

Breast Cancer: *Just the Facts*



According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), breast cancer is the most common cancer for women in the United States, except for skin cancer. The ACS estimates one in eight American women will develop invasive breast cancer during their lifetime. However, with early detection, new treatments and a better understanding of the disease, survival rates for breast cancer patients have increased.

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

There are a number of risk factors for breast cancer. Some are related to lifestyle choices such as tobacco use, drinking and diet. However, some risk factors cannot be changed. The ACS lists the following risk factors not related to personal choice:

- being female
- aging (over 55 years of age)
- having a personal or family history of breast cancer
- being white or African-American
- having dense breast tissue
- beginning your period before age 12
- beginning menopause after age 55
- getting radiation therapy to the chest area for a previous cancer as a child or young adult

Signs and Symptoms of Breast Cancer

The most common sign for breast cancer is a new lump or mass, however, other changes in the breast can be a sign as well. The ACS recommends you see your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- breast or nipple pain
- swelling of all or part of a breast
- nipple discharge, not including breast milk
- skin irritation or dimpling
- nipple turned inward
- redness, scaling or thickening

Breast Cancer Prevention and Screening

Although there is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, you can help lower your risk by maintaining a healthy body weight, being physically active on a regular basis and making healthy food choices.

The ACS recommends an annual screening mammogram for women between the ages of 45 and 54 with an average risk for breast cancer. Beginning at age 55, a screening mammogram is recommended every other year as long as the woman is healthy.* The guidelines no longer recommend clinical or self-breast exams, however, every woman should be familiar with how her breasts normally look and feel, and contact her doctor if any changes occur.

**For benefit coverage, visit TRICARE's Covered Services page at www.tricare.mil/coveredservices. Ask your doctor for age recommendations and risk guidelines.*



Help lower your risk of breast cancer by living a healthy lifestyle.

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