

Take Charge

Older Women and Breast Cancer



Am I at Risk for Breast Cancer?

Check all that apply:

- I am a woman.
- I am getting older.

If you checked one of these boxes, then you are at risk for breast cancer. Being a woman is the number one risk factor for breast cancer. Your risk of breast cancer increases as you get older.



Take Charge!

You are important to your family and friends. When breast cancer is found early, chances of survival are highest.

1. Know Your Risk.

- Talk to both sides of your family to learn about your family health history.
 - You may be at a higher risk if you or someone in your family (mother, sister, daughter) has had breast cancer.
- Talk to your doctor about your own risk of breast cancer.
 - Some women are more likely to get breast cancer than others.

“When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I knew it was important to share that information with my sisters and other family members so that they could understand how it might affect their risk.”



What Can I Do?

2. Get Screened.

- ❑ Talk with your doctor about which screening tests are right for you if you are at a higher risk.
- ❑ Have a mammogram every year starting at age 40 if you are at average risk.
- ❑ Have a clinical breast exam every year starting at age 40.
- ❑ Sign up for your screening reminder at www.komen.org/reminder.

Mammogram

What is a mammogram?

It is an X-ray of the breast. It can find breast cancer when it is small, before you can feel it.

When do I need a mammogram?

Women 40 years and older should have a mammogram every year.

What happens during a mammogram?

Each breast will be placed between 2 flat surfaces of the machine and then X-rayed. You may feel some pressure, but it only lasts a few seconds. Let the technologist know if you feel any pain.

What if my doctor does not recommend a mammogram?

Take Charge! Ask your doctor for a mammogram or go to another doctor or clinic.

What if I cannot afford a mammogram?

If you have insurance, most plans cover it. Medicare also pays for mammograms. Call our breast care helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636).



Clinical Breast Exam

What is a clinical breast exam?

It is a breast exam done by a doctor or nurse. He or she will look at and feel your breasts and your underarm area for any changes.

When do I need a breast exam?

Women 40 years and older should have a breast exam every year by a doctor or nurse.

What if my doctor does not do a breast exam?

Take Charge! Ask for one or find another doctor or clinic that will provide this service.



“Getting a mammogram is important but so is a breast exam by your doctor. I mark my calendar for both.”



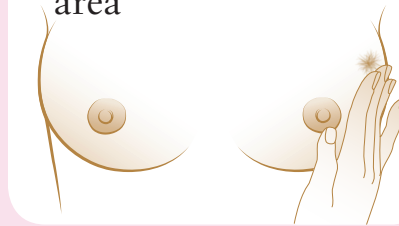
3. Know What is Normal for You.

The signs of breast cancer are not the same for all women. You should know how your breasts normally look and feel. If you notice any change in your breast — don't ignore it. It may be a benign (not cancer) breast condition or it could be a sign of breast cancer.

☐ If you notice any change in your breast, see your doctor. See the next page for a list of warning signs you should report to your doctor.

Breast changes you should report to your doctor include:

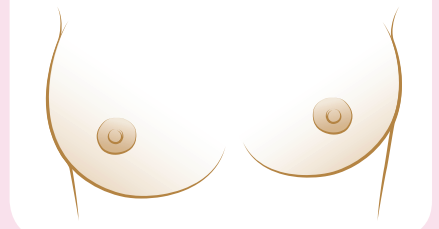
- Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area



- Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast



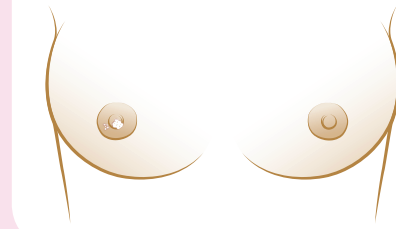
- Change in the size or shape of the breast



- Dimpling or puckering of the skin



- Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple



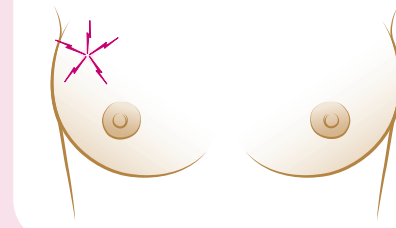
- Pulling in of your nipple or other parts of the breast



- Nipple discharge that starts suddenly



- New pain in one spot that does not go away



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“I think it’s important to take charge of my health. If I notice any changes in my breasts, I’ll be sure to let my doctor know.”

“I got a second opinion from another doctor for peace of mind.”



4. Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices.

You can do things that are good for your health and might also lower your risk of getting breast cancer.

- ❑ Maintain a healthy weight
 - Gaining weight after menopause increases a woman's chance for getting breast cancer. If you have gained weight, losing weight may reduce your risk.
- ❑ Add exercise into your routine
 - Do whatever physical activity you enjoy most and gets you moving, like walking for 30 minutes a day.
- ❑ Limit alcohol intake
 - If you drink alcohol, have less than one drink a day.
- ❑ Limit menopausal hormones
 - Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of taking menopausal hormones (estrogen plus progestin).



“I meet my friend every day for a 30-minute walk. It makes me feel better and helps me control my weight.”

Take Charge!

All women are at risk for breast cancer. As you get older, your chance of getting breast cancer increases. Your health is important to you and your family and friends. Take charge!



1. Know your risk.

- ❑ Talk to both sides of your family to learn about your family health history.
- ❑ Talk to your doctor about your personal risk of breast cancer.

2. Get screened.

- ❑ Talk with your doctor about which screening tests are right for you if you are at a higher risk.
- ❑ Have a mammogram every year starting at age 40 if you are at average risk.
- ❑ Have a clinical breast exam every year starting at age 40.
- ❑ Sign up for your screening reminder at www.komen.org/reminder.

3. Know what is normal for you.

- ❑ Know how your breasts look and feel and report any changes to your doctor.

4. Make healthy lifestyle choices.

- ❑ Maintain a healthy weight.
- ❑ Add exercise into your routine.
- ❑ Limit alcohol intake.
- ❑ Limit menopausal hormone use.

Resources

- **Susan G. Komen®** promises to save lives and end breast cancer forever by empowering people, ensuring quality of care for all and energizing science to find the cures.
1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636)
www.komen.org
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid** runs the Medicare and Medicaid programs.
1-877-267-2323
www.cms.gov

Take Charge!

1. Know your risk.
2. Get screened.
3. Know what is normal for you.
4. Make healthy lifestyle choices.



The 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.

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