

A risk factor is anything that affects your chance of getting a disease, such as cancer. Different cancers have different risk factors. For example, exposing skin to strong sunlight is a risk factor for skin cancer. Smoking is a risk factor for cancers of the lung, mouth, larynx (voice box), bladder, kidney and several other organs. But risk factors don't tell us everything. Having a risk factor, or even several, does not mean that you will get the disease.

Most people who have one or more breast cancer risk factors never develop the disease, while many people with breast cancer have no apparent risk factors (other than having breast tissue and growing older). Most people who are diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a family history of breast cancer. Even when someone with risk factors develops breast cancer, it is hard to know just how much these factors may have contributed to their cancer.

Risk Factors You CAN Change

- Post-menopausal obesity
- Use of hormone replacement therapy
- Alcohol consumption
- Physical inactivity
- Some environmental exposures

Risk Factors You CANNOT Change

- **Sex assigned at birth**—Having breasts and estrogen are the main risk factors for developing breast cancer. Though people assigned male at birth can develop breast cancer, they are at much lower risk.

- **Aging**—Your risk of developing breast cancer increases as you get older.
- **Genetic risk factors**—About 5% to 10% of breast cancer cases are thought to be related to a hereditary risk factor. There are many genes related to hereditary breast cancer, including ATM, BRCA1, BRCA2, CHEK2, PALB2, PTEN and TP53. These genes increase risk for other cancers also, such as ovarian, prostate, pancreatic and colon cancer.

Conditions that Increase Your Risk

The exact causes of breast cancer are unknown. Research has shown that these conditions increase the chance of developing breast cancer:

- **Personal history**—Those who have had breast cancer face an increased risk of developing breast cancer again.
- **Family history**—The risk for developing breast cancer increases if family members have had breast cancer, especially at a young age.
- **Certain breast changes**—A diagnosis of atypical hyperplasia or lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS) may increase a woman's risk for getting breast cancer.
- **Genetic mutation**—Changes in certain genes increase a person's risk of developing breast cancer.
- **Breast density**—Breasts that have a more lobular and ductal tissue appear dense on mammograms. Breast cancer develops more in lobular or ductal tissue (not fatty tissue).
- **Radiation therapy**—Those whose breasts have been exposed to radiation therapy before age 30.

HOW CAN I LOWER MY RISK FOR BREAST CANCER?



**Know Your
Family History**



**Maintain a Healthy
Body Weight**



**Get Routine
Exercise**



**Schedule a Yearly
Mammogram**



**Get a 3D
Mammogram**



**Talk to Your
Provider**

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