

## Who Gets Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is one of the most frequently diagnosed cancers in women in the United States today. Every woman has some chance of developing breast cancer during her lifetime. Since age is a major risk factor, as women get older, their chances of getting breast cancer increase. Even though breast cancer is more common in older women, it also occurs in younger women and even in a small number of men.

While we don't yet know what causes breast cancer, we do know that

- Breast cancer is not caused by stress or by an injury to the breast.
- Most women who develop breast cancer do not have any known risk factors or a history of the disease in their families.
- You should not feel guilty. You haven't done anything wrong in your life that caused breast cancer.
- You cannot "catch" breast cancer. It is not contagious.

Remember, you don't have to face breast cancer alone; there are knowledgeable and caring people who can help you.

## Who Gets Cervical Cancer?

Around 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year. Cervical cancer is curable if it is detected early. Women with high-risk HPV types are at a greater risk of developing cervical cancer. Since there are often no symptoms, women with the disease usually discover it through Pap tests. If your Pap test is abnormal, your doctor may perform additional tests or remove abnormal tissue through additional procedures.

Women should begin to have yearly Pap tests at 18 years of age or when sexual activity begins. The Pap test results can show infection, inflammation, abnormal cells or cancer. When you receive your results, be sure to ask questions if you do not understand your health care provider's plan for your care.



# Illinois Breast & Cervical Cancer Programs



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# TAKE CHARGE - get screened

**The Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program offers free mammograms, breast exams, pelvic exams and Pap tests to eligible women.**

If you live in Illinois and do not have insurance, you may be eligible for free screenings through the Illinois Department of Public Health's Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. These important screening tests are provided annually at no cost at many locations throughout Illinois.

- Women between the ages of 35 and 64 may qualify for free screenings. Women younger than 35 may also be eligible in some cases.
- Women must have no health insurance or be under-insured for screening procedures.

*Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. If it is detected in its earlier stages, breast cancer can be successfully treated. Routine mammograms and breast exams can detect cancer early and provide women with better treatment options and results.*

*Cervical cancer also is treatable if detected early. There are often no noticeable symptoms, so it is important women get screened regularly and have a Pap test. The test can find any abnormal changes that could turn into cancer.*

## Tips for Healthy Living

**Get Checkups and Regular Screenings:** One of the best gifts you can give yourself this year is to schedule a medical checkup and preventive screenings. Take advantage of the IBCCP and get screened. Remember, early detection can save lives.

**Eat Healthy:** Include at least five servings of fruits and vegetables along with lean protein sources, low-fat dairy products, whole grains and healthy fats. Choose healthier cooking methods like baking, grilling and roasting over frying.

**Stop Smoking:** Quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do. You will live longer and live better, and lower your risk of heart attack, stroke or cancer. For help, call the **Illinois Tobacco QuitLine**, 866-QUIT-YES.

**Get Moving:** Strive for 45 minutes of moderate physical activity on most, if not all days of the week. If a gym workout is not for you, focus on getting active with dancing, gardening, swimming and walking.

**Maintain a Healthy Weight:** According to the American Obesity Association, women who are overweight are at greater risk for strokes and of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Focus on healthy eating and staying active to help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

**Be Good to Yourself:** Balancing work, home and play, reducing stress, and getting plenty of sleep are just as important as a healthy diet and exercise to living a happy, healthy life. Sometimes that means simply relaxing and choosing to let some of life's stresses roll off your back.

**If diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer, you may be eligible for treatment coverage as well as screening. Ask your health care provider or contact IBCCP.**

To determine your eligibility for the program or to find out where to go for screenings, call

The Department of Public Health's  
Women's Health Line  
**888-522-1282**  
TTY: **888-547-0466**

[www.cancerscreening.illinois.gov](http://www.cancerscreening.illinois.gov)

