

# Breast Cancer: Know These Symptoms and Risk Factors



Breast cancer is known to affect 1 in 3 women per year, and is the second leading cause of cancer death in women in the U.S. Breast cancer can start from different parts of the breast and spread when the cancer cells get into the blood or lymphatic system and are carried to other body parts.

The most common symptom is a new lump or mass in a breast. Other possible symptoms include:

- **Swelling of all or part of a breast** (even if no lump is felt)
- **Skin dimpling** (sometimes looking like an orange peel)
- **Breast or nipple pain, nipple retraction** (turning inward), **and nipple or breast skin that is red, dry, flaking or thickened**
- **Nipple discharge** (other than colostrum during pregnancy or breast milk)
- **Swollen lymph nodes under the arm or near the collarbone** (this can sometimes be a sign of breast cancer that has spread, even before the original tumor in the breast is large enough to be felt)

As with other cancers, there are risk factors associated with breast cancer that can increase one's chances of becoming diagnosed. However, the presence of risk factors does not mean breast cancer will develop. Monitoring certain risk factors can help lower a patient's chances of being diagnosed. Risk factors may include but are not limited to: excessive alcohol consumption, being overweight or obese, low physical activity, use of birth control, and the existence of breast implants.

Men can be diagnosed as well! 1 in 833 men are at risk for being diagnosed with breast cancer. Although the cause of most breast cancer in men is unknown, hormone levels and genetics are the two common reasons why men may be diagnosed with breast cancer.

Individuals may be able to lower their chances for increased risk of several cancers by engaging in physical activity, eating a healthy diet, avoiding nicotine and alcohol, and staying up to date on age- and gender-specific cancer screenings. If you have a family history of breast cancer, be sure to consult with your doctor regarding guidelines for screenings.

Sources:  
[cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/about/what-is-breast-cancer.html](https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/about/what-is-breast-cancer.html)  
[cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/breast-cancer-signs-and-symptoms.html](https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/breast-cancer-signs-and-symptoms.html)

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