

What can I do to help keep my breasts healthy?

There are several things you can do that we know can lower your risk of breast cancer. Most of these things are also good for your overall health:

- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Get regular exercise — 4 or more hours a week is best.
- Avoid tobacco — Smoking increases the risk of breast and many other cancers.
- Limit alcohol — The more you drink, the higher your risk of breast cancer. If you do drink alcohol, 1 drink per day is a good limit.
- Know your environment — Some chemicals and harmful things around you in your daily life can affect your breasts. This includes some foods, cosmetics, plastics, and household products. Ask your doctor or nurse for more information.
- Breastfeed — People who breastfeed their children are less likely to develop breast cancer.
- Discuss breast cancer screening with your doctor or nurse.

What should I be doing for breast cancer screening?

Screening is based on both your age and your risk level (things like family history of breast cancer). Your screening might include

- Self-breast awareness (knowing what your breasts feel like and letting your doctor or nurse know about any change)
- Clinical breast exam (an exam done by your doctor or nurse)
- Mammogram (x-ray of the breasts)
- Genetic counseling (meeting with someone who has special training to figure out your risk of getting breast cancer)

Though breast screening cannot prevent breast cancer, it can help to find breast cancer earlier, when it is easier to treat and more curable. If you don't get the recommended breast screening and you have breast cancer it might not be found at the earliest possible stage.

How do I learn my risk for getting breast cancer?

You can find out more about your risk for getting breast cancer by answering these 2 questions.

- Have you had breast or ovarian cancer?
- Has a blood relative had breast or ovarian cancer?

If you answer no to both questions, your risk for breast cancer is just like most women. You should

- Get to know what your breasts feel like and call your doctor or nurse about any change
- Have a breast exam done by your doctor or nurse every 1-3 years from age 21-39, then every year from age 40 on
- Consider having a mammogram every 1 to 2 years, starting at age 40 but no later than age 50

If you answer yes to either question, you should talk to your doctor or nurse.

If you don't know, you should try to find out the answers by talking to your family members.

Your health is important to us. If you have any questions or concerns please call us. We are happy to help you.