

Breast Cancer Screening Helps Save Lives

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in women. It is the second most common after skin cancer. The good news is that many women are surviving breast cancer. Doctors feel that finding breast cancer early through screening helps save thousands of lives every year. Screening is when you or your doctor look for cancer even if you don't have any symptoms.

1-2-3: Complete Screening

These are three ways of screening for breast cancer:

1. When you examine your own breasts for lumps.
2. When your doctor examines your breasts. This is called a clinical breast exam.
3. When you get a mammogram (MAM-o-gram).
This is a special type of breast X-ray.

The three of these together are the most complete way to screen for breast cancer.

Breast Self-Exam

Ask your doctor to go over with you how to do a self-exam. If you do a monthly breast self-exam at home, you will get to know how your breasts look and feel. This makes it easier for you to notice a change. If there is a change in how your breasts look or feel, see your doctor right away.

Clinical Breast Exam

Women in their 20s and 30s should have their breasts examined by a doctor or nurse when they go in for regular exams. The American Cancer Society recommends every three years. After age 40, women should have their breasts examined every year.

In a clinical breast exam, your doctor will ask you to undress from the waist up. He or she will look at your breasts for changes in size or shape. Your doctor will also look for skin changes, dimpling, or redness. Then your doctor will ask you to lie on your back with your arms behind your head so he or she can feel for lumps or other changes.

Breast cancer screening helps to find cancer at an early stage, when there is a better chance that cancer treatment will work. You can also make changes in your life that may help you prevent getting breast cancer:

- Lose extra weight.
- Cut down on red meat. Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Cut down on alcohol.
- Be more active. Do more walking.
Try to exercise more.

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Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death by cancer in women. You can lower your risk by doing self-exams, having regular breast exams from your doctor, and getting a yearly mammogram starting at age 40.



ONCOLOGY

If my mammogram results are abnormal, does this mean I have cancer?

No. Many times results from mammograms are not normal. If this happens, you will be called to come in for more testing. Most of the time, the results of these further tests show that there is no cancer.

