

Breast Cancer and You:

What You Need to Know

What is breast cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. When cancer starts in the breast, it is called breast cancer. The breast is made up of three main parts: glands, ducts, and connective tissue.

Sometimes breast cells become abnormal and grow faster than normal cells. These extra cells form a mass called a tumor. Some tumors are “benign,” or not cancerous. Other tumors are “malignant,” meaning they are cancerous and have the ability to spread to other parts of the breast and body and disrupt normal functions in those areas.

Who gets breast cancer?

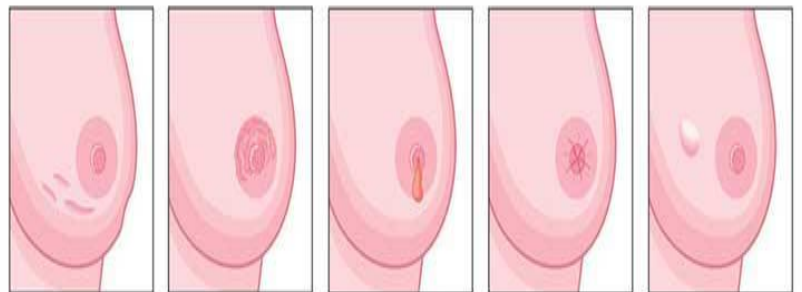
All women are at risk of getting breast cancer. Men can also get breast cancer, but this is rare. Not counting skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. The older a woman is the more likely she is to get breast cancer. Rates of breast cancer are low in women under 40.

What raises a woman's chance of getting breast cancer?

There are several factors that may affect the risk of developing breast cancer. These include:

- Getting older (aging).
- Not having children, or having your first child later in life.
- Starting your first menstrual period at an early age.
- Beginning menopause at a late age.
- Having a personal history of breast cancer or certain benign breast diseases, such as atypical ductal hyperplasia.
- Having close family relatives (such as a mother, sister, father,

Signs & Symptoms of Breast Cancer



Dimpling / Puckering

Rash Crusting

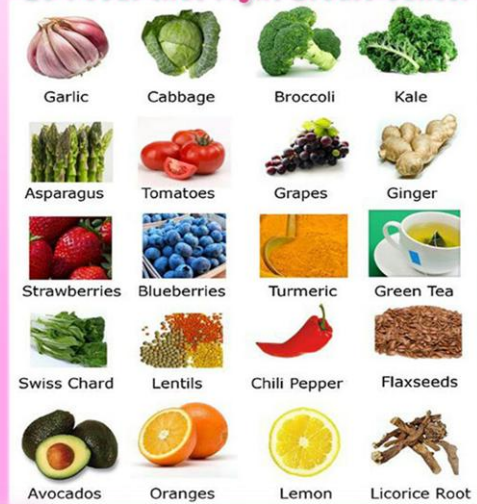
Nipple Discharge

Appearance or Direction of Nipple

Lump (may not be visible but might be felt)

If you have any of these symptoms please visit the nearest clinic or hospital. They may be caused by anything other than cancer, but the only way to know is to see a health care professional.

20 Foods that Fight Breast Cancer



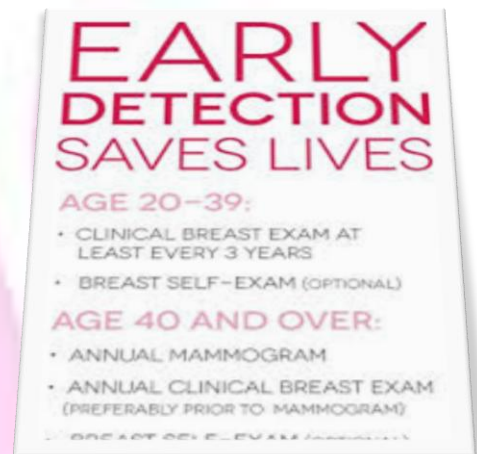
or daughter) who have had breast cancer.

- Having been treated with radiation therapy to the breast or chest.
- Being overweight, particularly after menopause.
- Using hormone replacement therapy for a long time.
- Using oral contraceptives.
- Drinking smoking and alcohol.
- Being physically inactive.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GETTING A... MAMMOGRAM

When should I get a mammogram?

Most women should have their first mammogram at age 40 and then have another mammogram every one or two years. If you have any symptoms or changes in your breast, or if breast cancer runs in your family, talk to your health care professional. He or she may recommend that you have mammograms earlier or more often than other women.



What happens if my mammogram is abnormal?

If your mammogram is abnormal or more tests are required, do not panic. Many women need additional tests, and most are not diagnosed with cancer. An abnormal mammogram does not always mean you have cancer. It does mean that you will need to have some additional X-rays or other tests before your doctor can be sure. Other tests may include an ultrasound (picture taken of the breast using sound waves) or a biopsy (removing tissue samples to be looked at closely under a microscope). You may be referred to a breast specialist or a surgeon, because these doctors are experts in diagnosing breast problems.

For support groups and assistance, the following institutions can be contacted:

- **CANSA – The Cancer Association of South Africa**
Toll free – 0800 22 66 22
e-mail - info@cansa.org.za
- **Pink Drive – Breast Cancer Awareness and Education**
011 998 8022
info@pinkdrive.co.za
- **Breast Health Foundation**
0860 283 343
louise@mybreast.org.za
- **Journey of Hope**
082 840 3633
info@journevofof hope.co.za