

## Who gets breast cancer?

Everyone is at risk for breast cancer. The two most common risk factors for breast cancer are:

- Being female
- Getting older

No matter your age, you should get to know how your breasts normally look and feel. If you notice any changes, see a doctor.

## Lesbian, gay and bisexual women — is there an increased risk?

Lesbian, gay and bisexual women have a greater risk of breast cancer than other women. This is not because of their sexual orientation. Rather, it is linked to breast cancer risk factors that tend to be more common in these women. For example, these women may be more likely to never have children or have them later in life. Lesbians also tend to have higher rates of obesity and alcohol use. All of these factors increase breast cancer risk.

## Screening rates

Some findings show similar rates of screening mammography among lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual women. Yet other findings have shown lesbian and bisexual women may not get regular breast cancer screenings. This may be due to:

- Past experience of discrimination or insensitivity from doctors
- Perceived low risk of breast cancer
- Not having a regular doctor
- Lack of health insurance



*Seeing a health care provider on a regular basis for a clinical breast exam and mammogram is important for the early detection of breast cancer.*

Some people may also avoid or delay seeing a provider. They may be afraid of being treated poorly due to their lifestyle. Once you find a provider you like, see him/her on a regular basis. These visits offer the chance to get routine health screenings and other medical care. Screening tests can find breast cancer early, when the chances of survival are highest.

## Transgender people

At this time, data on the risk of breast cancer among transgender people is limited. If you are transgender, talk with a doctor about your breast cancer risk and which screening tests may be right for you. It is important to find a doctor who is sensitive to your needs and to see that doctor on a regular basis. The resources on the back of this fact sheet may help.

## So what can I do? Take charge of your health!

- Choose a doctor who makes you feel at ease.
- Learn about your family health history and talk with a doctor about your risk.
- Talk with a doctor about which screening tests are right for you if you are at a higher risk.
- Sign up for your screening reminder at [komen.org/reminder](http://komen.org/reminder)
- Know how your breasts normally look and feel and report any changes to a doctor.
- Make healthy lifestyle choices — maintain a healthy weight, get regular exercise, limit alcohol intake and menopausal hormone use (postmenopausal hormones) and breastfeed, if you can.
- Contact an organization about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender health concerns. See resources below.

### Resources

Susan G. Komen®  
1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636)  
[www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association  
202-600-8037  
[www.glma.org](http://www.glma.org)

The Mautner Project of Whitman-Walker Health  
202-745-7000  
[www.whitman-walker.org/mautnerproject](http://www.whitman-walker.org/mautnerproject)

National LGBT Cancer Network  
212-675-2633  
[www.cancer-network.org](http://www.cancer-network.org)

The National LGBT Cancer Project  
[www.lgbtcancer.org](http://www.lgbtcancer.org)



Scan here to view more information at [komen.org](http://komen.org).

Related fact sheets in this series:

- Breast Cancer Risk Factors
- Healthy Living
- Talking With Your Doctor

The above list of resources is only a suggested resource and is not a complete listing of breast cancer materials or information. The information contained herein is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or to replace the services of a medical professional. Komen does not endorse, recommend or make any warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, quality or non-infringement of any of the materials, products or information provided by the organizations referenced herein.