

Breast Cancer

Mammograms and Monthly Self-Exams Save Lives

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer develops when cells in the breast grow out of control and then spread to other tissues in the body. It is the second leading cause of death in women.

What are the signs of breast cancer?

The earliest sign of breast cancer is an abnormality that shows up on a mammogram, before it can be felt by you or your doctor. But once the cancer grows, symptoms include:

- Breast lump, swelling, distortion or tenderness
- Skin irritation or dimpling
- Nipple pain, scaliness or ulcer formation

How can I prevent breast cancer?

The two biggest risk factors, age and family history, are out of your control. But there are steps you can take to help prevent breast cancer. They are:

- Avoiding long-term hormone replacement therapy
- Having children before age 30
- Breastfeeding
- Avoiding weight gain

How is breast cancer diagnosed?

The earlier breast cancer is detected, the more likely it can be cured. So it's important to get your breasts examined regularly.

- Women aged 40 and older should have an annual mammogram and an annual clinical breast exam by her doctor
- Women aged 20-39 should have a clinical breast exam by her doctor every three years
- Women with a family history of breast cancer should ask their doctor at what age they should begin getting mammograms
- Every woman should exam her own breasts monthly. Become familiar with how your breasts feel normally, so when you feel something different (such as lump), you'll know to contact your doctor.

How can I schedule an exam?

Contact the Institute for Women's Health by calling **1.877.41WOMAN**.