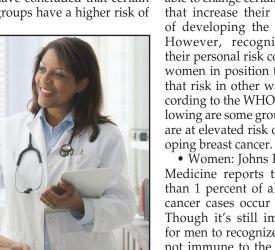
# ealth Juvareness

# Groups at elevated risk for breast cancer

The number of women diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020 exceeded two million. That figure, courtesy of the World Health Organization, underscores the signifi-

cance of the threat posed by the disease.

Though no one is immune to breast cancer, researchers have concluded that certain groups have a higher risk of



RISK FACTOR. Being 50 or older is one of various fac-

others. Women who recognize their personal risk for breast cancer may not be able to change certain factors that increase their chances of developing the disease. However, recognition of their personal risk could put women in position to lower that risk in other ways. According to the WHO, the following are some groups who are at elevated risk of devel-

• Women: Johns Hopkins Medicine reports that less than 1 percent of all breast cancer cases occur in men. Though it's still important for men to recognize they're not immune to the disease, women must also recognize that nearly all of the more than two million annual breast cancer diagnoses

developing the disease than across the globe are found in women.

> • Women 50 and older: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 years old or older. A report from the National Cancer Institute indicates that a 30-year-old woman has a 1 in 204 chance (0.49 percent) of being diagnosed with breast cancer, while a 40-year-old has a 1 in 65 chance (1.55 percent) of being diagnosed. By the time women reach age 60, their risk is 1 in 28 (3.54 percent), while a 70-yearold has a 1 in 24 chance (4.09 percent) of being diagnosed. Though women of any age can get the disease, the risk clearly increases as women get older.

criteria for being overweight or obese: The nonprofit organization Susan G. Komen®, which helps to raise funds for the fight against breast cancer, notes that women who are overweight or obese after menopause have a 20 to 60 percent higher risk of developing breast cancer than women who are not overweight or obese. The American Cancer Society reports that having more fat tissue increases breast cancer risk because it raises estrogen levels. However, the ACS notes the link between weight and breast cancer risk is complicated, so it's worth it for women concerned about their cancer risk to open a dialogue with their physicians.

• Women who consume • Women who meet the alcohol: The MD Anderson Cancer Center reports that alcohol consumption and breast cancer risk are linked. Though the precise cause of the link is unknown, one theory suggests that consuming alcohol can increase estrogen levels as well as the levels of other hormones associated with breast cancer. However, the MDACC warns that the risk is very low, particularly for women who limit their consumption to one drink or less per day. Routinely consuming more than one alcoholic drink per day is a cause

It's vital that women recognize their risk for breast cancer. Though any woman can be diagnosed with breast cancer, certain factors, including some that can be avoided, can increase a woman's risk for the disease.

# What distinguishes the different types of breast cancer?

Individuals can experience a whirlwind of emotion upon being diagnosed with cancer. No one ever expects to receive such a diagnosis, so the moment a physician delivers such news can be emotional and compromise a person's ability to focus. Once those emotions settle down and individuals resolve to overcome the disease, they typically have a lot of questions.

One of the questions doctors will attempt to answer is which subtype of cancer a person has. For example, when doctors initially deliver a breast cancer diagnosis, they may explain that further testing will be necessary to determine precisely which type of breast cancer an individual has. Identifying the

subtype of breast cancer helps doctors choose the most effective course of treatment, but it's understandable if patients and their families become confused during the process. The following rundown can help breast cancer patients understand this crucial next step after diagnosis.

#### How is breast cancer type determined?

The American Cancer Society notes that breast cancer type is determined by the specific cells in the breast that become cancer. The Mayo Clinic reports that a medical team will use a tissue sample from a patient's breast biopsy or, for patients who have already undergone surgery, the tumor to identify the cancer type.

breast cancer I might be diagnosed with?

There are many types of breast cancer, but some are more common than others. Invasive and non-invasive (also referred to as "carcinoma in situ") are the two main subtypes of breast cancer.

According to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the most common types of invasive breast cancer are invasive ductal carcinoma, which affects the inner lining of the milk ducts, and invasive lobular carcinoma, which originates from the glands that produce milk.

The UPMC reports that

What are the types of does not often develop More information about cancer can be found at caninto breast cancer though it is considered a risk factor for an invasive form of the disease.

> The ACS notes that triple-negative breast cancer is an aggressive form of breast cancer that accounts for roughly 15 percent of all breast cancers. Triple-negative breast cancer can be difficult to

> Less common types of breast cancer, each of which account for between 1 and 3 percent of diagnoses in a given year, include Paget disease of the breast, angiosarcoma and phyllodes tumor.

A breast cancer diagnothe most common in situ sis marks the beginning types are ductal carcinoma of a sometimes lengthy in situ, which is cancer but often successful jourthat remains within the ney that has ended in full milk ducts, and lobular recovery for millions of carcinoma in situ, which women across the globe.



CRUCIAL STEP. Learning the type of breast cancer is the first step in understanding what comes next after

### Men and breast cancer

Breast cancer affects millions of women each year, but breast cancer also can be diagnosed in men. Each year in the United States, about 2,400 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in men, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Roughly 270 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year in Canada, according to the Canadian Cancer Society. Macmillan Cancer Support says men have a small amount of breast tissue behind their nipples, where breast cancer potentially can develop. Breast tissue in boys and girls is the same until puberty, when girls start to develop more. Signs of male breast cancer include a lump or swelling in the breast, redness or flaky skin in the breast, irritation or dimpling of the skin around the nipple, nipple discharge, or pulling in or pain of the nipple, states the CDC.



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## Reduce breast cancer risk with these healthy habits

Cancer is a formidable disease that the World Health Organization reports is the leading cause of death worldwide. Figures vary, but organizations such as the WHO and the American Cancer Society estimate that around 9.5 million people die from cancer every

No type of cancer causes more deaths in women across the globe than breast cancer. Though the five-year survival rate for breast cancer patients has increased by a significant margin in recent decades, a 2019 study published in The Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention reported a significant increase in breast cancer mortality rate in the 25year period preceding the study. The researchers behind the study theorized that the spike in mortality rate could be due to an increase in incidence and prevalence of breast can-

Like all cancers, breast cancer cannot be prevented. However, various healthy habits could help women reduce their risk for the disease.

• Avoid alcohol. The ACS reports that alcohol consumption is a clear risk factor for breast cancer. Risk increases with the amount of alcohol a woman consumes. For example, a woman who consumes one alcoholic drink per day has a 7 to 10 percent higher risk of getting breast cancer than a woman who abstains from alcohol. Drinking two to three drinks per day could increase risk by around 20 percent.

• Establish and maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese



GET MOVING! A physically active lifestyle can help women reduce their risk for breast cancer.

increases breast cancer risk, particularly among postmenopausal women. According to the ACS, after menopause women in turn increases a wom-

get most of their estrogen from fat tissue. Fat tissue increases estrogen levels in the body, which

an's risk for breast cancer. of their work day sitting Elevated levels of insulin in the body, which is common among individuals who are overweight, also has been linked to higher breast cancer risk. Establishing and maintaining a healthy weight cannot prevent breast cancer, but it can help women reduce their risk for the disease.

• Maintain a physically active lifestyle. A sedentary lifestyle increases a person's risk for various conditions and diseases. Women who live such a lifestyle are at elevated risk for breast cancer. The ACS notes that sedentary behavior such as sitting, lying down, watching television, or engaging with screen-based forms of entertainment that do not require physical activity can increase breast cancer risk, especially for

women who spend most

down. A more physically active lifestyle that includes routine exercise can help women reduce their breast cancer risk. • Adopt a nutritious

diet. Eating right is another way for women to reduce their breast cancer risk. Vegetables, fiber-rich legumes such as beans and peas, fruits across the color spectrum, and whole grains are some components of a healthy, nutrient-rich diet that can help lower breast cancer risk. Women also can avoid certain foods, such as red and processed meats and refined grains, to lower their breast cancer risk.

Though there's no guaranteed way to prevent breast cancer, women can embrace various healthy habits to lower their risk for the disease.

## What to know about breast lumps

Breast cancer is a cause for concern for millions of women. Each year about 264,000 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in women in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Canadian Cancer Society indicates around 28,600 Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year. Globally, data from the

World Health Organization with breast cancer in 2020.

the presence of a lump in the breast. Though not all lumps are malignant, it's important that women learn about mothers. breast anatomy and lumps health care routines.

indicates roughly 2.3 mil- breast lumps can occur at lion women were diagnosed any age in both men and women. Hormonal changes One of the more notable can cause breast enlargement symptoms of breast cancer is and lumps during puberty, and boys and girls may even be born with lumps from the estrogen received from their

It is important to note that as part of their preventive the vast majority of breast lumps are benign. The Na-

Mount Sinai says that tional Institutes of Health says 60 to 80 percent of all breast lumps are non-cancerous. The most common causes of breast lumps are fibroadenomas and fibrocystic changes. Fibroademomas are small, smooth, moveable, painless round lumps that usually affect women who are at an age to have children, indicates the Merck Manual. They are non-cancerous and feel rubbery.

Fibrocystic changes are painful, lumpy breasts. This benign condition does not increase a woman's risk for breast cancer. Symptoms often are worse right before one's menstrual period, and then improve after the period begins.

Additional factors can contribute to the formation of lumps. Breast cysts are fluid-filled sacs that likely go away on their own or may be aspirated to relieve pain. Complex cysts may need to be removed surgically. Sometimes cysts also may form in milk ducts throughout the breasts.

Lumps also may be the result of injury. Blood can collect under the skin and form a type of lump called a hematoma. Other lumps may be traced to lipomas, which is a collection of fatty tissue or breast abscesses, which typically occur if a person is breastfeeding or has recently given birth.

Additional causes of lumps can be discussed with a doctor. Though the majority of lumps are not a cause for concern, it is important for people to regularly feel their breasts to check for abnormalities. Doctors may recommend annual mammograms to women age 40 and older. In its earliest stages, breast cancer may produce little to no visible symptoms, but a mammogram may be able to catch something early on.

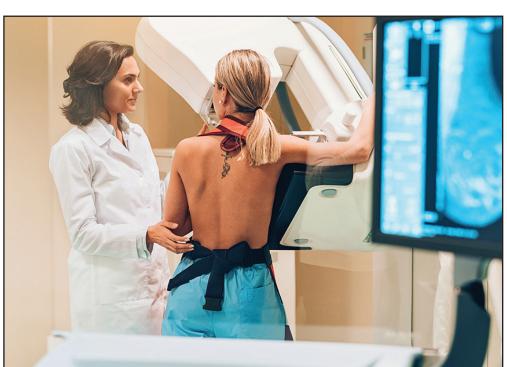
## **ACS Breast Cancer Screening Guidelines**

American Cancer Society Recommendations for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer. These guidelines are for women at average risk for breast cancer. For screening purposes, a woman is considered to be at average risk if she doesn't have a personal history of breast cancer, a strong family history of breast cancer, or a genetic mutation known to increase risk of breast cancer (such as in a BRCA gene), and has not had chest radiation therapy before the age of 30.

- Women between 40 and 44 have the option to start screening with a mammogram every year.
- Women 45 to 54 should get mammograms every year.
- Women 55 and older can switch to a mammogram every other year, or they can choose to continue yearly mammograms. Screening should continue as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live at least 10 more years.
- All women should understand what to expect when getting a mammogram for breast cancer screening – what the test can and cannot do.
- Clinical breast exams are not recommended for breast cancer screening among average-risk women at any age.
- Women should also know how their breasts normally look and feel and report any breast changes to a health care provider right away.
- Some women because of their family history. a genetic tendency, or certain other factors should be screened with MRIs along with mammograms. (The number of women who fall into this category is very small.)
- Talk with a health care provider about your risk for breast cancer and the best screening plan for

Courtesy American **Cancer Society** 





BE AWARE. One of the more notable symptoms of breast cancer is the presence of a lump in the breast. Always have any lumps examined by your doctor.







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