



# October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Breast cancer is the second most common kind of cancer in women. It is estimated that **1 in 8 women** born in the United States today will get breast cancer at some point in their life. Many women can survive breast cancer if it's found and treated early. To increase public awareness about the importance of early detection of breast cancer, the **Louisiana State Board of Nursing** is providing the following information.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Forty percent** of diagnosed breast cancers are detected by women who feel a lump during a self-exam.

A mammogram – the screening test for breast cancer – can help find the disease when it is easier to treat. If you are a woman **age 40 to 49**, you should talk to your doctor about family history and when you should start getting mammograms. If you are a woman **age 50 – 74**, you should get a mammogram at least every **2 years**.

Breast cancer can occur in both **men and women**.

### RISK FACTORS

Following are a few risk factors to consider:

- ✂ Being younger when you had your first menstrual period.
- ✂ Never giving birth, or being older at the birth of your first child.
- ✂ Starting menopause at a later age.
- ✂ Using hormone replacement therapy for a long time.
- ✂ Getting older
- ✂ A personal history of breast cancer, dense breasts, or other breast problems
- ✂ A family history of breast cancer (parent, sibling, or child)
- ✂ Getting radiation therapy to the breast or chest
- ✂ Being overweight – especially after menopause
- ✂ Changes in your breast cancer-related genes

### SYMPTOMS

Some warning signs of breast cancer are:

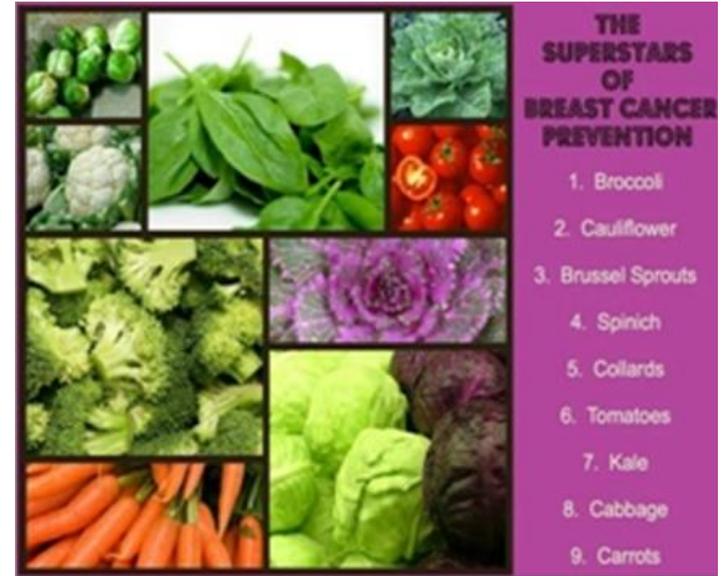
- ✂ A lump or pain in the breast
- ✂ Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- ✂ Irritation or dimpling of the breast skin
- ✂ Redness or flaky skin on the breast
- ✂ Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area
- ✂ Fluid other than breast milk from the nipple – especially blood
- ✂ A change in the size or shape of the breast

While mammograms help detect cancer before you feel a lump, self-exams help you be familiar with how your breasts feel and look so you can tell your healthcare provider if there are changes.

## HOW CAN I REDUCE MY RISK?

Many factors can influence your breast cancer risk. You can help lower your risk of developing breast cancer in the following ways:

- ✂ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✂ Exercise at least four hours a week
- ✂ Either don't drink alcohol or limit alcoholic drinks to no more than one per day
- ✂ Avoid exposure to chemicals that can cause cancer
- ✂ Try to reduce your exposure to radiation
- ✂ If you have been told to take hormone replacement therapy or oral birth control pills, ask your doctor about the risks
- ✂ Breastfeed your babies if possible



## CAN'T AFFORD A MAMMOGRAM?

If you have a low income or do not have insurance and are between the ages of 40 and 64, you may qualify for a free or low-cost mammogram through the Centers for Disease Control's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. To learn more, call (800) 232-4636.

Centers for Disease Control. (n.d.). *Breast cancer: What you need to know*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/pdf/BreastCancerFactSheet.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control. (2016, April 14). *What can I do to reduce my risk of breast cancer?* Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic\\_info/prevention.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/prevention.htm)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2016). *October: National Health Observances*. Retrieved from <http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/PDFs/OctoberNHOToolkit.pdf>