



CANCER INSTITUTE

Wayne State University



BREAST HEALTH

PROMOTING CANCER AWARENESS & EARLY DETECTION

Taking Control of Your Health

Cancer is the most curable in its early stages.

At the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, we know that routine screenings save lives every day. Advocate for your health and talk with a health care professional to make an informed decision on which screenings are right for you.

What is breast cancer?

- Breast cancer is the growth of cancer cells in breast tissue.
- Breast cancer is not just one disease – there are many types of breast cancer.
- Breast cancer is a survivable disease when detected early. More women are living longer without their breast cancer returning.

Who can get breast cancer?

- With the exception of skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer in women.
- Men can develop breast cancer too, though it is rare.
- Certain factors increase a woman's risk for breast cancer. At increased risk are:
 - Women age 40 and older. Risk increases with age.
 - Women with a personal history of breast cancer.
 - Women with a family history of breast or ovarian cancer on the mother's or father's side of the family. This factor is particularly important if cancer occurred before age 50, or if the cancer occurred in a first-degree relative (mother, sister

or daughter). However, 80 percent of women with breast cancer have no family history.

- There are other factors that increase a woman's risk for breast cancer. Discuss your risk with your health care provider.
- Women at an increased risk for breast cancer should ask their provider about the need for additional screening tests.
- **Breast Density**
Michigan law requires that you be told if your screening mammogram shows you have dense breasts.
 - Dense breasts have more glandular tissue than fatty tissue.
 - Dense breasts may put you at a higher risk for breast cancer.
 - Dense breasts make it harder for the radiologist to see breast changes on a mammogram.

Talk with your healthcare provider about additional screening tests that may be right for you.

Be proactive.
Talk to your health care provider
about your breast health.
Early detection saves lives.

What are the symptoms of breast cancer?

- Early stage breast cancer does not always have symptoms. This is why regular checkups are important.
- The most common symptom is a lump or thickness in the breast or underarm area.
- Other symptoms may include a change in color, feel, size or shape of the breast or nipple, unusual pain in the breast or an unusual discharge.

How do I get checked for breast problems?

- Become familiar with the look and feel of your breasts. Report any unusual lumps or changes to your health care professional right away.
- A clinical breast exam, done by your health care provider, should be part of your regular physical exam.
- Most women should consider regular mammograms. A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast. Currently, it is the best method in finding breast cancer early. A mammogram may find a change in the breast that cannot be seen or felt.

When should I start getting checked for breast cancer?

- Clinical breast exams are encouraged every one to three years starting at age 18, and every year starting at age 40.
- Women 40 and older should consider yearly mammograms. Talk with your health care provider about what is right for you.

- For women at increased risk, talk with your health care provider before age 40 about what screening schedule is right for you.
- Men should also report breast lumps or changes to their health care provider.

How do I lower my risk for breast cancer?

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Limit fat in your diet and include regular physical activity.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Avoid tobacco use.
- Talk to your health care provider about the risks and benefits of birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy.



Most insurance plans in Michigan and Medicare cover breast cancer screening. Women ages 40-64 without health insurance should call the Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Program at 888-242-2702 for eligibility for free breast and cervical cancer screenings.

*This information is intended to serve as a guideline only. Screening needs vary for each individual depending on your overall cancer risk. Please consult with a health care professional to decide which screenings are right for you and to make an informed decision.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to learn more about any of these topics, please visit karmanos.org.
To make an appointment or to reach the Patient & Community Education department call Karmanos at 1-800-527-6266.
Reliable information is also available from the following sources:

American Cancer Society
877-ACS-2345
Cancer.org

Susan G. Komen for the Cure
877-GO-KOMEN (877-465-6636)
komen.org

National Cancer Institute
800-4-CANCER
Cancer.gov



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