



# Protect yourself against breast cancer

Understanding your risk for breast cancer — and the steps you can take to reduce it — is an important part of taking care of yourself and staying strong for the ones you love.

## What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is cancer that starts in one or both breasts. It can affect women of any race, age, or ethnicity.

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**1 in 8**  
**women**  
will develop breast cancer  
in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

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Breast cancer is the  
**2nd most**  
**common**  
type of cancer among adult women  
in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

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## Lowering your risk

There's no sure way to prevent breast cancer. Some factors that can put you at a higher risk are out of your control — like getting older and having a family history of breast cancer. You can reduce your risk by staying healthy in the following ways:

-  Maintain a healthy weight
-  Exercise regularly
-  Drink alcohol in moderation, or not at all



Talk to your doctor about scheduling a mammogram. To find a doctor near you, use the Sydney<sup>SM</sup> Health app or go to [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com).

## Breast cancer screenings

Mammograms and breast self-exams are both useful tools for early breast cancer detection. Learn how they work together to protect your breast health.

### Mammograms

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast. Mammograms are the best way for doctors to find breast cancer early, when it's easier to treat — sometimes up to three years before symptoms show.<sup>2</sup>

Most women should begin having mammograms every one to two years starting at age 40, and then every year once they turn 50. You should talk to your doctor about the right schedule for you, since they might recommend screening earlier and more frequently if you have certain risk factors.

### Breast self-exams

In between mammograms, performing breast self-exams about once a month is a good way to check for anything out of the ordinary. Simply look and feel for changes to your breasts in front of a mirror. These symptoms don't mean you have breast cancer, but if you notice any of the following, you should talk to your doctor:

- A new lump in the breast or armpit
- Swelling, redness, soreness, or a rash
- Any nipple discharge other than breast milk
- Change in breast size or shape
- Dimples, puckers, or bulges on the skin of your breast

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society: *How Common is Breast Cancer?* (accessed July 2022): [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).  
<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *What is a Mammogram?* (accessed July 2022): [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Breastcancer.org: *Breast Self-Exam (BSE)* (accessed July 2022): [breastcancer.org](https://www.breastcancer.org).  
Cancer.org: *Don't Lower My Risk of Breast Cancer?* (accessed July 2022): [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).

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