

Racial & Ethnic Differences

Breast cancer differences

Aside from skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the U.S. It is the most common cancer found among every racial and ethnic group.

The rates of getting and dying from breast cancer differ among ethnic groups.

Screening may save lives

Getting regular screenings (along with treatment if diagnosed) lowers the risk of dying from breast cancer. Screening tests can find breast cancer early, when the chances of survival are highest. Talk with a doctor about which screening tests are right for you.

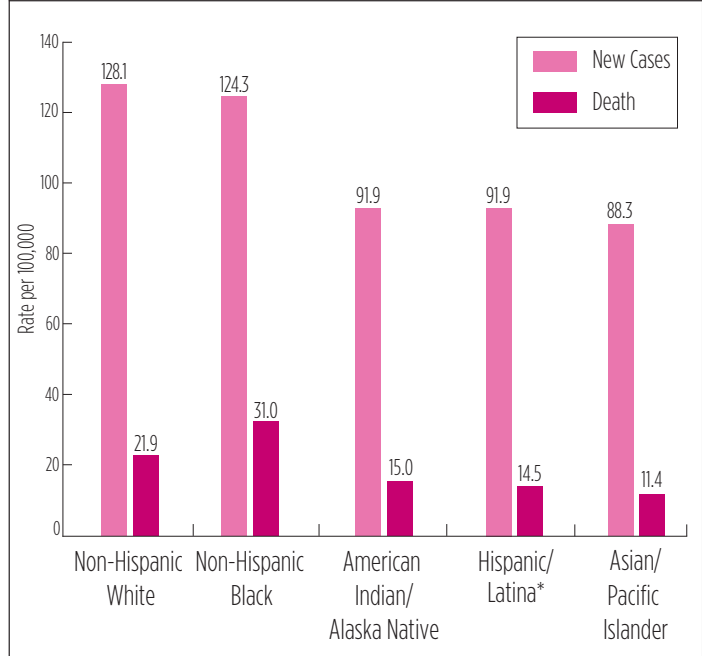
Incidence (new cases) rates

Overall, new cases of breast cancer is about the same for black and white women. However, African-American women under age 45 have a higher incidence of breast cancer than white women.

Hispanic/Latina women are more likely than white women to be diagnosed with late stage breast cancers. They also tend to have larger tumors than white women. Breast cancer incidence is lower among Asian/Pacific Islander women than for white and black women.

New Asian-American immigrants also have lower rates of breast cancer than those who have lived in the U.S. for many years. Yet, for those born in the U.S., the risk is about the same as that of white women.

Rates[†] of female new cases (incidence) and death (mortality) from breast cancer by race and ethnicity, US, 2008-2012.



[†] Rates are age adjusted to the 2000 US standard population.
* Women of Hispanic origin may be any race.

American Cancer Society Inc., Surveillance Research, 2015



Survival rates

Black women tend to have poorer survival rates than women from other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. Studies have found that they often have aggressive tumors with a poorer prognosis (chance for recovery).

Breast cancer is still the most common cancer (and the leading cause of cancer death) among Hispanic/Latina women. Their breast cancers are often found at a later stage. The chance of dying from breast cancer is higher if a tumor is found at a late stage.

Why are there racial and ethnic differences in rates of breast cancer?

Some populations have risk factors which may explain some of the differences in rates. Known risk factors include:

- Age at first period
- Age at menopause
- Age at first childbirth
- Body weight
- Number of childbirths
- Menopausal hormone therapy (postmenopausal hormone use)

There are other factors that may also play a role including:

- The biology of some breast cancers. For example, African-American women are more likely to have triple negative breast cancer — an aggressive subtype of breast cancer.
- Access to health care. Women of some races/ethnicities are more likely than others to have low income, delay in diagnosis, delay in treatment and lack of follow-up.

Studies are looking at other reasons for these differences.

Resources

Susan G. Komen®
1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636)
www.komen.org

American Cancer Society
1-800-ACS-2345
www.cancer.org

Intercultural Cancer Council
www.iccnetwork.org

National Cancer Institute
1-800-4-CANCER
www.cancer.gov



Related fact sheets in this series:

- Breast Cancer Risk Factors
- Screening and Early Detection
- Breast Cancer Resources

The above list of resources is only a suggested resource and is not a complete listing of breast cancer materials or information. The information contained herein is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or to replace the services of a medical professional. Komen does not endorse, recommend or make any warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, quality or non-infringement of any of the materials, products or information provided by the organizations referenced herein.