



## IT'S TIME TO BE AWARE

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, when attention focuses on increased awareness of the disease, the second most common cancer diagnosed in women in the United States (after skin cancer). While breast cancer does occur in both men and women, it's far more common in women.

Public support for breast cancer awareness and research funding has improved the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Early detection, new treatments, and a better understanding of the disease have all contributed to higher breast cancer survival rates.

As in all forms of cancer, the abnormal tissue that makes up breast cancer is the patient's own cells that have multiplied uncontrollably. Those cells may also travel to locations in the body where they are not normally found. When that happens, the cancer is called metastatic.

Breast cancer usually begins with the formation of a small, confined tumor (lump), or as calcium deposits (microcalcifications), and then spreads through channels within the breast to the lymph nodes or through the blood stream to other organs. The tumor can grow and expand to tissue around the breast, such as the skin or chest wall. Different types of breast cancer grow and spread at different rates, with some types taking years to spread beyond the breast and others growing and spreading quickly.

Fortunately, breast cancer is very treatable if detected early. Localized tumors can usually be treated successfully before the cancer spreads; and in about 90 percent of cases, patients live at least another five years. However, late recurrences of breast cancer are common.

Once the cancer begins to spread, treatments become more difficult, but they can often control the disease for many years. Improved screening procedures and treatment options mean that at least seven out of 10 women with breast cancer will survive more than five years after initial diagnosis, while half will survive more than 10 years.

## HOW IS BREAST CANCER TREATED?

There are several treatments for breast cancer, depending on the type of breast cancer and how far it has spread. Most patients with breast cancer undergo multiple kinds of treatment, such as:

- surgery
- chemotherapy
- hormonal therapy
- radiological therapy
- radiation therapy

Early detection, however, has become our most powerful weapon against breast cancer. Mammograms, clinical breast exams, and breast self-examination have all been enormously effective in the early detection and treatment of breast cancer. Talk to your physician about the best methods for you.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Best Doctors is a confidential benefit offered by your employer at no cost to you**

**37% of Best Doctors' cases see a change in diagnosis, and 75% see a change in treatment**

**If you have been diagnosed with breast cancer or are facing a medical decision, Best Doctors is here to help.**

**Call 1-866-904-0910 or visit [www.bestdoctors.com/members](http://www.bestdoctors.com/members).**