

BREAST CANCER FACTS

Breast Cancer is the most common cancer among women. Three-quarters of all breast cancers occur in women over age 50.

The two biggest risk factors for breast cancer are (1) being a woman and (2) getting older.

Nearly all breast cancers can be treated successfully if found early.

Early detection is very important because the cancer can spread if not treated at its earliest stages.

When breast cancer is found at its earliest stage, the survival rate is 96%.

Survival depends on the stage of the disease at detection. The five-year survival rate for all women diagnosed with breast cancer is 86%.

An estimated 11,100 Pennsylvania women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003, and 2,100 will die from the disease.

80% of women who develop breast cancer have no family history of the disease.

Annual mammograms should begin at age 40.

Women should also have regular clinical breast exams performed by a health professional. Women age 40 and over should have an annual clinical breast exam; women ages 20-39 should have a clinical breast exam every three years.

All women should perform monthly breast self-examinations (BSE). Ask your doctor or nurse to explain the proper procedures for doing BSE.

Any lump, thickening, swelling, dimpling, skin irritation, distortion, retraction of the nipple, scaliness or pain in the breast could be a symptom of breast cancer. A physician should check any of the above symptoms. Most lumps are not cancerous.

A mammogram can often detect breast cancer before a lump can be felt and before any other physical symptoms develop.

Mammograms are now available yearly through Medicare for women over age 65 and no deductible fee applies.

Today's mammograms require less than one fortieth of the radiation used 20 years ago.

In the United States, a woman's lifetime risk of developing breast cancer is about 12%. A woman's chance of developing breast cancer are one in 200 by age 40, one in 50 by age 50, one in 25 by age 60.

Breast cancer risk may be reduced by being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, and reducing alcohol use.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) has awarded over \$185 million in breast cancer research grants since 1972. ACS is the largest nongovernmental agency supporting cancer research. Research supported by ACS has shown tamoxifen can prevent stimulation of breast cancer tumors by estrogen, developed the technique for human bone marrow transplantation, and proved the safety and effectiveness of mammograms.

The American Cancer Society offers the "Reach to Recovery" program in which women who have had breast cancer provide support to women who have been newly diagnosed. ACS offers many support services to patients and families, and offers workplace education programs to promote early detection. For more information on breast cancer and support programs offered in your community, contact the American Cancer Society toll-free at 1-800-ACS-2345, or on the web at www.cancer.org.