

## RESOURCES

### If You Live on a Reservation or Tribal Lands:

- Ask your local Tribal Health clinic or Indian Health Service (IHS) center about breast cancer screenings.
- Free or low-cost screenings may be available.

### If You Live in a City or Away from Tribal Lands:

- Urban Indian Health Organizations (UIHOs) can provide screenings and support services.
- Many hospitals or community clinics offer low-cost or no-cost breast health services.

## Breast Cancer Support and Navigation

### Komen Patient Care Center

- Our navigators offer free, culturally respectful navigation services for patients, caregivers and families. Services include breast health and breast cancer information, access to services and resources, emotional support and more. Get connected with a Komen navigator at 1-877-GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) or [helpline@komen.org](mailto:helpline@komen.org).

### Indian Health Service (IHS)

- [ihs.gov](https://www.ihs.gov)

### National Indian Health Board (NIHB)

- [nihb.org](https://www.nihb.org)

### American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF)

- [americanindiancancer.org](https://www.americanindiancancer.org)

### Native CIRCLE (Cancer Information Resource Center and Learning Exchange) at Roswell Park

- [roswellpark.org/research/departments/indigenous-cancer-health/native-circle](https://www.roswellpark.org/research/departments/indigenous-cancer-health/native-circle)

### Center for Native American Cancer Health Equity (C-NACHE)

- [in.nau.edu/native-american-cancer-health-equity](https://in.nau.edu/native-american-cancer-health-equity)



**ShareForCures®** is Komen's breast cancer research registry, connecting researchers with information from people who have or had breast cancer – empowering discovery and accelerating cures.

Your breast cancer information is as unique as you are. When combined with other people in the ShareForCures community, you provide researchers with a more diverse set of data to make new discoveries faster.

You can join **ShareForCures®** if you:

- Are 18 years or older\*
- Live in the U.S. (including territories)
- Have or ever had breast cancer



Please answer a few questions about this resource to better help us serve you. We'd love to hear your thoughts. **Simply scan the QR code to share your feedback!**

This brochure was developed with guidance from Native community members, including an Elder from the Piscataway Conoy Tribe of Maryland and reviewed by others from Tribal communities. Their leadership and cultural knowledge helped ensure the information is respectful, community-informed and reflective of the values and needs of Native American, Alaska Native and Indigenous peoples.

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# Prioritize Your Health

Breast Cancer Messages for the Native American/Indigenous Community

**susan g. Komen.**



## 1. Know Your Risk: Breast Cancer Affects Native American/Indigenous Women

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Native American/Indigenous\* women in the U.S. Native American/Indigenous women are often diagnosed later and are more likely to die from breast cancer than white women, making education and early detection critical for your community.

### So, what can you do?

- Talk with relatives from all parts of your family, Elders and other trusted members of your community — whether they're born to you or chosen — to learn about your family's health. Understanding your shared health story can help you and your loved ones stay informed, care for each other and pass on important knowledge to future generations.
- Use the **Family Health History tool** on [komen.org](https://www.komen.org) to help you collect that information to share with your doctor and the people who support you.
- Speak with your doctor about your risk of breast cancer.

## 2. Get Screened: Early Detection Saves Lives

Regular screening mammograms can detect breast cancer early, when treatment is more effective. Screening, along with follow-up tests and treatment if needed, reduces the chance of dying from breast cancer. However, many Native American/Indigenous women are not getting screened.

### So, what can you do?

- If you're age 40 or older, talk with your doctor about what screening tests are available and what may be right for you if you're at higher risk of breast cancer.
- Have a mammogram every year starting at age 40.
- Have a breast exam by a doctor at least every three years starting at age 25 and every year starting at age 40.

## 3. Break Barriers, Not Traditions: Prioritize Your Health

Access to high-quality care, transportation and medical mistrust may be real challenges in your community. Whether you live on or off the reservation, your life matters. Ask your doctor, nurse, community health worker (CHW) or patient navigator where you can get screened and how to access support if you're having trouble getting the care you need.

### So, what can you do?

- Find out what support resources and screening options are available.

## 4. Know the Signs: Listen to Your Body

Breast changes like lumps, swelling, pain in one area or nipple changes could be warning signs of breast cancer. If you notice anything unusual, don't wait—speak up and ask your doctor or nurse, even if you've had a recent mammogram.

### So, what can you do?

- If you notice any change in how your breasts look or feel, contact your doctor.

- 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



- 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



## 5. Honor Yourself and Your Community Through Health

Taking care of your breast health is a way to honor both yourself and your community. By learning about risk factors for breast cancer—like being overweight or smoking—and getting screened, you protect your well-being and set a good example for future generations.

### So, what can you do?

- Learn about risk factors for breast cancer, including some of the following:
  - Getting older
  - Being born female
  - Being overweight or obese
  - Breastfeeding
  - Drinking alcohol
  - Having a family history of breast, ovarian or prostate cancer
- Encourage your community to prioritize their breast health.

\*The term "Native American/Indigenous" is used here to include American Indian, Alaska Native and other Indigenous people in the U.S.