



# Taking Action Against Breast Cancer

**SUSAN G.  
KOMEN.**   
EAST TENNESSEE

# Take Personal Action

1 in 8 women in the U.S. will get breast cancer during her lifetime. Here is how you can take steps to reduce your risk for developing breast cancer or to catch it early if it does develop:

- 1. Know what's normal for you:** tell your doctor right away if you notice any changes in the look or feel of your breasts.
- 2. Get screened:** clinical breast exams starting in your 20s and mammograms every 1-2 years starting at age 40.
- 3. Learn your family health history:** talk to both sides of your family about any history of breast cancer.
- 4. Talk to your doctor:** share your family history, discuss your personal risk for developing breast cancer, and determine the best screening choices for you.
- 5. Choose health:** maintain a healthy weight, exercise, limit alcohol, and limit post-menopausal hormone use.

**“While I wouldn’t have volunteered for a Breast cancer diagnosis, I thank God for the opportunity to see Him at work. He allows things in our lives for His sovereign reasons. Perhaps my experience occurred so that I could be credible when I implore women to get your annual screening mammograms.”**



**Georgita**  
**Thankful Baptist Church**

# Make a Difference in Your Community

## **Advocate**

Contact your representatives about crucial issues, like ensuring equitable access to costly oral chemo treatments. E-mail [info@KomenEastTN.org](mailto:info@KomenEastTN.org) for talking points handouts and more.

## **Share**

Use social media to share breast health information from [KnowYourGirls.org](http://KnowYourGirls.org) or to encourage your friends to take action.

## **Educate**

Host an educational event for your workplace, organization or church. E-mail [info@KomenEastTN.org](mailto:info@KomenEastTN.org) to request a speaker.

## **Volunteer**

Get involved with Komen East TN or another organization and lend your talents! E-mail [info@KomenEastTN.org](mailto:info@KomenEastTN.org) to sign up.

## **Donate**

For \$25, you could help a patient pay for gas to get to daily radiation treatments for one week. Visit [KomenEastTN.org](http://KomenEastTN.org).

## **2018 Knoxville Race for the Cure®**

Start a team and register for the 2018 Knoxville Race for the Cure® on Saturday, October 27 at World's Fair Park. Visit [KomenEastTN.org](http://KomenEastTN.org) to register or fundraise.

## **2019 Tri-Cities Race for the Cure®**

Online registration is now open for the April 13, 2019 Tri-Cities Race for the Cure®. The 2018 Tri-Cities Race was attended by more than 1,000 people - help us keep the momentum alive all year long!

# 10 Little-Known Breast Cancer Facts

1

**It's all about early detection and treatment.** More people are surviving breast cancer because they're finding the cancer sooner, when treatment is most effective.

2

**Black women are more likely to get breast cancer at a younger age.** Still, fewer than 5% of all new breast cancer cases in the U.S. occur in women under age 40.

3

**Breast cancer is the most common cancer among black women.** Black women are 42% more likely to die than white women - a statistic we're fighting to change.

4

**Black women are more likely to have triple negative breast cancers.** Triple negative tumors have certain traits that make them more aggressive and harder to treat.

5

**Breast cancer survival has come a long way.** In fact, deaths from breast cancer have gone down 39% since 1989 due to a effective treatment and early detection.

**6**

**A family history of breast cancer may mean your risk is higher.** That's why it's so important to talk to both sides of your family about their health history.

**7**

**Most women who get breast cancer don't have a family history.** We all need to take charge of our breast health, whatever our family history.

**8**

**Men can get breast cancer too.** All men should talk to their doctor if they ever notice a change to their chests or nipples.

**9**

**A person can do everything "right" and still get breast cancer.** Taking care of your health is always a good idea, but there's no guarantee against breast cancer.

**10**

**There are things we can do to take charge of our breast health.** Getting exercise and minimizing alcohol are a great start. Breastfeeding can also reduce your risk.

# Know Your Normal

**Knowing your normal, paying attention to changes, and getting checked out if you notice something is a crucial part of breast health.**

The signs of breast cancer are not the same for all women. That's why it's important for each of us to be aware of how our breasts normally look and feel. *By noticing if something seems off, we can take charge of our breast health.*

Breast tissue naturally has a bumpy texture, and some women have more lumpiness in their breasts than others. In most cases, lumpy breast tissue is normal. The key is to notice lumps that feel harder or different than the rest of the tissue in either breast.

While a lump or other change to your breast may be no big deal, seeing a doctor is the only way to be sure. If the change *does* turn out to be a big deal, it's best to find out as soon as you can.

## Never Ignore a Change in Your Breast

When it comes to signs of breast cancer, it's all about noticing changes (and getting them checked out by a doctor).

The 3 most common signs of breast cancer are:

1. A change in the look or feel of the breast
2. A change in the look or feel of the nipple
3. Nipple discharge that starts suddenly

# Mammogram FAQs

## **What is a mammogram?**

During a mammogram, each breast is pressed between two plates and an X-ray image is made. Mammograms can find cancers early, when lumps may be too small to feel.

## **When should I start getting mammograms?**

Most women should start receiving mammograms at age 40, but your doctor may recommend starting earlier.

## **How much does a mammogram cost?**

Most health insurance pays the full cost for women 40+ to get yearly mammograms. If you do not have health insurance, Komen East TN funding will cover your cost - call to learn more.

## **Are mammograms painful?**

Sometimes, the pressure can be uncomfortable, but it only lasts for a few seconds. Taking Tylenol or Advil about an hour before the exam may help. Some women get their mammograms the week after a menstrual cycle, when breasts may be less tender.

## **How do I prepare for a mammogram?**

You'll undress from the waist up, so wear a shirt you can remove easily. Also, don't use deodorants, powders, antiperspirants or lotions on your breasts or underarms on the day of the exam.



**“Trust me with praise and worship and everything will be alright... March 18, 2019 will mark 11 years since my breast cancer diagnosis. Faith and trust in the Lord are very important.”**

**Mary**  
**Greater Love**  
**International Church**

# Family History Matters

If anyone in your family has had breast cancer, your family could be at higher risk. We don't know exactly why, but it could have to do with genetics, similar lifestyles or other family traits. We do know that certain gene mutations that pass from generation to generation can have a big impact on our breast cancer risk.

## **Tips for talking to family about their health history:**

### **1. Start Close**

First talk with a relative you're close with and trust to help you gather background information and figure out the best way to approach other members of the family.

### **2. Prepare Beforehand**

Get informed about the main points you want to discuss. You may want to have a short explanation in mind for why you think making a family health history is important.

### **3. Bring Men to the Table**

Including as many members as possible from both your mother's and your father's families will help you collect more information. Plus, everyone you include can get informed about their own risk too.

*Remember to share your family health history with your doctor.*

**“I am not superwoman.  
But my faith in God  
gave me the strength to  
survive cancer,  
so... close enough!”**

*Lola*

*First AME Zion Church*



# Talking to Your Doctor

**Before you talk with your doctor, you should know that there are 2 main types of breast cancer screening:**

**Clinical Breast Exam (CBE):** a physical exam performed by a doctor. Women should start receiving CBEs in their 20s.

**Mammogram:** an x-ray image of the breast. Most women should have one done every 1-2 years starting at age 40.

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## **Questions to ask at your next doctor's appointment:**

- What breast cancer screening tests do you recommend?
- What are the risks and benefits of breast cancer screening?
- Am I at higher risk of breast cancer? If so, do I need special screening tests or do I need to be screened more often?
- What should I do to prepare for my mammogram?
- How often should I get a clinical breast exam/mammogram?
- If a problem is found, what will we do next?

## **Questions to ask when you get your mammogram:**

- How long will the mammogram take?
  - When and how will I get my results?
- 

## **Feeling rushed?**

Tell your doctor you have questions at the start of your visit.

If you feel like your doctor doesn't have time for your questions, it may be time to find a new doctor. Everyone deserves a doctor who listens and takes them seriously.

# Reduce Your Risk

There are so many reasons to make your health a priority. You'll feel better. You'll be better able to take care of all the things—and people—that need your attention. And you'll decrease your risk of different types of cancer and other health conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

When it comes to breast cancer, there are some lifestyle factors research has shown to decrease risk. Here are 6 things everyone can do for their breast health.



**Maintain a  
Healthy Weight**



**Regularly  
Exercise  
(2.5 hours/week)**



**Eat 2.5+ Cups of  
Fruits and  
Veggies Per Day**



**Limit Post-  
Menopausal  
Hormone  
Replacement  
Therapy**



**Breastfeed  
(if you are able/  
have children)**



**Limit Alcohol  
(aim for less than  
1 glass/day)**

# Support for Survivors

Sometimes the fear of being diagnosed with breast cancer stops women from getting regular mammograms or follow up tests. They fear that they won't be able to care for their family, might lose their income or couldn't afford treatment. While fighting cancer is no easy burden to bear, there is an entire community of support and resources to help lighten the load.

## Financial Assistance

Komen East Tennessee provides financial assistance, such as paying one month's rent/mortgage or providing gas cards, to breast cancer patients currently in treatment.

## Health Insurance

Uninsured breast and cervical cancer patients who earn 250% or less of the federal poverty limit (e.g. \$2,530/month for a single-person household, \$5,230/month for family of 4) can receive TennCare (Medicaid) to pay for treatment. TennCare enrollment for treatment of breast and cervical cancer is completed at the local health department.

## Social Security Disability Payments for Stage IV Patients

Metastatic (Stage IV) breast cancer is a qualifying condition for Social Security Disability. Learn more or apply online at [SSA.gov](http://SSA.gov).



**“Family is everything...  
Because cancer visited our  
home, I take care of ME -  
because they need me to  
survive. Take care of YOU:  
get a mammogram!”**

*Kyla  
Word of Life Ministries*

# About Susan G. Komen® East Tennessee

**We have funded over \$10.3 million in local community grants since 1997.** Komen East TN has also funded almost \$3.6 million in cutting edge, groundbreaking research. Nationally, Susan G. Komen® has funded \$956 million in research and clinical trials.

## Join Our Efforts to Eliminate Local Health Disparities

Through targeted use of grant funding, we aim to eliminate disparities in access to timely, quality care causing more deaths among certain groups, including Black/African American women and people in rural areas. We fund mammograms, diagnostic tests, and financial assistance for patients in treatment.

For instance, our funding covers free mammograms for the uninsured on UT Medical Center Cancer Institute's mobile mammography bus, which regularly travels to both rural areas and churches in Black/African American communities.

Then, outreach like Worship in Pink/Pink Sunday helps ensure that these communities are aware of the resources from Komen and other organizations. These are just a few of the ways we're tackling these issues.

We invite you to join us in identifying and implementing strategies to eliminate local breast cancer disparities.

# KomenEastTN.org

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