



## Learn the basics of breast cancer

### Aetna Resources For Living<sup>SM</sup>

Anyone can get breast cancer. That includes — in rare cases — men. Doctors aren't certain about what causes breast cancer. But they do know that one in eight women in the United States will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

#### **What are the risk factors?**

There are certain factors that may predispose you to breast cancer. Some of the risks you can control include drinking too much alcohol, smoking, being obese and living an inactive lifestyle. Some of the factors you can't control include age, family history and genetic makeup.<sup>2</sup>

To be clear, however, even if you have risk factors, it doesn't necessarily mean you will develop breast cancer. So what can you do to protect yourself and those close to you?

<sup>1</sup>[What is breast cancer?](#) National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc. Accessed September 2021.

<sup>2</sup>[What are the risk factors for breast cancer?](#) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed September 2021.



## 1. Start with awareness

Over half of breast cancer cases are detected while the cancer is still limited to the breast tissue. And in those cases, 99 percent of treated patients go on to live five years or more.<sup>1</sup> So one key to helping beat breast cancer is to be aware and proactive. How can you do this?

## 2. Take action

Everyone can take some easy steps to help detect breast cancer. For example, you can:

- **Do self-examinations.** People can learn how to examine their own breasts to feel for lumps and irregularities. Keep in mind that most lumps do not turn out to be cancer.<sup>1</sup> Learn more by going to [How to do a breast self-exam: The five steps.](#)

- **Get medical checkups.** Gynecologists and other doctors know how to do a thorough clinical exam of the breast. You should make a regular clinical exam part of your health routine.
- **Have mammograms regularly.** Mammograms are non-invasive x-rays of the breasts that look for signs of cancer. It's done by technicians at a breast or imaging center. It's reviewed by a doctor who knows how to interpret the images. [Learn more about mammograms.](#)

## 3. Spread the word

You can help by being an advocate. Volunteer your time for a local breast cancer organization. Or you can simply be the "one who's not afraid" to discuss breast cancer among your friends and relatives. Just sharing your awareness can help others stay healthy.

It's important to learn about breast cancer. You may help someone you love.



<sup>1</sup>What is breast cancer? National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc. Accessed September 2021.

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