

What Are the Risks for Breast Cancer?

These are a few of the risk factors that may increase the chances of getting breast cancer.

- Getting older
- Having a close family member (parent, sibling, child) who has had breast cancer, especially at an early age
- Having certain gene mutations such as BRCA1 or BRCA2
- Having dense breasts
- Having overweight or obesity
- Drinking alcohol
- Not getting enough exercise
- Not breastfeeding
- Having a first menstrual period younger than 12 years
- Starting menopause older than 55 years
- Never giving birth or giving birth to your first child after age 30
- Having had high levels of radiation exposure to the chest early in life
- Using hormone replacement, feminizing hormone therapy, or certain birth control pills

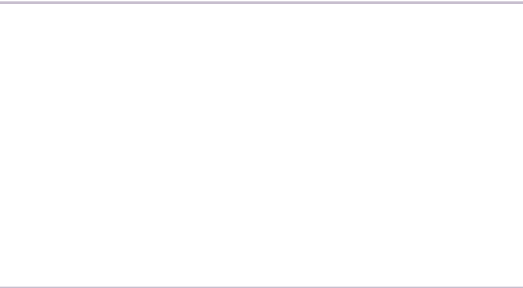
Talk to your health care provider about your personal risk.

Having one or more of these risk factors does not mean a person will get breast cancer. At the same time, not having any risk factors does not mean a person can't get breast cancer. **This is why screening is so important!**

Not Insured?

If you don't have insurance, you may still be able to get screened. The New York State Cancer Services Program offers free breast cancer screening for eligible, uninsured New York State residents.

Call **1-866-442-CANCER (2262)** to find a program near you.



For information about enrolling in a health plan through NY State of Health call the help line at **855.355.5777** or visit: **nystateofhealth.ny.gov**

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Department of Health

health.ny.gov

Get the Facts about Breast Cancer



A mammogram is the best way to find breast cancer.

What Is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is cancer that starts in the breast but can travel to other areas of the body.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers among females in New York State. It is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among females.

All females can get breast cancer, but it is most often found in females ages 50 and older.

While very rare, males can also get breast cancer.

What Is a Mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast used to screen for cancer. Screening means checking for signs of cancer before there are symptoms or problems. Getting a mammogram regularly can lower the risk of dying from breast cancer.

A mammogram is the best way to find breast cancer early, when it may be easier to treat.



Who Should Get Screened for Breast Cancer?

Most people ages 40 to 74 years should get a mammogram at least every two years.

You should get a mammogram if you:

- Are female
- Have a family history of breast cancer
- Have dense breasts
- Are a transgender man or non-binary person assigned female at birth

Some people may need to be screened earlier or more often. Talk to your health care provider if you have:

- a genetic marker or syndrome associated with a high risk of breast cancer (e.g., BRCA1 or BRCA2)
- a history of abnormal growths or lumps in the breast
- a history of high-dose radiation to the chest at a young age
- a previous breast cancer diagnosis

What Are Dense Breasts?

Dense breasts (or dense breast tissue) are very common. Dense breasts have less fatty tissue, which can make it harder to see signs of cancer on a mammogram.

If you have been told you have dense breasts, talk to your health care provider about other risk factors for breast cancer and decide if more screening tests are needed.

What Are the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer **may not** cause symptoms, especially in the early stages. This is why regular mammograms are so important.

If there are symptoms of breast cancer, they can include:

- Lump in the breast or underarm (armpit)
- Swelling of all or part of the breast
- Irritation or dimpling of the of breast skin
- Nipple retraction (the nipple turns inward)
- Redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- Breast or nipple pain
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk

If you have any of these symptoms, or anything else that worries you, talk to your health care provider.

