

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

[Make an Appointment](#)

[Back](#)

[Cancer Types](#) [Diagnosis & Treatment](#)

[Refer a Patient](#)

ABOUT US

[Our mission, vision & core values](#)

[Leadership](#)

[History](#)

[Equality, diversity & inclusion](#)

[Annual report](#)

[Give to MSK](#)



Medical oncologist Ayca Gucalp is an expert in treating breast cancer in men.

Breast cancer affects men as well as women, but it is about 100 times less common in men. At Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), we have specialists who regularly care for men with breast cancer. We recognize that it can feel isolating as a man with this disease, and we are here to support you every step of the way.

Request an Appointment

Call [646-497-9064](tel:646-497-9064)

Available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern time)

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Here is more information about male breast cancer.

Who is most at risk for male breast cancer?

About 1 in 800 people assigned male at birth are at [risk](#) of getting breast cancer in their lifetime. Males who develop breast cancer often do so later in life, around the ages of 65 to 70.

You are at a higher risk for male breast cancer if you:

- Have a family history of male breast cancer

- Have a mutation in the [BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene](#), two genes that are linked to breast cancer

- Have a genetic syndrome such as Klinefelter syndrome that increases the body's production of estrogen

- Are a transgender woman who takes or has taken estrogen hormones

[Back to top](#)

What are the symptoms of male breast cancer?

There is no routine breast cancer screening for men, so many men with the disease find a lump in their breast or armpit on their own. Other changes to look for include:

- Unexplained swelling or shrinkage of the breast, particularly on one side only

- Nipple discharge

- Changes to breast skin, such as redness, flaking, thickening, or pitting that looks like the skin of an orange

- A nipple that becomes sunken (inverted), red, thick, or scaly

[Breast screening exams such as mammograms](#) are usually the first step once a person notices symptoms.

[Back to top](#)

Should men be screened for breast cancer?

There are no current recommendations for breast cancer screening in men because the incidence is so low, even in men with a mutation in the [BRCA](#) gene. However, as we continue to learn about male breast cancer, we may discover that certain populations of men should be routinely screened. Talk to your doctor about your individual risk for male breast cancer.

[Back to top](#)

How is male breast cancer diagnosed?

Male breast cancer is diagnosed by a [breast biopsy](#). Biopsies can be done in several ways. During a biopsy, a doctor takes a sample of your breast tissue. You are awake and the area is numbed so you don't feel anything. The sample gets sent to a [pathologist](#), a doctor who diagnoses diseases. The pathologist checks the tissue for cancer cells under a microscope.

[Back to top](#)

What are the types of male breast cancer?

Male breast cancer is categorized the same way as female breast cancer. [Learn more about breast cancer types.](#)

Male and female breast cancers have many features in common, but they also differ in some respects. Researchers are still learning about the differences in the disease between men and women. Much of the research done in women with breast cancer has led to advances in the [treatment of male breast cancer](#). However, in 2019, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommended that men be included in breast cancer clinical trials. MSK offers clinical trials for men with breast cancer, and individuals should speak with their doctors about which trials might be right for them.

[Back to top](#)

What are the stages of male breast cancer?

The stages of breast cancer for men are the same as they are for women. [Learn more about breast cancer stages.](#)

[Back to top](#)

What are lymph nodes, and why are they important to a diagnosis of male breast cancer?

Lymph nodes are small, bean-shaped organs that contain different types of cells, including immune cells, which help the body fight infections and cancer. When breast cancer spreads, it usually reaches the lymph nodes under the arm first. These are called axillary lymph nodes.

Doctors run tests to see if a patient's cancer has reached these lymph nodes. They use this information to estimate the risk that the cancer has or is about to spread to other parts of the body and recommend an appropriate treatment plan.

[Back to top](#)

How is male breast cancer treated?

The [treatments for male breast cancer](#) are very similar to the ones for female breast cancer. They may include [chemotherapy](#), [radiation therapy](#), and/or [surgery](#), such a lumpectomy (removal of the tumor) or mastectomy (removal of the full breast). Sometimes, a combination of these approaches offers the best chance of successful treatment. [Learn more about breast cancer treatments.](#)

[Here are some questions you might like to ask your surgeon.](#)

[Back to top](#)

What is the prognosis for male breast cancer?

A man's breast cancer prognosis (outcome) is similar to that of a woman diagnosed at the same stage of disease. Like female breast cancer, male breast cancer is more likely to be successfully treated if it is discovered early. But because many men do not realize that they can develop the disease, they may not seek medical attention when they first discover a mass or lump in their chest. Therefore, breast cancer is generally diagnosed at later [stages in men](#) than in women.

[Back to top](#)

What is the risk of breast cancer for transgender people?

A transgender woman who takes or has taken estrogen hormones has a higher risk of breast cancer. If a transgender person has breast cancer, we have a team of experts who work together to make sure they get the very best in specialized care. We also work with an individual's care team outside of MSK to make sure all our efforts are coordinated.

[Back to top](#)

Why should I choose MSK for male breast cancer treatment?

Because there are so few cases of male breast cancer, it is important to choose a care team that is trained in treating the disease.

The [Rare Breast Cancer Program](#) at MSK has that experience. We evaluate and treat about 200 people with early- or advanced-stage rare breast cancer, including male breast cancer, every year.

When men with breast cancer come to MSK, they have access to streamlined, comprehensive care. We offer molecular testing to determine the genetic makeup of each person’s tumor. We also provide genetic counseling so we can learn about any cancer predispositions that may affect them or members of their family. Our [clinic for men with the BRCA gene](#) ensures that men get the most information they can about their specific disease in an effort to determine which treatments may be best for them. In addition, we have clinical trials just for men based on their specific tumor’s makeup.

We work with other MSK experts to ensure that you get the care you need beyond medical treatment. Experts in [male sexual health](#), [social work](#), [integrative medicine](#), and other subspecialties can help you manage the stress of breast cancer treatment, as well as its potential side effects, such as chemotherapy-induced nausea, fatigue, loss of appetite, or [lymphedema](#) (buildup of fluid in the arm and hand).

Many of the specialists and therapies you need to help with your recovery and transition to life after cancer are conveniently located at our [Evelyn F. McKee Breast Center](#) in Manhattan. We also have several regional outpatient locations in [New Jersey](#), as well as [Westchester County](#), [Long Island](#), and [Brooklyn](#). For our out-of-town patients, we’ve negotiated [special discounts](#) at nearby hotels.

We know it is overwhelming to be diagnosed with male breast cancer, but we have the expertise and experience needed to give you the highest quality of care.

[Back to top](#)

NEXT

[Types of Male Breast Cancer](#)

Connect

Contact us

Locations

APPOINTMENTS

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About MSK

About us

Careers

Giving

Cancer Care

Adult cancer types

Child & teen cancer types

Integrative medicine

Nutrition & cancer

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