

### What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that starts in the cells of the breast. A malignant tumor is a group of cancer cells that can grow into (invade) nearby tissues or spread (metastasize) to distant parts of the body. Breast cancer happens mostly in women, but men can get it, too.

### What are the risk factors for breast cancer?

A risk factor is anything that affects your chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Most women who have one or more breast cancer risk factors never develop breast cancer, while many women with breast cancer have no known risk factors (other than being a woman and growing older). Even when a woman with risk factors develops breast cancer, it's hard to know just how much these factors might have contributed. Some risk factors can't be changed— like a person's age or race. Other risk factors are lifestyle-related, such as cancer causing factors in the environment or personal behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, and diet. Some factors influence risk more than others, and your risk for breast cancer can change over time, due to things like aging or life-style. You may also hear about risk factors with unclear effects on breast cancer risk, or risk factors that are controversial or have been disproven.

### Breast cancer risk factors you cannot change

#### 1. Gender

Simply being a woman is the main risk factor for developing breast cancer. Men can develop breast cancer, but it's about 100 times more common among women than men. This is probably because men have less breast tissue, as well as less of the female hormones estrogen and progesterone, which can promote breast cancer cell growth.

#### 2. Aging

Your risk of developing breast cancer goes up as you get older. About 1 out of 8 invasive breast cancers are found in women younger than 45, while about 2 of 3 invasive breast cancers are found in women age 55 or older.

### 3. Inheriting certain genes

About 5% to 10% of breast cancer cases are thought to be hereditary, meaning that they are caused by gene defects (called mutations) passed on from a parent. BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes

### 4. Family history of breast cancer

Breast cancer risk is higher among women whose close blood relatives have this disease. Having a first-degree relative (mother, sister, or daughter) with breast cancer about doubles a woman's risk. Having 2 first-degree relatives increases her risk about 3fold. Although the exact risk is not known, women with a family history of breast cancer in a father or brother also have an increased risk of breast cancer. Overall, less than 15% of women with breast cancer have a family member with this disease. This means that most (85%) women who get breast cancer do not have a family history of this disease.

### 5. Personal history of breast cancer

A woman with cancer in one breast has an increased risk of developing a new cancer in the other breast or in another part of the same breast. (This is different from a recurrence (return) of the first cancer.) This risk is even higher if breast cancer was diagnosed at a younger age.

### Routine screening of breast cancer

Widespread use of screening mammograms has increased the number of breast cancers found before they cause any symptoms. Women ages 40 to 44 should have the choice to start annual breast cancer screening with mammograms if they wish to do so. The risks of screening as well as the potential benefits should be considered. Women age 45 to 54 should get mammograms every year. Women age 55 and older should switch to mammograms every 2 years, or have the choice to continue yearly screening. Screening should continue as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live 10 more years or longer.

Adapted from *American Cancer Society, Inc.*

## OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH



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# SEVEN REASONS YOU SHOULD MAKE TIME FOR A MAMMOGRAM

**SELF-EXAMS AREN'T ENOUGH**  
mammograms can detect a  
lump 2 YEARS before  
you can feel one

Breast Cancer Affects  
1 in 8 Women

#1  
MOST  
COMMON  
CANCER IN  
WOMEN



>192,370 WOMEN ARE  
DIAGNOSED  
WITH BREAST CANCER  
EACH YEAR

A MAMMOGRAM  
TAKES MINUTES  
THAT'S JUST - 2%  
OF YOUR DAY

More than a  
40,000 women  
lose their lives  
to this disease  
annually

REGULAR MAMMOGRAM  
INCREASE YOUR BREAST  
CANCER  
SURVIVAL RATE BY 30%



On behalf of the doctors and staff of  
**Advanced Imaging and Therapy  
Centre**, we welcome you to have  
your regular Mammogram done.

25%  
OFF

