



## **Breast Cancer: Early Detection and Risk Factors**

The American Cancer Society estimates there will be 232,320 new cases of invasive breast cancer in the United States in 2013 and about one in eight women may have breast cancer in their lifetime. After lung cancer, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women. However, death cancer rates have been decreasing and there are an estimated 2.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

### **What are the risk factors?**

The cause of breast cancer isn't exactly known, but there are certain risk factors linked to the disease. Having a risk factor doesn't mean that a woman will get breast cancer. Some women who may have one or more risk factors may never get the disease, and most women who do get breast cancer don't have any risk factors other than being a woman and growing older. Hormones seem to play a role in many cases, but how is not fully understood.

### **Early detection**

The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for finding breast cancer early in women without symptoms:

- Breast self-exams should be an option for women starting in their 20s
- Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam as part of a regular exam by a health expert every three years
- Women age 40 and older should have a screening mammogram and a clinical breast exam every year
- Women at high risk should get an MRI and a mammogram every year.

### **Prevention**

There is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, but there are things all women can do that might reduce their risk and help increase the odds that if cancer does occur, it is found at an early, more treatable stage. Women can change the risk factors that are under their control:

- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight throughout life
- Adopt a physically active lifestyle
- Consume a healthy diet, with an emphasis on plant foods
- Avoid or limit alcohol intake.

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