

## WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?

Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast tissue become abnormal and divide without order or control. It is estimated that 180,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with breast cancer every year and that approximately 46,000 women will die annually from the disease.

The earlier breast cancer is detected, the easier it is to treat. If detected early, before cancer cells have spread, the chance of a cure from breast cancer is greater than 90%.



*For more information,  
please contact:*

AMC Cancer Research Center's  
Cancer Information & Counseling Line

**1-800-525-3777**

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AMC CANCER RESEARCH CENTER IS A MEMBER OF:

 Community  
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A national, not-for-profit research institute  
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1-800-321-1557

# BREAST CANCER



*Finding  
it early  
can save  
your life*



*Information  
on early  
detection  
provided by*

  
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## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

Scientists continue to look for a cure for cancer, to learn more about it and to prevent it from occurring. Through their research, scientists have been able to determine these risk factors for breast cancer.

- **Age**

As women get older, the risk of developing breast cancer increases. Breast cancer occurs most often in women over 50 and the risk is even higher for women over 60.

- **Family History**

The risk of developing breast cancer increases for women who have immediate family members with the disease, or family members who have died from breast cancer. About 5 percent of women with breast cancer have a hereditary form of breast cancer.

- **Personal History**

Women who have had breast cancer are at risk for developing breast cancer again. Ten to fifteen percent of women with breast cancer have a new breast cancer later.

- **Natural Hormones**

Women who bear their first child after the age of 30 and those who have never had children are at greater risk for breast cancer. If a woman starts menstruating at an early age (before 12) or goes through menopause after the age of 55, she is also at a greater risk for developing the disease.

### *Remember:*

*Early detection of breast cancer can save your life.*

**Follow these simple steps to protect yourself:**

**1** **Yearly exams by your doctor.**

Have your doctor perform a physical breast exam as a part of your yearly check-up.

**2** **Monthly personal self-exams.**

Perform personal breast self-examinations once a month. Watch for changes. Look for lumps, changes in breast shape, pain or discharge from the nipple.

**3** **Watch your diet.**

The best choice for cancer prevention is a diet low in fat and high in fiber.

**4** **Mammograms.**

Have a mammogram (breast x-ray) at age 40. Between ages 40 and 49, you should have a mammogram every one-to-two years.



*The information provided by your doctor will vary according to your age and family medical history. You should also talk with your doctor about symptoms to look for and how often you should see a doctor for regular check-ups.*

*You must take an active part in the early detection of breast cancer!*