

## Resources

Learning that you have breast cancer can change your life and the lives of those close to you. These changes can be hard to handle. It's normal for you, your family and your friends to need help coping with the feelings that such a diagnosis can bring.

Several organizations offer special programs for women with breast cancer. Be informed and learn more about Breast Cancer at:

[www.inovalinktopink.org](http://www.inovalinktopink.org)

[www.lifewithcancer.org](http://www.lifewithcancer.org)

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

[www.nbcam.org](http://www.nbcam.org)

[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

[www5.komen.org](http://www5.komen.org)

[www.nationalbreastcancer.org](http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org)



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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit healthcare system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services, including emergency- and urgent-care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health and blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community it serves through excellence in patient care, education and research. Inova provides a healthy environment for its patients, families, visitors, staff and physicians by prohibiting tobacco use on its campuses.

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## For Your Health

### What is Cancer?

Cancer begins in cells, the building blocks that make up tissues. Tissues make up breasts and other parts of the body.

Normal cells grow and divide to form new cells as the body needs them. When normal cells grow old or get damaged, they die, and new cells take their place.

Sometimes, this process goes wrong. New cells form when the body doesn't need them, and old or damaged cells don't die as they should. The buildup of extra cells often forms a mass of tissue called a lump, growth, or tumor.

### What is Breast Cancer?

Breast Cancer is a form of cancer that develops in tissues of the breast. If the cancer starts in the ducts (tubes that carry milk to the nipple), it is called Ductal Carcinoma. If the cancer starts at the lobules (glands that make milk) it is called Lobular Carcinoma. Breast Cancer occurs in both men and women, although male breast cancer is rare.

Estimated new cases and deaths from breast cancer in the United States in 2010:

	Female	Male
<b>New Cases</b>	207,090	1,970
<b>Deaths</b>	39,840	390

Tumors in the breast can be benign (not cancer) or malignant (cancer). Benign tumors are not as harmful as malignant tumors.

## What causes Breast Cancer?

Unfortunately, there is no known cause for breast cancer. Doctors do know that bumping, bruising, or touching the breast does NOT cause cancer. And breast cancer is not contagious, as you can't catch it from another person.

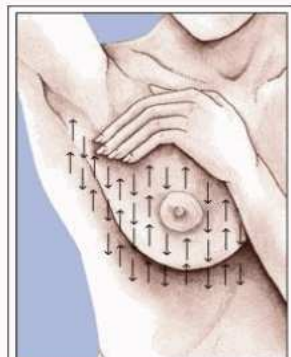
Some risk factors, such as drinking alcohol, can be avoided. But most risk factors like having a family history of breast cancer can not be avoided.

## How to prevent it?

Early detection through mammograms it is very important, but prevention is still the best cure.

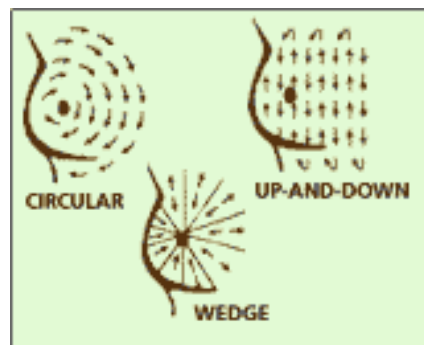
A self-breast manual exam once a month during the week following the menstrual period is recommended for women over 20 years. After the age of 40, a mammogram every 1-2 years is recommended.

Self-breast manual exam:



**Breast Self Examination**

Examine up to the collarbone, out to armpit, in to middle of chest, and down to bottom of rib cage



## Risk Factors

The following are some breast cancer risk factors shown in studies:

**Age:** Chances increase as you get older.

**Personal health history:** Have breast cancer in one breast increases your risk of getting cancer in your other breast.

**Family health history:** Your risk is higher if your mother, father, sister, or daughter had breast cancer.

**Reproductive and menstrual history:**

- The older a woman is when she has her first child,
- Women who never had children
- Women who had their first menstrual period before age 12
- Women who went through menopause after age 55
- Women who take menopausal hormone therapy for many years

**Race:** In US breast cancer is diagnosed more often in white women than in African American/black, Hispanic/Latina, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native women.

**Being overweight or obese after menopause:** Higher risk after menopause in women who are overweight or obese.

**Lack of physical activity:** Women who are physically inactive throughout life may have an increased risk of breast cancer.

**Drinking alcohol:** Studies suggest that the more alcohol a woman drinks, the greater her risk of breast cancer.

Having a risk factor does not mean that a woman will get breast cancer. Most women who have risk factors never develop breast cancer.