



Breast cancer: Know the risks

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in women. Every woman is at some risk of developing breast cancer but there are many risk factors that can make one woman's situation differ substantially from another's. When you understand your own particular risk profile, you are in a better position to manage it.

You have a higher chance of developing breast cancer if you have:

- A mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer.
- Multiple generations of family members affected by breast or ovarian cancer.
- Relatives who were diagnosed with breast cancer at a young age (under 50 years old).
- Relatives who had both breasts affected by cancer.
- Increased oestrogen exposure, as evidenced by a first menstrual period before age 13, late menopause (after age 55), or the use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
- Never having been pregnant or your first pregnancy is after the age of 30.

Other risk factors include:

- Being overweight, especially after menopause.
- Drinking alcohol (cancer risk doubles with three or more drinks a day).
- Smoking cigarettes.
- Having a sedentary lifestyle with little regular exercise and an unhealthy diet.

