



Breast Health Guide:

Every Woman, Any Age



Do something good for yourself

Good health takes effort – eating right, exercising, learning to manage stress and getting regular checkups. As a woman, you have something else to think about, too – Breast Health. It is an important part of caring for yourself. 1 in 8 women will have breast cancer in their lifetime. Learn how to reduce your risk and find cancer early.



One in eight women will get breast cancer in her lifetime.

A combined approach to breast health

Edith Sanford Breast Centers recommend a combined approach to breast health. You and your regular doctor will talk about the best way to keep your breasts healthy. Ask questions about any concerns.

- Be aware of cancer risk factors – some you can change, some you cannot. Contact an Edith Sanford Breast Center to learn more about the Athena program to assess your risk factors.
- Reduce risk factors – with healthy lifestyle choices.
- Practice breast self-awareness – get to know what is normal for you.
- Get clinical breast exams – partner with your doctor at regular check-ups.
- Be sure to have a yearly mammogram – from age 40 on, or as often as advised.

Risk factors you cannot change

Risk factors may increase your chance of having a health problem. Talk to your doctor about what they mean for your health.

Being a woman

Men can get breast cancer, but 99 out of 100 people with breast cancer are women. Transgender people (male-to-female, female-to-male, bi-gender, two-spirit, transitioning) should speak with their doctor or visit an Edith Sanford Breast Center to learn if they are at increased risk of breast cancer. Hormone therapy may affect your personal risk of developing cancer.

Getting older

Your risk of getting breast cancer is greater as you get older. Most breast cancer is found in women over 50 years of age.

Your family history or genetic changes

Your chance of getting breast cancer is greater if your mother, sister, or daughter have had it. Inherited changes in certain genes (BRCA1, BRCA2, and others) increase the risk of breast cancer. Ask your doctor about seeing a genetic counselor to learn if genetic testing is right for you.

Your personal breast history

If you have had breast cancer before, you are more likely to develop a second breast cancer. Certain breast changes may increase your risk of developing breast cancer.

Menstrual and pregnancy history

Women who started their periods before age 12 or who went through menopause after age 55 have an increased risk of breast cancer. Women who had their first full-term pregnancy after age 30 or who

never had a full-term pregnancy are also at an increased risk of breast cancer.

Radiation therapy

Women who have had radiation therapy to their chests or breasts before age 30 are at an increased risk for breast cancer.

Risk factors you can control

Studies have shown that eating a healthy diet, exercising, limiting alcohol, losing weight, and avoiding hormone replacement therapy can reduce your risk for breast cancer and other health problems.

Healthy eating tips

- Choose whole foods most of the time. Whole foods are those sold without processing or additives.
 - Start planning your meals around plants.
 - Add vegetables and fruits to every meal or snack.
 - Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits.
 - Avoid foods with processed sugar. Calm your sweet cravings with at least 3 fruits a day.
 - Choose whole grains whenever you can.
 - Choose plant proteins or lean meats.
 - Plants high in protein include beans, lentils, split peas, soy products, and quinoa.
 - Choose chicken and turkey more often than red meats (pork and beef).
 - Trim off any visible fat from meat before cooking.
 - Eat fish 2 times a week.

- Choose nonfat or low-fat dairy.
- Use healthy cooking methods.
 - Bake, broil, steam, or roast foods instead of frying.

Exercise

Research suggests exercise may reduce breast cancer risk. Tips for starting an exercise routine:

- Keep trying forms of exercise until you find one or more that you enjoy.
- Start slowly. Increase the amount of time you exercise a little each week until you are exercising a total of 2 1/2 hours each week.
- Find a workout buddy. When you agree to work out with another person, you are more likely to follow through.
- Add activity to your day when you can.
 - If you work at a desk, set a timer and move for 3 minutes every hour.
 - Walk to your coworker's office instead of sending an email.
 - Clean your house with energy.
 - Park your car at the end of a parking lot to increase your steps.

If you are overweight

Women who are overweight may have a higher risk for breast cancer. To reduce this risk, start adding healthy habits for gradual weight loss and a healthier life. Talk to your doctor first if you have any health concerns or questions.

Adding healthy habits one at a time can help you lose weight. To get started:

- Choose one of the nutrition or exercise tips outlined in this brochure.

- When that choice is part of your routine, choose another healthy habit to add.
- Instead of going on short-term diets, start a new normal way to eat and be active.

Alcohol intake

The more alcohol a woman drinks, the greater her risk of breast cancer. To reduce your risk, limit your alcohol intake to 1 drink a day. One drink is equal to:

- 12 ounces of beer
- 4 ounces of wine
- 1 to 1.5 ounces of distilled alcohol (such as vodka, gin, or other hard liquor)

Hormone therapy for menopause

Women who use combined estrogen and progestin treatment for menopause for more than 5 years have an increased chance of breast cancer. Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of using hormones. Ask if there are other treatments you can try.

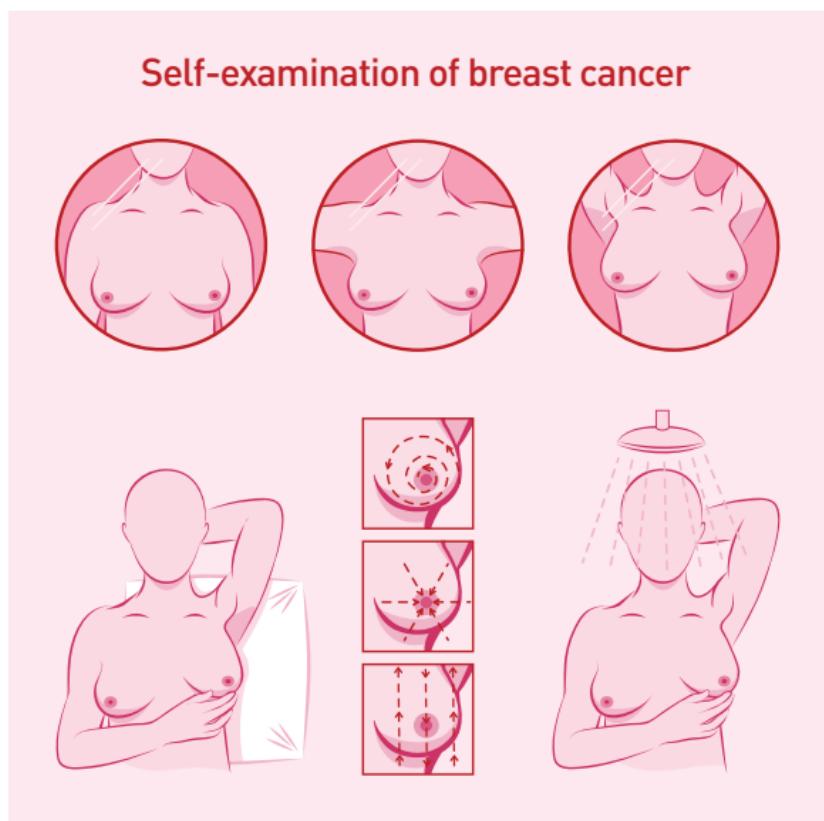
Breast self-awareness

You know your body best. Call your doctor if your breast looks or feels different. Often these breast changes are not cancer, but it is important to have them checked. By doing regular breast self-exams you will learn how your breasts normally look and feel.

Call your doctor if you notice:

- A new or changed lump in the breast or armpit
- Change in skin color or texture
- Change in the shape of the breast
- Discharge from the nipple

- Thickening in the breast
- Puckering, dimpling, swelling, or redness of the breast
- Retraction (pulling in) of the nipple
- Pain or soreness in the breast that does not go away or gets worse
- Your breasts look or feel different



Clinical breast exam

A breast exam is often part of a regular checkup by your doctor. The doctor will carefully look at your breasts. The doctor will also feel your breasts and under arms for lumps or anything else that seems unusual. When you need to have a breast exam may depend on your age, health, or family history. Talk to your doctor about how often to have a breast exam.

Common breast conditions

Most women have breast changes at some time. Your age, hormone levels, and medicines may cause lumps,

bumps, or discharge (fluid that is not breast milk leaking from the nipple).

If you have a breast lump, pain, discharge, skin irritation or change to your breast, see your doctor. Minor and serious breast problems have similar symptoms. Although many women fear cancer, most breast problems are not cancer.

Some common breast changes are:

- **Fibrocystic breast changes** – lumpiness, thickening, and swelling; often just before your period
- **Cysts** – fluid-filled lumps that may be tender
- **Fibroadenomas** – solid, round, rubbery lumps that move easily when pushed; found most often in younger women
- **Intraductal papillomas** – growths similar to warts near the nipple
- **Blocked milk ducts**
- **Nipple discharge** when not breastfeeding – many times this is normal, but have it checked by your doctor.
- **Breast infection** – causes swelling, pain and fever. Usually happens while breastfeeding (mastitis).
- **Breast pain**

Mammogram

A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast. It is used to check for breast cancer when you have no signs or symptoms of the disease (screening mammogram). It is

also used if you have a lump or other sign of breast problems (diagnostic mammogram).

During your test:

- You will need to undress from the waist up.
- The technologist will position your breast to get the best image.
- Each of your breasts will be compressed, one at a time. This helps get the most complete x-ray image.

When making your appointment, tell the breast center if:

- **You have noticed any changes in your breast.**
- **It is hard for you to stand.** You can still have a mammogram. We will arrange for you to sit during your mammogram.
- **You have breast implants.** You should continue to have mammograms, but implants can hide some breast issues. The technologist and radiologist must be experienced in x-raying women with breast implants.

Be sure to have a yearly mammogram – from age 40 on, or as often as advised

Tips for your mammogram

- Schedule your mammogram right after your period when your breasts are less tender.



- Wear a shirt with shorts, pants, or a skirt. You can undress from the waist up and leave on your shorts, pants, or skirt during the mammogram.
- Do not use deodorant, perfume, cream, lotion, or powder on your breasts. These things can make shadows show on the mammogram.
- Tell the mammogram technologist about any skin tags, scars, or moles you have in the area of your breasts.

Other screening options

Your doctor may recommend other breast cancer screening tests depending on your history. These may include:



- **Breast ultrasound.** This test uses painless sound waves to create a picture of the breast tissue. This test is often used to learn more about a breast problem that was found on a mammogram or during breast exam.
- **Breast MRI.** This test uses a strong magnet, radio waves, and a computer to create detailed pictures of the breast tissue. An IV contrast medicine is often used to see more details. This test may be used for women who are at high risk for breast cancer.

Edith Sanford Breast Health Centers
edithsanford.org

To schedule your next mammogram,
call (855) 35-EDITH, (855) 353-3484 or
visit breastscreen.sanfordhealth.org.

Edith Sanford has partnered with Athena to offer women advanced approaches to care. You will be able to fill out a personalized breast cancer risk assessment survey when you schedule a mammogram.

For more information, visit:
Athena Breast Health Network
[edithsanford.org/patient-care/
prevention/athena](http://edithsanford.org/patient-care/prevention/athena)

