

# Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer afflicting women, and is a leading cause of death. While all races and ethnicities are vulnerable, Hispanic women die more from breast cancer than any other kind.

## Signs and Symptoms

The way your breasts look and feel varies from person to person. While breast lumps are often tied to cancer, other

medical conditions can cause them as well. Different people have different warning signs for breast cancer, and some people do not have any signs or symptoms at all. A person may find out they have breast cancer only after a routine mammogram. Some common signs of breast cancer include: new lumps in the breast or underarm (armpit), a thickening or swelling of part of the breast, irritation or dimpling of breast skin, redness or flaky skin in the nipple area of the breast, a pulling-in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area, nipple discharge other than breast milk (including blood), any change in the size or shape of the breast, and pain in any area of the breast. Some of these warning signs can happen with other conditions.

## Common Kinds of Breast Cancer

There are different kinds of breast cancer that vary based on which cells in the breast are affected. *Ductal carcinoma* is the most common kind, and begins in the cells that line the milk ducts (also called the lining of the breast ducts). *Lobular carcinoma* is when cancer cells begin in the lobes,



or lobules, of the breast (which are responsible for milk production). Both cancers can emerge either as *in situ* (in which they do not spread beyond the cancerous tissue) or as *invasive*, in which the cancer spreads to other areas of the breast or body.

## Risk Factors

The following factors can increase your chances of getting breast cancer: getting older, menstruating for the first time at a young age, starting menopause at a later age, being older at the birth of your first child, never giving birth, not breastfeeding, a personal history of breast cancer or some non-cancerous breast diseases, a family history of breast cancer, treatment with radiation therapy to the breast/chest, being overweight (riskier especially after menopause), long-term use of hormone replacement therapy (estrogen and progesterone combined), drinking alcohol more than once daily, and not getting regular exercise.

## Preventing Breast Cancer

Get screened for breast cancer

regularly, especially through mammograms. Women aged 40 to 49 should talk to their doctor about when and how often they should be screened, while women 50 to 74 should be tested every two years. Control your weight, eat healthy, exercise regularly, know your family history of

breast cancer and consult with your doctor, find out the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy, and limit the amount of alcohol you drink. To learn more, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/>

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Miami-Dade County Health Department's Women's Health Program provides screening services for detecting breast and cervical cancer in women aged 50-64. These are provided through a partnership with primary care physicians and community hospitals.

Services are free if you are uninsured, between the ages of 50-64, have not been screened in the past year, and meet financial eligibility criteria. To learn more, call 305-470-5634.

The MOMmobile provides on-site service for pregnant and post-partum women. Reducing complications with pregnancy can help lower the risk of breast cancer. Call 305-546-2986 to learn more.

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