

Breast Cancer Awareness

Unpreventable Risk Factors

- **Getting Older:** The risk for breast cancer increases with age; most breast cancers are diagnosed after age 50.
- **Genetic Mutations:** Inherited changes (mutations) to certain genes, such as BRCA1 and BRCA2. Women who have inherited these genetic changes are at higher risk of breast and ovarian cancer.
- **Reproductive History:** Early menstrual periods before age 12 and starting menopause after age 55 expose women to hormones longer, raising their risk of getting breast cancer.
- **Having Dense Breast:** Dense breast have more connective tissue than fatty tissue, which can sometimes make it hard to see tumors on a mammogram. Women with dense breast are more likely to get breast cancer.
- **Personal History of Breast Cancer or Certain Non-Cancerous Breast Diseases:** Women who have had breast cancer are more likely to get breast cancer a second time. Some non-cancerous breast diseases such as atypical hyperplasia or lobular carcinoma *in situ* are associated with a higher risk of getting breast cancer.
- **Family History of Breast or Ovarian Cancer:** A woman's risk for breast cancer is higher if she has a mother, sister, or daughter (first-degree relative) or multiple family members on either her mother's or father's side of the family who have had breast or ovarian cancer. Having a first-degree male relative with breast cancer also raises a woman's risk.
- **Previous Treatment Using Radiation Therapy:** Women who had radiation therapy to the chest or breasts (like for treatment of Hodgkin's lymphoma) before age 30 have a higher risk of getting breast cancer later in life.
- **Women Who Previously Took the Drug Diethylstilbestrol (DES):** This drug was given to some pregnant women in the United States between 1938 and 1971 to prevent miscarriage, the women have a higher risk, as well as, women who's mothers took DES while pregnant are at risk.