
Breast Cancer Screening and Detection/Risk Factors

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in women. There is increasing evidence that early detection increases survival and treatment options.

Screening and Detection:

Screening and detection for breast cancer consists of *clinical breast exam* (an exam done by a health professional) and mammography.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following revised guidelines for screening and detection as of May 2003:

Ages 20-39: Clinical breast exam every 3 years.

Ages 40+: Annual clinical breast exam; annual mammography beginning at age 40.

**Monthly breast self exam can be used in addition to clinical breast exam and mammography.

NOTE: *These guidelines may need to be adjusted for women who are at increased risk for breast cancer.*

Risk Factors:

There are certain risk factors that increase a woman's chances of developing breast cancer. Risk factors can be broken down into 2 categories as follows:

Major Risk Factors:

- Personal History: previous occurrence of breast cancer, either invasive or in situ.
- Family History: having a 1st degree relative (mother, sister, or daughter) who has had breast cancer or ovarian cancer, or more than one family member with breast or ovarian cancer.
- A biopsy which indicates one or more of the following:
 - atypical hyperplasia
 - lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS)
 - ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS).
- Testing positive for the BRCA 1 gene or BRCA 2 gene.

Minor Risk Factors:

- **Hormonal Factors:**
 - Early menstruation.
 - Late menopause.
 - First pregnancy after age 30.
 - No history of breast feeding or never having had children.
 - Prolonged use of combination hormone replacement therapy with estrogen and progesterone.
- Previous breast biopsy.
- Sedentary lifestyle.
- Increasing age.
- Obesity.
- Large dose of radiation exposure to the chest at a young age.

Note: *Having any of these risk factors does not necessarily mean that a woman will develop breast cancer.*

Risk Reduction

If you are considered high-risk, certain lifestyle recommendations may help reduce breast cancer risk. Considerations may be given to treatment with SERMS (selective estrogen receptor modulators) such as Tamoxifen, or prophylactic mastectomy.

The Lynne Cohen Breast Cancer Preventive Care Program

This program is dedicated to any woman who wants to understand and assess her risk for breast cancer. The goal of the program is to provide each woman with:

- a risk assessment consisting of a review of her history and a physical exam
- recommendations for optimal screening
- education about risk factors and strategies for risk reduction
- genetic counseling and testing where appropriate
- treatments aimed at reducing risk.

An important part of this program is making sure that every woman has a clear understanding of breast cancer risk factors, how they evolve as life changes, and what can be done to manage them. For information on genetic counseling and testing, please refer to the Breast Cancer, Genetics, and Genetic Counseling handout.

We can work with you to help lessen your breast cancer risk. To schedule an appointment for a consultation please call: **(212) 731-5452.**