

Breast Cancer

According to www.breastcancer.org, breast cancer incidence in women in the United States is one in eight. To put it another way, just under 12% of women can expect to develop breast cancer over the course of an entire lifetime.

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer:

- Estrogen related risks for developing breast cancer are: early menstruation (before age 12); late menopause (after age 55); and no children or first child after age 30.
- Growing older: from age 30 to 39, the risk is 1 in 233. That jumps to 1 in 27, or almost 4 %, by the time you are in your 60s.
- **Personal History** — If you have already been diagnosed with breast cancer, your risk for developing it again is higher than if you had never had it.
- **Family History** — Your risk could be higher if you have a mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer or have multiple generations of family members affected by breast or ovarian cancer.

Screening Guidelines for Breast Cancer:

- **Mammogram** — Done yearly for women 40 and over.
- **Clinical Breast Exam (CBE)** — Women in their 20s and 30s should have a CBE as part of their regular health exam every three years. For women over 40, the exam should be done yearly.
- **Breast Self Exam (BSE)** — Women should start self-exams in their twenties. Have your doctor check your method of self-examination so you know you are doing it accurately.
- **Women at High Risk** — Talk with your doctor about the best approach for screening; this might include early mammograms, and/or more frequent exams.

Symptoms of Breast Cancer:

- A lump or mass
- Swelling in part of the breast
- Nipple pain
- Skin irritations or dimpling
- Nipple turning inward, or nipple discharge
- Redness or scaliness of the nipple
- A lump in the underarm area

It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** to see your doctor **RIGHT AWAY** if you have any symptoms of breast cancer.



Did You Know:

- It is estimated that more than 232,340 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among women this year.
- An estimated 2,240 new cases of breast cancer are expected in men.
- Approximately 80% of biopsied breast abnormalities are proven noncancerous, but every breast lump must be evaluated by a physician.
- Early detection of breast cancer provides the best opportunity for successful treatment and reduces chances of death.

If you would like to learn more about your risk of breast cancer, you can ask your doctor to help you record your family history and assess your risk. Genetic counseling can help you better define and understand the significance of your own family history.

How To Talk To Your Health Care Provider

Waiting in your health care provider's (HCP) office can be an anxious experience. Most often, patients become overwhelmed during a visit, leaving no time to explain symptoms and concerns. It is when you leave the office that you remember something you had forgotten to mention and wonder if it matters. Knowing how to talk to your HCP will help you get the information you need, when you need it, especially when visits are oftentimes short.

Here are some tips for talking to your HCP:

- Make a list of concerns and questions to take to your visit with your HCP.
- Describe your symptoms clearly and truthfully.
- Be honest about your diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol or drug use, and sexual history — withholding information can be harmful.
- Understand everything before you leave your visit.
- Bring a family member or trusted friend with you on your visit.



A Special Report Concerning Women's Health

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Dear Friend:

I am reaching out to you with important information that may help save lives, including your own. Every day, medical research is adding to our body of knowledge of how to treat and prevent chronic diseases, such as breast cancer and heart disease.

We have a long way to go to cure these diseases, but we have also made some important discoveries in their treatment and early detection. For example, in the United States heart disease is the leading cause of death among women. Yet, we know that with a balanced diet and moderate exercise, we can help prevent the onset of this disease.

This brochure includes some basic information on health issues concerning women. While the common-sense information in these articles should make us all think about how we can live well, it is not a substitute for regular doctor visits and other sources of information.

I hope you find this information useful. Here's to your good health.

Roxanne J. Persaud
19th Senate District

Heart Disease & Stroke

Heart disease, stroke and cardiovascular diseases are not just men's diseases — they are devastating to women too. The leading cause of death for American women is Coronary Heart Disease. Many women believe that cancer is a bigger threat — not so!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for all American women and the number one killer of minority women in the United States. Nearly twice as many women in the United States die of heart disease and stroke as from all forms of cancer. Heart attacks are the leading cause of death among women in New York.

Risk Factors for Heart Disease and Stroke:

- **Increasing age** – as women grow older, their risk of heart disease and stroke begins to rise and keeps rising with age.
- **Previous heart attack**, stroke or TIA (mini-stroke)
- **High blood pressure**, high blood cholesterol, physical inactivity, overweight and obesity.
- **Diabetes** – adults with diabetes have heart disease rates two to four times those of adults without diabetes.
- **Tobacco use** – smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States.
- **Heredity** (family history) – women and men are more likely to develop heart disease or stroke if their close blood relatives have had them.

Symptoms of Heart Attack/Stroke:

Research by the National Institutes of Health indicates that women often experience new or different physical symptoms as long as a month or more before experiencing a heart attack. However, women's symptoms may not be as predictable as men's.

Major symptoms include:

- Chest pain or discomfort; pain or discomfort in other areas of the upper body, such as arms, back, jaw, neck or stomach
- Unusual fatigue or weakness
- Sleep disturbance
- Shortness of breath
- Indigestion/nausea
- Lightheadedness
- Anxiety

Did You Know:

- According to the American Heart Association, every year more than 500,000 women suffer new or recurrent myocardial infarction (MI) or die of cardiovascular diseases.
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for women.
- African-American and Hispanic women have a higher incidence of high blood pressure and diabetes, both of which increase the risk of heart disease.
- Exercise and diet modification are recommended and are often sufficient to lower blood pressure without medication. The three major risk factors are high blood

pressure, high cholesterol and being overweight.

If at Risk for Heart Disease/Attack or Stroke, be prepared:

- Make a list of your medications and how often you take them.
- Know the location of the nearest emergency department.
- Discuss with your doctor, in advance, what you should do if you experience symptoms of a heart attack.
- If you do experience heart attack or stroke symptoms, call 911.

For Stroke Information, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE

For Heart Information, log on to www.Heart.org www.womenheart.org & www.womenshealth.gov

Symptoms of Lung Cancer:

- Coughing up blood
- Persistent cough that gets worse over time
- Wheezing
- Hoarse voice
- Repeated bouts of bronchitis or pneumonia
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Weight loss with no known cause

Did You Know:

- Smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death in the United States.
- Recent surveys show that nearly one in five US women (20%) aged 18 and older smoke cigarettes.
- Women who smoke usually begin smoking as teenagers.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is now the most common cancer-related cause of death among men and women alike. Lung cancer accounts for more deaths than breast cancer, prostate cancer and colon cancer combined.

Risk Factors for Lung Cancer:

- **Smoking is the #1 cause of lung cancer** — People who smoke are estimated to be 10-20 times more likely to get lung cancer than those who don't smoke.
- **Secondhand smoke also increases your risk for lung cancer** — A nonsmoker who is married to a smoker has a 30% greater risk of developing lung cancer.
- **Exposure to on-the-job carcinogens** — Asbestos is the best known substance associated with lung cancer. Others are uranium, arsenic, and certain petroleum products.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a term that refers to a large group of lung diseases, all of which are characterized by obstruction to airflow that interferes with breathing.

- COPD is the 4th leading cause of death in America.
- COPD's include emphysema and chronic bronchitis but not asthma.
- Beginning in 2000, women have consistently outnumbered men in the number of deaths attributed to COPD.
- The primary risk factor for COPD is smoking.
- Female smokers are roughly 13 times as likely to die from COPD versus female nonsmokers.

All information collected from or provided by the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Women's Heart Association, Center for Disease Control and Prevention and American Stroke Association

www.womenshealth.gov

www.healthywomen.org

www.breastcancer.org