

# October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women, except for skin cancers. One in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

While some breast cancer is found after symptoms have appeared, many women experience no symptoms. This is why regular screenings are so important! When the cancer is found early, is small and has not spread, chances of treating it successfully are much greater.

## Symptoms

According to the Centers for Disease Control, some warning signs of breast cancer are:

- Any change in the size or shape of the breast
- A new lump in the breast or armpit
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area of the breast
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area
- Pain in any area of the breast
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk (including blood)

Please note that some of these symptoms can happen with other medical conditions that are not cancer.

## Mammograms

According to the CDC, mammograms are still considered the best way to find breast cancer early, before it's big enough to feel or cause symptoms. For women at average risk for breast cancer, the American Cancer Society recommendations for the early detection of breast cancer are as follows:

- **Ages 40-44** – Women should have the choice to start annual breast cancer screening with mammograms
- **Ages 45-54** – Women should get mammograms every year
- **Ages 55 and older** – Women can switch to mammograms every two years or can continue yearly screenings

*The County's health plans cover annual screening mammograms, including 3D mammograms, under the preventive services benefit beginning at age 40.*



## Average Risk or High Risk?

Talk to your health care provider about your personal medical history and family history, especially if you have a first degree relative who has had breast cancer.

To learn your 5-year and lifetime risk of breast cancer, Doctors Medical Center offers a Breast Cancer Risk Profiler. [Click here to view the profiler.](#)

## Things You Can Do That May Lower Your Risk

There is no way to prevent breast cancer, but there are some things you can do that may lower your risk:

- Get to and stay at a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Limit or avoid alcohol
- Breastfeed
- Don't smoke
- Limit hormone therapy

