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# WellnessWatch



Welcome to **WellnessWatch** -- The Starr Group's monthly digest featuring articles to keep **YOU** current with latest **#health** and **#wellness** trends and fitness buzz. *Be well!*



## Topic of the Month: **Breast Cancer Awareness**

There are a variety of factors that can contribute to breast cancer in women. While ethnicity and heredity are two

factors that are beyond control, they can help in early identification of breast cancer within certain demographics. Financial and economic situations sometimes hamper a woman's ability to obtain a mammogram. Lifestyle choices can contribute to an increase in the risk of breast cancer<sup>[1]</sup>:

- Having fewer children or having them later in life: Hispanic and Caucasian women are more likely to have children at a later age and have fewer children, each of which can increase the risk of breast cancer.
- Not breastfeeding: Breastfeeding may lower breast cancer risk. Both African Americans and Hispanics tend to breastfeed less than Caucasians.
- Use menopausal hormone therapy (postmenopausal hormones)
- Being overweight or obese: Both African American and Hispanic/Latina women have higher rates of obesity. Being overweight or obese is a known risk factor for postmenopausal breast cancer, contributes to poor survival and is believed to contribute not only to breast cancer disparities, but to other health disparities as well.
- Alcohol: Drinking alcohol increases a woman's risk of breast cancer. Although alcohol consumption is lowest among Asian/Pacific Islanders overall, Japanese Americans consume more alcohol than Asian Americans of other national origins, which may contribute to the higher rates of breast cancer observed in this subpopulation.

Studies show that lesbians and bisexual women have a greater risk of breast cancer than other women, but this is not because of their sexual orientation. Rather, it is linked to risk factors for breast cancer that tend to be more common in these women (such as never having children or having them later in life). Lesbians also tend to have higher rates of

obesity and alcohol use, both of which can increase breast cancer risk.

Read further for facts, symptoms and warning signs of breast cancer. Feel free to share this information with the women in your life.



## Did you know?



- **33%** of African American women are diagnosed with breast cancer at an age less than 50 years.<sup>[2]</sup>
- There are more than 3.8 million women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Approximately **17,000** Hispanic women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the U.S.<sup>[4]</sup>
- The cost of a mammogram with an insurance copay is usually between \$10 and \$35. For uninsured patients, a mammogram typically averages close to \$102. Patients without insurance should ask the provider for assistance with the cost of a mammogram.<sup>[5]</sup>
- The average 5-year survival rate for non-metastatic invasive breast cancer is 91%. The average 10-year survival rate for invasive breast cancer is 84%. The 5-

year survival rate of invasive cancer only in the breast is **99%**.<sup>[3]</sup>



## **Early Detection is Important!**

Different people have different symptoms of breast cancer. Some people do not have any signs or symptoms at all. Some warning signs of breast cancer are<sup>[6]</sup>:

- New lump in the breast or underarm (armpit).
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast.
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin.
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast.
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area.
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood.
- Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.
- Pain in any area of the breast.

Keep in mind that these symptoms can happen with other conditions that are not cancer. It is best to consult your physician when you notice any changes.



## Learn More!

1. **Komen Perspectives - Breast Cancer Disparities** (April 2014)  
<https://ww5.komen.org/BCDisparities.html>
2. **What African American women need to know about breast cancer.** (January 2017)  
<https://www.tapgenes.com/blog/african-american-women-breast-cancer/>
3. **Breast Cancer Statistics - Survival Rates** (July 2020)  
<https://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/breast-cancer/statistics>
4. **What Hispanic Women should know about breast cancer.** (April 2015)  
Breast Cancer Research Foundation  
<https://www.bcrf.org/blog/what-hispanic-women-should-know-about-breast-cancer>
5. **How much does a Mammogram cost?** (October 2018) **City Hospital.** <https://bit.ly/3lmU6Y2>
6. **What are the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?**  
[https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic\\_info/symptoms.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/symptoms.htm)
7. **Treating Breast Cancer - American Cancer Society** (October 2020)  
<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/treatment.html>

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