



Breast Cancer Facts Sheet



What is breast cancer? Breast cancer starts in abnormal cells in the breast. These cells are very different from normal, healthy cells. They begin to grow out of control and produce more cells that grow into tumors, or growths.

Signs and symptoms: Breast cancer typically produces no symptoms when the tumor is small and most treatable. Therefore, it is important for women to follow recommended screening guidelines to detect breast cancer at an early stage. Larger tumors may become evident as a breast mass, which is often painless. Less common symptoms include persistent changes to the breast, such as thickening, swelling, distortion, tenderness, skin irritation, redness, or nipple abnormalities, such as ulceration, or spontaneous discharge. Breast pain is more likely to be caused by benign conditions and is not a common early symptom of breast cancer.

How prevalent is it? Aside from skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the U.S. Women have a 12.3%, or a 1 in 8, lifetime risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer. In 2013, an estimated 232,340 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among women. (This includes new cases of primary breast cancer among survivors, but not recurrence of original breast cancer among survivors.)

Risk factors: Many of the known risk factors such as age, sex, family history, early menarche and late menopause, are not modifiable, that is they cannot be changed. However, other factors associated with increased breast cancer risk, including postmenopausal obesity, use of combined estrogen and progestin menopausal hormones, cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption **are** modifiable.

Steady declines in breast cancer mortality among women since 1989 have been attributed to a combination of early detection and improvements in treatment. Know what is normal to for you! *Changes that should be reported include:*

- ◆ Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area
 - ◆ Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast
 - ◆ Change in size or shape of the breast
 - ◆ Dimpling or puckering of the skin
 - ◆ Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
 - ◆ Pulling-in of your nipple or other parts of the breast
 - ◆ Nipple discharge that starts suddenly
 - ◆ New pain in one spot that does not go away

National Indian Women's Health Resource Center

228 South Muskogee Ave., Tahlequah, OK 74464 Phone-918-456-6094 Fax-918-456-8128

Vision: American Indian and Alaska Native women and families living a healthy, balanced life.



Mission: To empower American Indian and Alaska Native women and families to build happy, healthy communities.