

Breast cancer: risk factors & warning signs

While regular mammograms can help spot breast cancer, it's important to know the risk factors and warning signs of breast cancer to increase your chances of catching the disease early. Take a few minutes to review the important information below – it could save your life.



Risk Factors

There are some risk factors you can control and others you cannot. Talk to your doctor about which risk factors may apply to you. Remember that having one or more of the below risk factors only increases your risk. It does not mean you will get breast cancer.

- Changes in certain genes such as BRCA1 and BRCA2.
- Personal history of breast cancer, dense breasts or other breast problems.
- Family history of breast or ovarian cancer.
- Previous treatment using radiation therapy.
- Early menstrual periods (before age 12).
- Starting menopause after age 55.
- Being overweight or obese after menopause.
- Long-term use of hormone replacement therapy.
- Having your first pregnancy after age 30.

Warning Signs

Make sure you know how your breasts look and feel when they are healthy so you can easily notice when something is wrong. Talk to your doctor if you have any of the below symptoms..

- A new lump in the breast or underarm.
- Thickening or swelling of the breast.
- Breast or nipple pain.
- Skin irritation or dimpling of breast skin.
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or on the breast.
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk.



If you have any questions, note them for your next appointment or call your doctor's office.