



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# About Breast Cancer in Men

This information explains breast cancer in men, including risk factors, prevention, symptoms, and diagnosis.

## About Breast Cancer in Men

While breast cancer is more common in women, it can also affect men. About 1 in 1,000 men in the United States will get breast cancer during their lifetime.

Breast cancer in men is more likely to be cured if it is found early. But many men don't realize that they can get breast cancer so they don't always notice the signs or only see their doctor when the lumps have gotten large. If you notice a lump or any other changes to your breast, call your doctor right away.

## Risk Factors of Breast Cancer in Men

The most common risk factors associated with breast cancer in men include:

- Getting older
- Family history of breast cancer
- Inherited gene mutations, most commonly a BRCA2 mutation
- Having higher levels of the female hormone estrogen, lower

levels of male androgen hormones (such as testosterone), or both

- Obesity can cause an increase in the production of estrogen.
- Having severe liver disease can cause low levels of androgens and higher levels of estrogen.
- Having prostate cancer treated with estrogen-related hormonal therapies can increase your estrogen levels.
- Klinefelter syndrome, which is a rare condition you're born with, can lower your testosterone levels.

## **Preventing Breast Cancer in Men**

There are a few lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of getting breast cancer, including:

- Reaching and maintaining a healthy body weight
- Exercising regularly
- Limiting alcohol use to no more than 2 drinks per day
  - One serving is equal to a 5-ounce glass of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1.5 ounces of liquor

## **Symptoms of Breast Cancer in Men**

The most common symptom of breast cancer in men is a lump or swelling that can be felt in the breast. These lumps are usually painless.

Other signs include:

- Nipple retraction (when the nipple is flat)
- Nipple inversion (when the nipple is turned inward)
- Discharge (fluid coming from the nipple)
- Redness or scaling of the nipple or breast skin
- Dimpled breast skin

Most of the time, these are due to noncancerous conditions, such as an infection or gynecomastia (a harmless swelling of breast tissue). However, it's very important for you to call your doctor as soon as you notice any changes in your breast.

## **Diagnosing Breast Cancer in Men**

Breast cancer is diagnosed in the same way for everyone. Your doctor will first do a breast exam and let you know if you need any additional testing.

## **Additional Resources**

### **American Cancer Society (ACS)**

[www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancerinmen/detailedguide/index](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancerinmen/detailedguide/index)

800-227-2345

Provides detailed information about male breast cancer.

### **His Breast Cancer Awareness**

[www.hisbreastcancer.org](http://www.hisbreastcancer.org)

Offers education and information on male breast cancer.

### **Male Breast Cancer Coalition**

[malebreastcancercoalition.org](http://malebreastcancercoalition.org)

Patient advocacy organization that educates about male breast cancer.

### **Susan G. Komen**

[www.komen.org/BreastCancer/BreastCancerinMen.html](http://www.komen.org/BreastCancer/BreastCancerinMen.html)

Provides information and support services for men with breast cancer.

### **CancerCare**

[www.cancercares.org](http://www.cancercares.org)

800-813-HOPE (800-813-4673)

National nonprofit organization that helps people with cancer and their caregivers through counseling, education, information, referrals, and direct financial assistance.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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