

BROWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



HOT TOPICS



The Facts on Breast Cancer

If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with breast cancer, you are not alone. After skin cancer, breast cancer is the second leading type of cancer in women. Breast cancer can occur in men, but it is relatively uncommon. If you have been diagnosed with breast cancer, you should talk to your doctor about your treatment options.

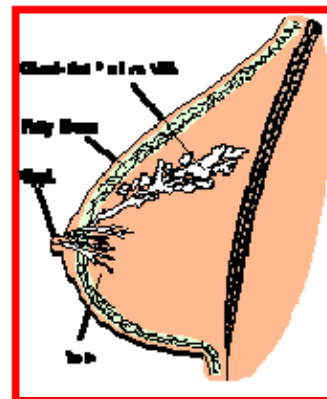
The stages of breast cancer (stages I through IV) indicate how far advanced the cancer is. The different stages have different treatment options, with the more advanced stages usually having fewer options available to treat the cancer. It is important to catch the cancer at the earliest stage possible in order to provide the best chances for successful treatment:

- **Breast-conserving surgery (BCS)** – Removing the cancerous lump in the breast, lymph nodes, and some of the surrounding tissue. The surgery is usually followed by radiation therapy. A **mastectomy** is the removal of the entire breast plus surrounding lymph nodes.

- **Radiation therapy** – Using high-dose radiation to kill cancer cells. Used following surgery, at the physician's discretion, to control any remaining tumor and to reduce the chance of recurrence.

- **Chemotherapy** – Using drugs to kill the cancer cells that may be in the body.

- **Hormone therapy** – Using drugs that change the way hormones work or removing the organs that produce hormones, such as the



ovaries. Chemotherapy and hormone therapy can be used together to lessen symptoms if the cancer has spread.

The following is recommended in order to detect breast cancer in its earliest stages:

● **Physical examination** – Get examined by a health care professional every 3 years from ages 20 to 40 years and every year thereafter. Women with a family history or previous breast cancers should be examined more frequently (ask your doctor or health-care provider).

● **Mammography** – A special low-intensity x-ray of the breast that can find tumors in the breast that may be too small to feel by examination. According to the National Cancer Institute, women aged 40 years or older should get a mammogram every 1 to 2 years.

● **Breast self-examination (BSE)** – If you are a woman older than 20 years, you should examine your breast **every month** for any unusual changes or lumps. Not all lumps are cancerous, but all lumps should be checked out by a doctor.

Breast cancer is more likely to occur in women, older individuals, a person with a family history of breast cancer, persons diagnosed with BRCA1/BRCA2 gene, women who started menstruation before age 12 or who begin menopause later in life than usual, women who have never had children or those who have had their first baby after age 30, individuals who have had other types of breast disease, and women who have long-term use of estrogen replacement therapy. **BUT... breast cancer can occur in anyone at anytime.** It is important to examine your breasts monthly and get regular exams.

For further information contact the Breast and Cervical Cancer Hotline at 1-888-886-0646.



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