

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

oakgov.com/health

Breast Cancer

What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a malignant tumor starting from cells of the breast. These cells may spread to surrounding tissue or to different areas of the body. Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women. Men can get breast cancer too, but this is rare.

What are the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?

Some people have different symptoms of breast cancer and some people do not have any symptoms. Some symptoms of breast cancer are:

- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area
- A change in the size or shape of the breast
- A discharge or bleeding from the nipple
- A change in the color or feel of the skin of the breast, areola, or nipple (dimpled, puckered, or scaly)
- Pain or tenderness in a specific area of the breast or nipple

What are the Risk Factors for Breast Cancer?

Having a risk factor does not mean you will get breast cancer. Most women have some risk factors, but do not get breast cancer.

- Being a woman
- Growing older, risk increases over the age of 50
- Family history of breast cancer
- Women who have had breast cancer before
- Women who had their first child after the age of 30, or never had children
- Women who began menstruation before the age of 12
- Women who began menopause after the age of 50
- Using hormone replacement therapy for a long time
- Using birth control pills, also called oral contraceptives
- Drinking alcohol
- Not getting regular exercise
- Being overweight

How is Breast Cancer Detected?

- Yearly mammograms for women 40 years and older
- Annual clinical breast exam for women 20 years and older
- Breast self examination every month for women of all ages

The best way to find breast cancer is by getting a mammogram.

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How can the Risk of Breast Cancer be Reduced?

- Exercising, regularly
- Limiting alcohol consumption
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Getting screened regularly

How can Breast Cancer be Treated?

The best treatment for you needs to be determined by you and your health care provider. Some of the ways Breast Cancer is treated are:

- Surgery such as:
 - Lumpectomy – removal of tumor
 - Mastectomy – removal of breast
- Chemotherapy – use of anticancer drugs to kill cancer cells
- Radiation therapy – use of high energy x-rays to kill cancer cells
- Hormone therapy – blocks cancer cells from getting the hormones they need to grow

For more information on Breast Cancer, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health.

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