphatic vessels



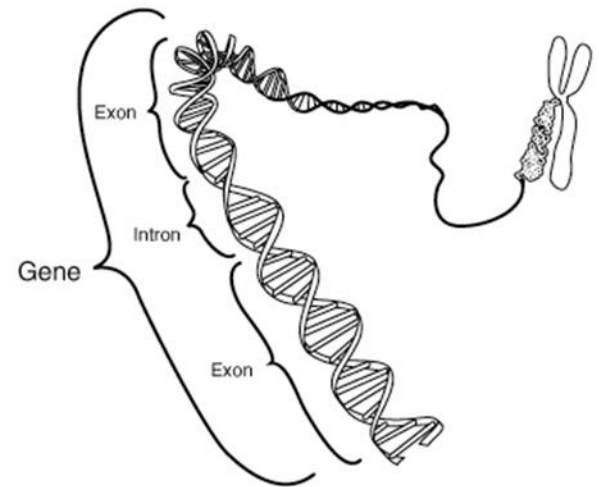


# What is breast cancer?

- Cancer is the growth of abnormal cells.
- The cells can invade and damage normal tissue.
- Breast cancer can start in any part of the breast.

# Causes of breast cancer

- We do not know the cause of most breast cancers.
- Most likely cause is related to changes in the genetic material (DNA) in our cells.
- DNA changes are often related to our lifestyle, but some can be due to age and other factors.





# Breast cancer risk factors

Risk factors are anything that can increase or decrease a person's chance of getting a disease, such as cancer.

There are many known risk factors for breast cancer. Some of these cannot be changed, but some can...

# Breast cancer risk factors

- Gender
  - Being a woman is the main risk factor for developing breast cancer
- Aging
  - Breast cancer risk increases as a woman gets older







# Breast cancer risk factors

- Genetic risk factors
  - About 5% to 10% of breast cancer cases are thought to be hereditary, caused by gene changes (mutations) inherited from a parent.
- Family history of breast cancer
  - Breast cancer risk is higher among women whose close blood relatives have this disease.



# Breast cancer risk factors

- Personal history of breast cancer
  - A woman with cancer in one breast has a 3- to 4-fold increased risk of developing a new cancer in the other breast or in another part of the same breast.
- Certain non-cancer breast problems
- Previous chest radiation
  - Women who had radiation to the chest for another cancer as a child or young adult are at a much higher risk.

# Breast cancer risk factors

- Post-menopausal hormone therapy (PHT)
  - Increased risk in women who use or recently used combined PHT for many years
- DES exposure
  - Slightly increases risk
- Recent use of hormonal contraceptives
  - Slightly higher risk than in women who never used them, but this goes down after use stops





# Breast cancer risk factors

- Race

Breast cancer risk is higher among white women than African American women.

African American women are more likely to die of this cancer.

- Dense breast tissue

Women with denser breast tissue (as seen on a mammogram) have a higher risk of breast cancer.



# Breast cancer risk factors

- Not having children or having them later in life (after age 30)
  - Puts a woman at slightly higher risk
- More menstrual cycles
  - Slightly higher risk if a woman started menstruation early or went through menopause later
- Not breastfeeding
  - Some studies suggest that breastfeeding may lower breast cancer risk.

# Breast cancer risk factors

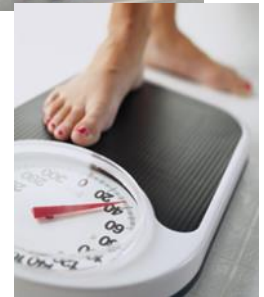
- Physical activity

More active → lowers risk



- Overweight

Obesity → raises risk of having breast cancer, especially for women after menopause



- Alcohol use

Clearly linked to increased risk

Risk goes up with the amount of alcohol you drink





# Preventing breast cancer

- How all women can lower risk:
  - Get to and stay at a healthy weight
  - Be physically active
  - Limit alcohol use
- Some women can also think about things like
  - Breastfeeding
  - Not using hormone therapy to deal with the symptoms of menopause



# Preventing breast cancer

There is no sure way to prevent breast cancer.

But there are things all women can do that might reduce their risk and help increase the odds that if they do get breast cancer, it is found at an early, more treatable stage...





# Breast cancer screening

- Screening is testing to find cancer, or other diseases, early in people who have no symptoms.
- Screening can help find cancers when they are small and have not spread – when they have a better chance of being cured.
- Breast cancer screening is done with
  - Mammograms
  - Clinical breast exams
  - In some cases, breast MRI



# ACS Recommendations for Early Breast Cancer Detection

Women age 40 and older should have a screening mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health.

Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) as part of a regular health exam by a health professional, preferably every 3 years. After age 40, women should have a CBE by a health professional every year.



# ACS Recommendations for Early Breast Cancer Detection

Breast self exam (BSE) is an option for women starting in their 20s.

Women should be told about the benefits and limitations of BSE. Women should report any breast changes to a health professional right away.



# ACS Recommendations for Early Breast Cancer Detection

Some women – because of their family history, a genetic tendency, or certain other factors – should be screened with MRIs in addition to mammograms. (The number of women who fall into this category is small – less than 2% of all women in the U.S.)

Women should talk with their doctor about their history and whether they should have additional tests at an earlier age.

So what can you do to  
prevent and beat  
breast cancer?

What you can do

**Change those risk factors that you can control.**

- Get to and stay at a healthy weight throughout life





# What you can do

- Be physically active

Adults should engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week, or an equivalent combination, preferably spread throughout the week.

- Limit sedentary behavior

- Limit alcohol

Have no more than 1 drink a day for women (2 drinks a day for men)



# What you can do

## Get screened.

- If you are age 40 or older, get your yearly breast cancer screening tests.
- Talk with a doctor about your breast cancer risk.
- Talk with a doctor about your medical history and your family history to find out if you need to start testing earlier or have MRIs done along with your mammograms.





# More information

You can get more information about breast cancer on our website, [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), or call 1-800-227-2345 and talk with one of our Cancer Information Specialists.

- Breast Cancer: Early Detection
- Breast Cancer – Detailed Guide
- Breast Cancer Overview
- How to Check Your Breasts
- Medicines to Reduce Breast Cancer Risk
- 10 Tips for Getting a Mammogram

*All are also available in Spanish.*

Thank you!