

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Courtesy of: The American Cancer Society
<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancer/>



Breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women, except for skin cancers. About 1 in 8 (12%) women in the US will develop invasive breast cancer during their lifetime.

The American Cancer Society's estimates for breast cancer in the United States are for 2013:

- About 232,340 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women.
- About 64,640 new cases of carcinoma in situ (CIS) will be diagnosed (CIS is non-invasive and is the earliest form of breast cancer).
- About 39,620 women will die from breast cancer

After increasing for more than 2 decades, female breast cancer incidence rates began decreasing in 2000, then dropped by about 7% from 2002 to 2003. This large decrease was thought to be due to the decline in use of hormone therapy after menopause that occurred after the results of the Women's Health Initiative were published in 2002. This study linked the use of hormone therapy to an increased risk of breast cancer and heart diseases. Incidence rates have been stable in recent years.

- Early detection improves the survival rate of breast cancer patients. Following the guidelines below can improve the chances of breast cancer being found at an early stage and treated with success:
- Mammograms: Women age 40 and older should have a screening mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health.
- Clinical Breast Exams (CBE's): Women in their 20's and 30's should have a clinical breast exam as part of a regular exam by a health professional, at least every three years. After age 40, women should have a breast exam by a health professional every year.

Breast Self-Exam (BSE): BSE is an option for women starting in their 20's. Women should discuss the benefits and limitations of BSE with their health professional. If you do BSE on a regular basis, you get to know how your breasts normally look and feel. Any changes should be reported to a health professional right away. Information about the BSE and how to perform it correctly can be found at www.cancer.org