

October 2025

Breast Cancer Awareness



What To Watch For

7 Breast Cancer Risk Factors

Screening Options

The latest breast cancer screening recommendations

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A special supplement to



Types of Breast Cancer & Treatment Possibilities





Breast Health and Breast Cancer Prevention

One in eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime – and odds are that you or someone you know has been personally impacted by breast cancer. According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the most common new cancer diagnosis worldwide.

Paying attention to your breast health starts with knowing your risk factors for breast cancer. Understanding these risks helps you and your healthcare provider create a personalized screening and prevention plan.

7 Risk Factors

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

Several factors may increase your risk of developing breast cancer, including:

- Being born female
- Age
- Having a family history of breast or ovarian cancer
- Having dense breast tissue
- Starting menstruation before age 12 or going through menopause after age 55
- Having a history of abnormal or atypical cells in breast biopsies
- Receiving radiation treatment to the chest during childhood or teenage years

Certain lifestyle choices can play a role. Staying active, maintaining a healthy weight, moderating alcohol intake and making informed decisions about hormone therapies can all decrease your risk.



Types of Breast Cancer

“Breast cancer” is not just one disease. It can begin in different parts of the breast and behave in different ways.

- **Invasive ductal carcinoma:** This is the most common type of breast cancer. It starts in the milk ducts and can spread to other parts of the body.

- **Invasive lobular carcinoma:** This is the second most common type. It starts in the milk-producing glands (lobules) and can grow in lines instead of lumps. This can make it harder to see on a mammogram.

- **Inflammatory breast cancer:** This is a rare but fast-growing cancer that makes the breast look red and swollen. This happens because the breast cancer cells are blocking lymph channels in the breast and skin, causing inflammation.

- **Triple negative breast cancer:** This type of cancer does not have the three main receptors (estrogen, progesterone and HER2) that most breast cancers use to grow. It cannot be treated with hormone or targeted therapies, but chemotherapy may work.

- **Metastatic breast cancer:** Also called Stage IV cancer. This means the cancer started in the breast but has spread to other parts of the body, like the bones, lungs, brain or liver.



Screening Options

Breast Mammography

Mammograms are the best way to detect breast cancer early, when it is more easily treatable. Yearly mammograms should begin at the age of 40 and even earlier for those at an increased risk of breast cancer.

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

A 3D mammogram combines multiple breast x-rays to create one 3D image. This is often recommended for individuals with dense breast tissue.

Breast Ultrasound

A breast ultrasound 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 (cysts) and others may be solid masses that need further testing. This is not a typical screening option, but it is useful when 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

This screening uses strong magnets to take detailed photos of the breast. Based on American Cancer Society guidelines, women who have a high risk for breast cancer should undergo a yearly breast MRI in addition to their 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 ordered if breast cancer is suspected. During biopsy, the doctor will take a small sample of breast tissue and fluid. The samples are then examined under a microscope to detect the presence of cancer cells.

Treatment Possibilities

If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, your doctor will recommend a treatment plan based on the stage of your breast cancer. Treatment options may be local (targeting just the area around the tumor) or systemic (targeting the whole body).

Common treatments include:

- **Surgery** – A procedure to remove cancerous tissue from the breast, and in some cases, nearby lymph nodes or other affected areas
- **Radiation Therapy** – High-energy rays used to kill cancerous cells within the breast

- **Hormone Therapy** – A prescription drug that blocks the hormones necessary for cancer cells to grow
- **Chemotherapy** – Medication that travels through the body and kills or slows down the growth of cancerous cells
- **Immunotherapy** – Medication that helps use a person's own immune system to fight cancerous cells or to reduce the side effects from other treatments

Mammograms Save Lives

An annual mammogram is the best screening tool we have to find breast cancer at its earliest stage, when it's easiest to treat. Women should have a screening mammogram every year, starting at age 40. Women with a family history of breast cancer or other risk factors may start screening sooner.

Schedule your mammogram online at bronsonhealth.com/mammogram. Questions about breast health and your risk? Call a breast health nurse navigator at (269) 341-8517.

Exceptional Cancer Care

Bronson is a leader in cancer care, and our centers in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo are rated among the best in the nation. Our oncology team treats cancer using a comprehensive approach that addresses each patient holistically. We work closely with each patient and family to develop a personalized care plan, from surgery, chemotherapy and radiation all the way to lifelong support and survivorship care.

"Thanks to the care I've received at Bronson, I feel strong, hopeful and incredibly grateful. When you're diagnosed with cancer, you need a team that makes you feel like you're going to be okay. The Bronson Cancer Center in Battle Creek was that team for me," said Cherie Buell.

Read her full story online at bronsonhealth.com/cherie-positivity



Bronson's High Risk Breast Clinic

Bronson offers a High Risk Breast Clinic for patients who have a greater chance of developing breast cancer. Services and support include early detection screenings, clinical breast exams, genetic counseling referrals and ongoing monitoring to reduce overall risk.

The clinic is a collaboration between Bronson's surgery, radiology and oncology teams. Together, this group works to ensure those with an increased risk of developing breast cancer receive the monitoring, education and care they need.

"We are proud to have implemented a clinic dedicated to those who have a higher risk for developing breast cancer. It is a space for these individuals to better understand their risk and develop a personalized plan for their future care. Patients have access to a variety of specialists who partner with them to reduce their risk and improve their chances of early detection and successful treatment," said Jill Dunham, NP, who leads Bronson's High Risk Breast Clinic.



Photo L to R: Brittney Sage, patient representative, Jill Dunham, NP and Karen Martin, medical assistant



Participants at this Battle Creek Support Group receive information and comfort from others.

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To learn more about Bronson's regional cancer program, visit bronsonhealth.com/cancer. To learn more about breast cancer, visit cancer.org or speak with your primary care provider.



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.

