

Talk to Your Provider: Detecting Breast Cancer

- It's important to have a healthcare provider who you trust and meet with regularly
- Talk to your healthcare provider about
 - + Your personal risk factors for breast cancer
 - + When a clinical breast exam is needed
 - + When to start getting mammograms and how often to get them



Talk to Your Provider: Mammograms

- Should be performed at least every 2 years starting at age 40 for people at average risk
- Can detect breast cancer before it can be felt
- Compress the breast between two plates for a few seconds
- Take a picture of the breast using a safe, low-dose X-ray — mammograms DO NOT cause cancer

For more Information Contact:



Massachusetts Department
of Public Health

Breast Health and Breast Cancer Screening



Breast Cancer

- Breast cancer is a disease where abnormal cells in the breast tissue grow out of control and form tumors
- **If you have a lump or changes in your breast, it does NOT mean you have breast cancer**
- There are many breast conditions that can cause lumps and changes

You should always see your health care provider if you notice a lump or any changes to your breasts or chest

Breast Cancer Facts

You may hear some information on breast cancer that is not accurate. Talk to your healthcare provider about any questions you have.

- Most people that get breast cancer have no known family history
- Things that don't cause cancer include:
 - + X-rays
 - + Bumping or hitting the breasts
 - + Eating soy products
 - + Wearing an underwire bra
 - + Wearing deodorant with aluminum

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

- Getting older
- Personal history of breast cancer
- Family history and genetics
 - + First degree relative with breast or ovarian cancer (e.g. a parent, sibling, or child)
- Personal history of radiation treatment to the chest (e.g., if you received radiation treatment to the chest area for childhood cancer)
- Racism and other forms of oppression impact all of the risk factors for breast cancer, including the ability to access health care. Talk to your healthcare provider about your risk.
- Hormone therapy may increase breast cancer risk.
- Note: There is still a risk for breast cancer after chest reconstruction surgery as the surgery does not remove all chest tissue.

Early Detection

- The earlier breast cancer is found and diagnosed, the better the chance of beating it
- Talk to your healthcare provider about when to start regular screening

