



Cancer Health Facts

Awareness. Hope. Believe. Cure. Love. Early Detection. We Can Win This Fight.

What is Breast Cancer?

Numbers at a Glance 2nd

Breast Cancer is the 2nd most common cause of cancer death among American Indian/ Alaska Native Women

1 in 8

Women in the U.S. will develop Breast Cancer in the course of their lifetime.

41,211

Number of women who died from breast cancer in 2017.

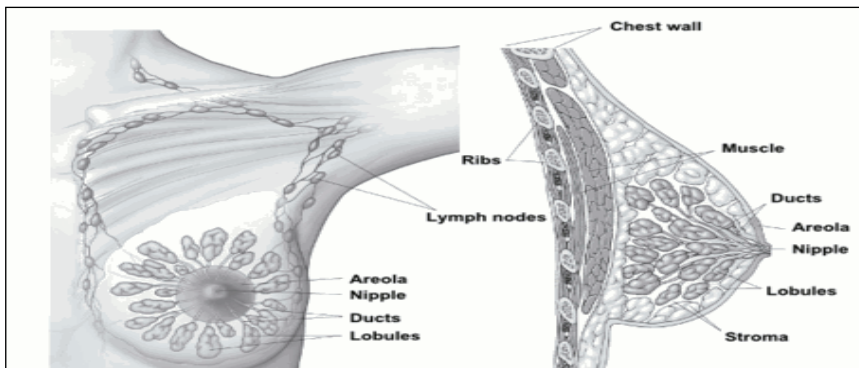
3.1 million

Women in the U.S. have a history of breast cancer

85%

Percentage of women who develop breast cancer with no family history.

Like any cancer, breast cancer is an uncontrolled growth of breast cells. Cancer occurs as a result of mutations, or abnormal changes, in the genes responsible for regulating the growth of cells and keeping them healthy. The genes are in each cell's nucleus, which acts as the "control room" of each cell. Normally, the cells in our bodies replace themselves through an orderly process of cell growth: healthy new cells take over as old ones die out. But over time, mutations can "turn on" certain genes and "turn off" others in a cell. That changed cell gains the ability to keep dividing without control or order, producing more cells just like it and forming a tumor.



Source: <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancer/detailedguide/breast-cancer-what-is-breast-cancer> ; Normal Breast Tissue

A tumor can be benign (not dangerous to health) or malignant (has the potential to be dangerous). Benign tumors are not considered cancerous: their cells are close to normal in appearance, they grow slowly, and they do not invade nearby tissues or spread to other parts of the body. Malignant tumors are cancerous.

Left unchecked, malignant cells eventually can spread beyond the original tumor to other parts of the body. The term "breast cancer" refers to a malignant tumor that has developed from cells in the breast. Usually breast cancer either begins in the cells of the lobules, which are the milk-producing glands; or the ducts, the passages that drain milk from the lobules to the nipple. Less commonly, breast cancer can begin in the stromal tissues, which include the fatty and fibrous connective tissues of the breast.

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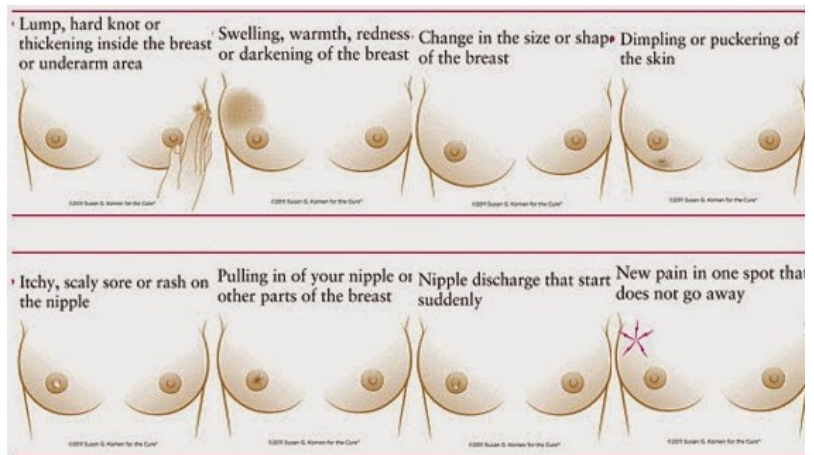
Signs & Symptoms of Breast Cancer

Widespread use of screening mammograms has increased the number of breast cancers found before they cause any symptoms. Still some breast cancers are not found by mammograms, either because the test was not done or because even under ideal conditions mammograms do not find every breast cancer.

The most common symptom of breast cancer is a new lump or mass. A mass that is painless, hard, and has irregular edges is more likely to be cancerous, but breast cancers can be tender, soft, or rounded. They can even be painful. For this reason, it is important to have any new breast mass or lump, or breast change checked by a health care professional experienced in diagnosing breast diseases.

Other possible signs of breast cancer include:

- Swelling of all or part of a breast (even if no distinct lump is felt)
- Skin irritation or dimpling
- Breast or nipple pain
- Nipple retraction (turning inward)
- Redness, scaly-ness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- A nipple discharge other than breast milk



<http://www5.komen.org/BreastCancer/WarningSigns.html> ; Common signs of Breast

Although any of these symptoms can be caused by things other than breast cancer, if you have them, they should be reported to your doctor so that he or she can find the cause.

Treatment for Breast Cancer

Breast cancer treatments can be local or systemic. Local treatments are used to remove or destroy the disease within the breast and surrounding regions, such as lymph nodes.

Surgery includes the following two procedures

- Mastectomy– this includes removal of the cancer and the breast in which the cancer was found, sometimes a double mastectomy is needed, where both breasts are removed.
- Lumpectomy– also called breast-conserving therapy, where only the tumor or lump is removed, leaving the remaining part of the breast or breasts in tact.

Systemic treatments are used to destroy or control cancer cells all over the body and include: Radiation and Chemotherapy use drugs to kill cancer cells. Side effects can include nausea, hair loss, early menopause, hot flashes, fatigue, and temporarily lowered blood counts.



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