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A Special Supplement to

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THINK



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OBSERVING SIGNS

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CANCER

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CANCER

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Breast Cancer: Symptoms, Screenings and Treatment

Did you know that in the United States, one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime? According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, “in 2023, an estimated 297,790 women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer.” Odds are that you know someone who currently has or has had breast cancer or has been personally impacted by it.

Knowing the facts about breast cancer, being aware of the symptoms and understanding the need for screening is key to making informed decisions about your breast health.

What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a growth of abnormal cells within the breast tissue that have the capability to invade surrounding tissues or spread to other parts of the body. In general, the more localized the process, the greater chance of cure which is why early detection is so important.

While breast cancer almost always occurs in women, men can get breast cancer, too. There are many types of breast cancer, which is determined by the type of cells within the breast that are affected.



7 Symptoms of Breast Cancer

Knowing how your breasts normally feel and look will help you identify any changes or abnormalities that may occur. The first symptom people typically notice is a lump in the breast or armpit. While each person's experience is different, common symptoms of breast cancer include:

1. Swelling or thickening of the breast
2. Pain in the nipple or breast
3. Change in the shape, size or appearance of the breast
4. Irritation, redness or dimpling of breast skin
5. A newly inverted nipple
6. Discharge from the nipple that is not breast milk
7. Swollen or painful lymph nodes in the armpit

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your primary care provider right away. Early detection plays a large role in the success of treatment.

Women are urged to report any abnormalities in their breasts to a physician immediately.



4 Breast Cancer Screening Options

Breast Mammogram

Mammograms are low-dose x-rays that take photos of the breast and can help detect abnormalities. Not only do mammograms spot masses, they can also detect abnormal cells in the lining of the breast duct, which can turn into invasive cancer.

A 3D mammogram is a type of mammogram that combines multiple breast x-rays to create a 3D image. This type of mammogram is recommended for people with dense breast tissue or who may not show signs or symptoms. Yearly mammograms should begin at the age of 40 and even earlier for those with a family history of breast cancer.

Breast Ultrasound

A breast ultrasound is a scan that uses sound waves to capture a detailed photo called a sonogram. The sonogram helps doctors determine what type of mass is detected. Some masses may be fluid-filled like cysts and others may be solid masses that need further testing. Undergoing a breast ultrasound is not a typical screening option. However, it is useful for looking at changes in the breast, especially for lumps you can feel, but cannot see.

Depending on screening results and other risk factors, additional testing may be ordered, such as:

Breast MRI

During this screening, an MRI machine uses strong magnets to take detailed photos of the breast as the person is lying down with their arms above their head. Based on the American Cancer Society guidelines, women who have a high risk for breast cancer should undergo a yearly breast MRI in addition to their yearly mammogram. Many high-risk women choose to schedule a mammogram and breast MRI six months apart to ensure they are tested twice a year.

Breast Biopsy

A breast biopsy is a test that removes tissue and fluid from the breast to determine if the suspicious area is cancerous. Doctors determine the type of biopsy based on the size of the suspicious area, where it is located in the breast and if there are multiple areas needing to be tested. The tissue and cells pulled from the biopsy are examined under a microscope to detect the presence of cancerous cells.



Breast cancer survival rates have improved dramatically in recent decades.

5 TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR BREAST CANCER PATIENTS



If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, your provider will recommend a treatment plan based on the stage of your breast cancer. Some treatments may be local (targeting just the area around the tumor) and other treatments may be systemic (targeting the whole body).

Breast cancer can be treated using multiple treatment options, including:

1. **Surgery** - A procedure to remove cancerous materials from the breast or affected areas.
2. **Radiation Therapy** - High energy rays used to kill cancer cells within the breast.
3. **Hormone Therapy** - A prescription drug that blocks the hormones necessary for cancer cells to grow.
4. **Chemotherapy** - A form of medicine that travels through the body and kills or slows down the growth of cancerous cells.
5. **Immunotherapy** - The use of a person's own immune system to fight cancerous cells or to reduce the side effects from other treatments.

Exceptional Cancer Care

Bronson's specialists are leaders in cancer care and our centers in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo are rated among the best in the nation. We have a comprehensive approach to care and work closely with each patient and family to develop a personalized care plan that guides them throughout medical, surgical and/or radiation treatment and includes ongoing supportive care.



To learn more about breast cancer, visit [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org) or speak with your primary care provider. Scan the code or go to [bronsonhealth.com/cancer](https://www.bronsonhealth.com/cancer) to learn more about the care provided at Bronson Cancer Centers.

Bronson Cancer Centers

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Battle Creek, MI 49068

(269) 245-6350

805 John St.

Kalamazoo, MI 49001

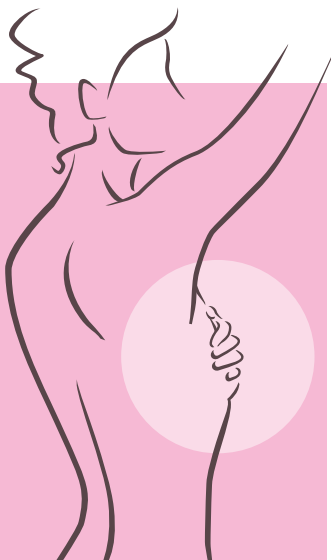
(269) 286-7170

Did you know?

Various organizations urge women to familiarize themselves with their breasts and conduct somewhat routine self-exams so they can uncover any lumps or other issues that may warrant further examination by a physician. Though self-exams can lead to discovery of breast cancer when the disease is most treatable, the World Health Organization notes that as many as 90 percent of breast masses are not cancerous. Non-cancerous abnormalities may be benign masses such as fibroadenoma and cysts or indicative of infection. It's also important that women recognize that breast cancer is not always accompanied by a lump. In fact, the Mayo Clinic reports that many women with breast cancer never experience any signs or symptoms of the disease. In such instances, the disease is discovered during screening tests, which include mammograms.

Does breast cancer run in families?

No woman is immune to breast cancer. However, some women with extensive family histories of the disease may wonder if they're more vulnerable to breast cancer than those without such a link. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly 3 percent of breast cancers result from inherited mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes that are passed on in families. Inherited mutations in other genes also can cause breast cancer (as well as ovarian cancer), but BRCA1 and BRCA2 are the most commonly affected genes. And it's not just women who can inherit these mutations. Though men account for only a small percentage of breast cancer patients, they can get the disease, and those who inherit mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 are more likely to develop breast cancer than other men. The CDC notes that not everyone who inherits a BRCA1, BRCA2 or other mutation will develop breast cancer, and women with such mutations can take steps to help lower their risk for the disease. Doctors can discuss those steps with women, but they may include genetic counseling and testing. The CDC also notes that, even in instances when counseling and testing is not ultimately recommended by a physician, women should consider talking to their doctors about starting mammography screening in their 40s. That's earlier than some organizations recommend, though physicians may feel it's worth it depending on the individual.





Exceptional Cancer Care

When you choose Bronson for cancer care, you get the skill, compassion and fierce determination of a whole team of experts. Our specialists are leaders in cancer care and our centers in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo are rated among the best in the nation. We work closely with you and your family to develop a personalized care plan that guides and supports you throughout medical, surgical or radiation treatment and recovery. Together, we bring national level expertise to you so you never have to go far for care!

Want to learn more? Visit bronsonhealth.com/cancer.

