



# BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

## Wellness Tips

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women in the United States with 250,000 new cases each year. In fact, the rate of breast cancer has increased for African American women and Asian and Pacific Islander women over the last 10 years, and although rare, can also occur in men. There are many unavoidable risk factors for breast cancer such as aging, family history, and dense breasts. However, there are also ways to reduce your risk such as cancer screenings before there are any signs of disease.

About **1 in 8** women in the U.S. will develop breast cancer.



The American Cancer Society states that women can start annual screenings at **age 40**.

### Mammogram Tips

- Avoid going a week before or during your period as your breasts may be tender.
- Do not apply deodorant or powders the day of your mammogram as they can appear as white shadows on the x-ray.

## Early Detection is the Best Defense

### PAY ATTENTION TO:

- ① Lump in breast or armpit
- ② Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- ③ Red or flaky skin on breast
- ④ Discharge from nipple
- ⑤ Swelling or change in breast size or shape
- ⑥ Pain in breast

### WHAT IS BREAST DENSITY?

Dense breasts mean that your breasts have more fibrous and glandular tissue than fatty tissue. About 50% of women 40 years of age and older have dense breasts, but it is unknown why it causes a higher risk of breast cancer. If you have dense breasts your doctor may recommend an ultrasound or MRI for more clarity.

### WHAT IS BRCA1 AND BRCA2?

All women have BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes but about 1 in 500 women in the U.S. will have a mutation in those genes. Mutations in these genes make the cells divide more rapidly, thereby increasing the risk of breast and ovarian cancers. You have a 50% chance of having the same gene mutations if your mother or father have them as well.



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## Tips to Lower Your Risk of Breast Cancer

1



Make appointments for recommended screenings. Discuss the benefits and risks of screening with your health care provider.

2



Inform your health care providers if you have a family history of breast cancer or BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations.

3



Maintain a healthy weight. Women who are overweight or obese after menopause have a higher risk of breast cancer.

4



Get regular exercise, especially after menopause. Regular physical activity may reduce the risk of breast cancer due to the effect on body weight, inflammation, and hormones.

5



Avoid alcohol or limit to one drink daily. Alcohol can raise estrogen levels in the body, which may explain some of the increased risk.

6



If possible, consider breastfeeding. It reduces a woman's lifetime exposure to estrogen, which has the ability to promote breast cancer cell growth.

7



Discuss with your health care provider about your risks with certain oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy taken for more than five years after menopause.



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Healthier Together

Source: cdc.gov, cancer.org

Disclaimer: Please note that this tip sheet is educational and not intended for diagnosis and/or treatment. Discuss any symptoms you have with a physician.