

Breast Cancer Awareness Month



What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast divide and grow without their normal control. Tumors in the breast tend to grow slowly. By the time a lump is large enough to feel, it may have been growing for as long as 10 years. Some tumors are aggressive and grow much faster. About 70% to 80% of breast cancers begin in the milk ducts, about 10% to 15% begin in the lobules and a few begin in other breast tissues.

Early Detection

Most early-stage breast cancers in the U.S. are found with screening mammography, before any warning signs or symptoms appear. However, breast cancer can also be found when people have warning signs. So, it's important to be aware of these warning signs and see a health care provider if you notice any changes in your breast or underarm area.

Awareness Without Fear

The warning signs of breast cancer are not the same for all women. Breast awareness means knowing what is normal and seeking care for persistent changes.

Concerning warning signs include:

- Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area
- Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast
- Change in the size or shape of the breast
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
- Nipple discharge that starts suddenly
- Pulling in of your nipple or other parts of the breast
- New pain in one spot that does not go away



In most cases, these changes are not cancer. For example, breast pain is more common with benign (not cancer) breast conditions than with breast cancer. However, the only way to know a change isn't breast cancer is to get it checked.

See a health care provider if you:

- Find a new lump (or any change) that feels different from the rest of your breast
- Find a new lump (or any change) that feels different from your other breast
- Feel something that's different from what you've felt before





If you're not sure whether you should have a lump (or any change) checked, it's best to see a health care provider. If you've had a benign lump in the past, don't assume a new lump will also be benign. The new lump may not be breast cancer, but it's best to make sure.

⚠ Warning Signs of Breast Cancer in Men

Men may experience most of the same symptoms as women, however the most common warning sign of breast cancer in men is a painless lump or thickening in the breast, chest or underarm area (usually painless, but may be tender). Men tend to have much less breast tissue than women so, warning signs in men may be easier to notice than warning signs in women. These may also be signs of a benign (not cancer) breast condition.

👨 Don't delay seeing a health care provider

Some men may be embarrassed about a change in their breast, chest or underarm area. Others may not know it's important to see a health care provider about a change. However, putting off seeing a provider may result in a delay in breast cancer diagnosis. Survival is highest when breast cancer is found early and treated.

If you notice any of the warning signs above or other changes in your breast, chest or underarm area, or nipple, see a health care provider right away.

🛡 Treatment for Breast Cancer

Starting treatment for breast cancer can be overwhelming. You may be feeling anxious, scared or even in shock. Understanding your treatment options will help you be better informed. Your treatment options are based on your unique breast cancer diagnosis.

Each treatment has benefits and risks to consider along with your own values and lifestyle. It's important to make thoughtful, informed decisions in partnership with your doctor. It's also important to complete your breast cancer treatment plan. Those who complete their full course of treatment have a higher chance of survival.

🌱 Survivorship Is Part of Breast Cancer Care

Better treatment means more people are living longer after breast cancer. That success creates another responsibility. Survivorship may include management of endocrine therapy symptoms, premature menopause, cardiovascular and bone health, lymphedema, cognitive concerns, fertility, sexual health, body image, anxiety about recurrence, employment and financial consequences, and the long-term toxicities of cancer treatment.



The end of chemotherapy or radiotherapy is therefore not necessarily the end of cancer care. Breast Cancer Awareness Month should recognize survivors not simply as people who have finished treatment, but as individuals who may continue to need structured medical and psychosocial support for years afterward.



Free Mammogram Providers in Atlanta

- **Fulton County Board of Health:** Provides free clinical breast exams and mammograms for uninsured or underinsured Georgia residents aged 40–64 (and younger on a case-by-case basis) with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Call 770-520-7323 for the Adamsville Regional Health Center or 770-520-7201 for the College Park Regional Health Center.
- **Grady Health System:** The Grady Comprehensive Breast Center offers free or low-cost screenings for qualifying uninsured or underinsured Georgia residents aged 40–64 via the Georgia Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (BCCP). Call 404-616-1000.
- **YWCA Greater Atlanta (ENCOREplus):** Partners with local health systems like Grady and Emory to link underserved minority women ages 40–64 to free screenings. Call 404-835-1632 or visit <https://ywcaatlanta.org/encoreplus>
- **Northside Hospital Cancer Institute:** Offers financial assistance and no-cost screening mammograms or diagnostics through its Breast Care Fund for qualifying uninsured individuals. Call 404-531-4444 or self-schedule/learn more at Northside Hospital.
- **Sisters by Choice:** Operates a Mobile Breast Clinic providing free digital mammograms and diagnostic testing to underserved, uninsured, and homeless individuals in metro Atlanta.

Scripture for the Month

"Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security." ~ Jeremiah 33:6 NIV

In Faith & Health
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