



The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service.

No matter who you are, we can help. Contact us anytime, day or night, for information and support.

The Older You Get, The More You Need A Mammogram



1.800.ACS.2345
www.cancer.org

Hope. Progress. Answers.®



Finding breast cancer early can save your life. So, get a mammogram every year starting at age 40.

I've lived this long without getting breast cancer. Why should I bother with a mammogram?

Your risk of developing breast cancer increases as you get older. More than three-fourths of the breast cancers diagnosed each year occur in women over age 50. A woman of 70 is almost twice as likely to develop breast cancer in the next year as a woman of 50.

Chances are you don't have breast cancer, so give yourself a present – the peace of mind **that comes** with knowing you don't. Have a **mammogram** – a simple breast x-ray – this year and every year.

But no one in my family ever had breast cancer.

Your risk is greater if a close relative has had breast cancer. But more than 80% of breast cancers are diagnosed in women who do not have a mother or sister who has had breast cancer.

American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer

If you are age 40 or older:

- Mammogram every year

Breast exam by your doctor or nurse every year

Report any changes to your doctor right away. Breast self-exam (BSE) is an option for finding breast changes.

If you are age 20 to 39:

- Breast exam by your doctor or nurse every three years

Report any changes to your doctor right away. Breast self-exam (BSE) is an option for finding breast changes.

If you have a history of breast cancer in your family, talk with your doctor about how often and when you should have a mammogram.

For answers to your questions about breast cancer, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.





I don't know where to get a mammogram.

If you have a doctor, ask him or her where you can get a mammogram. Your doctor will probably be very helpful.

Many public health departments, hospitals, and women's clinics offer mammograms. You may be able to get a mammogram by participating in a special program offered in your community. For help in finding a place to get a quality mammogram, call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345.

Mammograms are x-rays. Are they safe?

Over the past 20 years, mammography techniques and equipment have improved a great deal, and today the level of radiation is very low and harmless.

What's it like to get a mammogram? Does it hurt? Is it embarrassing?

When you get a mammogram, you stand beside the machine, and a specially trained technologist helps place your breast on a plastic plate. A second piece of plastic is placed on top, and for a few seconds, the top piece of plastic is pushed down and flattens the breast to get a good, clear picture. Two pictures usually are taken of each breast. Many women may feel some discomfort. Tell the technologist if you experience pain. The entire mammogram exam takes about 15 minutes.

It's a good idea to wear a blouse with a skirt or slacks, rather than a dress, since you will have to undress above the waist. You probably will be given a short gown to wear during the exam.

A specialist, called a radiologist, will read the mammogram to see if any suspicious areas are present.

What happens if they find something?

If a mass is found, the doctor may use a thin needle to remove fluid or a small amount of tissue. This test will show whether it's a fluid-filled cyst, which is not cancer, or a solid mass, which may or may not be cancer.

Sometimes the doctor will do a biopsy, which is a minor operation to take out part or all of the suspicious tissue. The tissue is then examined under a microscope by a specialist called a pathologist. A biopsy is the only sure way to know if cancer is present. Even if you are told you need a biopsy, remember that more than 80% of lumps or suspicious areas are not cancer.

If the biopsy shows that there is cancer, the woman and her doctor will discuss treatment options. Early cancer often can be treated by removing the lump or a portion of the breast rather than the whole breast.

What if I find something that worries me?

If you find a lump, see any dimpling or puckering of the skin, or notice anything that you know is unusual for you, see your doctor right away.

It probably isn't cancer, but do yourself a favor and have it checked out.

Some Important Reasons to Get a Mammogram

Finding breast cancer early can save your life.

As you get older, your risk for breast cancer increases. More than three-fourths of all breast cancers occur in women over 50.

Most women diagnosed with breast cancer have no history of it in their families.

Finding breast cancer early often means less surgery.

Getting a mammogram is easier than you think.

Having a mammogram once a year helps give you peace of mind.

If I'm going to get breast cancer, there's nothing I can do about it.

Yes, there is. We still don't know what causes breast cancer, but we do know what can improve a woman's chances for beating this disease: early detection. When breast cancer is found early, a woman increases her chances for successful treatment. A mammogram can find a tumor much earlier than you can feel it.

If a lump is found early, while it's still small and before any symptoms appear, a woman has more options for treatment. Surgery often can just remove the lump and a small amount of breast tissue. Early detection means that a woman's chances for saving her breast are better, and the treatment her doctor suggests will almost always have fewer side effects.

My doctor never told me to get a mammogram.

If your doctor hasn't mentioned the need for a mammogram, ask about it yourself. Women, especially older women, should insist on getting the health care they deserve.

The American Cancer Society is only one of many respected health and medical organizations that recommend annual mammograms for women age 40 and older.

These kinds of special tests are too expensive. How can I afford a mammogram?

Medicare covers mammograms according to your age and your risk. Your American Cancer Society can give you the details. Just call 1-800-ACS-2345. Most states now make insurance companies cover mammograms, too.

Some low-cost mammography programs are also available. These are often held during Breast Cancer Awareness Month every October. Some doctors, hospitals, or clinics also may lower their fees for women who cannot afford the usual charge. Check with the American Cancer Society about special low-cost programs in your community.

