

# Breast Health Basics

## Learn the Facts

- In 2008, approximately 182,460 women in the U.S. were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and about 40,480 women died from the disease.
- Except for skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women today.
- When breast cancer is found early (within the breast), the chance for survival is the greatest.



## Am I at Risk for Breast Cancer?

- All women are at risk for breast cancer.
- Being a woman is the number one risk factor for breast cancer. Your breast cancer risk increases as you get older.
- Most women who get breast cancer have no other known risk factors.
- Although breast cancer is more common in women over the age of 40, younger women can also develop breast cancer.
- Men can also get breast cancer, but it is rare. It is about 100 times more common in women.



## Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Recommends That You:

- Talk to your family to learn about your family health history
- Talk to your provider about your personal risk of breast cancer
- Ask your doctor which screening tests are right for you if you are at higher risk
- Have a mammogram every year starting at age 40 if you are at average risk
- Have a clinical breast exam at least every 3 years starting at 20, and every year starting at 40
- Know how your breasts look and feel and report any changes to your health care provider right away
- Make healthy lifestyle choices that may reduce your risk of breast cancer

For more information contact: 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) or [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)



## Questions & Answers About Your Breast Health

### What can I do to reduce my risk of getting breast cancer?

There is no sure way to avoid breast cancer. But, you can do things that may improve your overall health. Maintain a healthy weight. Exercise and eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

### My mother had breast cancer a few years ago. Does that mean that I will get breast cancer too?

We don't know what causes breast cancer. But, most women who get breast cancer have no family history of the disease. If someone in your family has had breast cancer or you are concerned about your risk, talk to your doctor. Learn about your choices and ask when to start getting mammograms.

### I am currently taking birth control pills. Do birth control pills increase my chance of developing breast cancer?

If you are currently taking birth control pills, your breast cancer risk is slightly increased. The increased risk from using birth control pills becomes less after you have stopped using them. After about 10 years your risk returns to normal.

### Does drinking alcohol increase my chance of breast cancer?

Studies have shown that drinking alcohol can increase your risk for breast cancer.



### My breasts feel lumpy and tender at certain times of the month. Does this increase my chance for breast cancer?

Breast lumpiness with tenderness or pain at certain times of the month is called *fibrocystic breast changes*. These breast changes are common, especially before your period, and do not increase your chance of getting breast cancer. Get to know the way your breasts look and feel. Learn what is normal for you. If you notice any change, see your doctor right away.



Susan G. Komen for the Cure does not provide medical advice.

For more information or if you have other questions about your breast health or breast cancer, please call our Breast Care Helpline (1-877-465-6636) or visit our website.

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