

# Breast Health

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Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women in the United States. More than 180,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. This year 3,900 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed among women in Wisconsin and 700 Wisconsin women will die of breast cancer.

Any woman can get breast cancer. The chance of having breast cancer increases as a woman gets older, with most breast cancers occurring in women who are 50 or older.

There are preventive steps every woman can take. Studies now show that a woman may help protect herself from breast cancer by maintaining her best body weight, exercising regularly, and not drinking alcohol or drinking it only moderately.

**The best way to fight breast cancer is to find it early.** Early detection gives a woman the best chance of getting well and living a full life.

Medical experts recommend that women take these steps to good breast health:

- Learn breast self-exam (BSE) and do it every month. That way you will get to know what your breasts feel like and can tell if there has been a change. Ask your healthcare provider to show you how to check your breasts, or visit [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org).
- See your healthcare provider for a breast exam. Women age 20-40 should get an exam every 1 to 2 years. Women 40 and older should have a breast exam every year.
- Get mammograms regularly, beginning at age 40. A mammogram is an X-ray picture of the breast. It can find breast cancer that is too small for you, your doctor or your nurse to feel.
- Cancer can show up at any time—so one mammogram is not enough. Women age 40-49 should have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years. Women age 50 and older should have a mammogram every year.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about the best schedule of breast exams and mammograms for you. You may need to have these checkups more often, or begin them at a younger age, if your chance of getting breast cancer is higher than average—for example, if someone in your family has had breast cancer.
- See your healthcare provider right away if you find a lump or see other changes in your breast—for example, a rash or nipple discharge.

## Three Ways to Take Care of Your Breasts:

- See a doctor or nurse for a breast exam – it's fast, easy and doesn't hurt

## If you're over 40:

- ask for a mammogram
- find cancer early to save your life – it could save your breast

## Once a month:

- check each breast all over
- also check under your armpit
- use your finger pads to go up and down
- feel for: lumps, thickness and other changes



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## For more information:

BreastCancer.org, [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org)

Breast Cancer Recovery Foundation, (888) 821-1140, [www.bcrf.org](http://www.bcrf.org)

Susan G. Komen Foundation, (800) I'M AWARE, [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)