

# Breast Health



Breast health starts with breast awareness. All women need to know the normal look and feel of their breasts. Knowing this makes it easier for women to identify possible changes that can affect the health of their breasts. Take time to learn how your breasts look and feel before, during and after your menstrual cycle so you can identify a possible abnormality early.

## Lifestyle Choices for Healthy Breasts

There are steps you can take to keep your breasts healthy and possibly avoid breast cancer. Mayo Clinic recommends the following lifestyle choices:

**Maintain a healthy weight** – Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for breast cancer, especially if it occurs after menopause.

**Don't smoke** – Evidence shows a link between smoking and breast cancer, especially in woman who have not yet gone through menopause.

**Add daily exercise** – Physical activity helps you control your weight, which can reduce your risk for breast cancer.

**Limit alcohol intake** – Drinking alcohol increases your risk for breast cancer. If you choose to drink, limit yourself to one drink a day.

**Limit hormone therapy** – Taking hormone therapy for more than three to five years can increase your risk for breast cancer. If you are using hormone therapy to control symptoms

caused by menopause, talk with your doctor about non-hormonal options.

**Breastfeed** – Breastfeeding may help prevent breast cancer. The longer you breastfeed, the greater the protection.

## What to Watch For

The American Cancer Society recommends you see your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- new lump or mass
- breast or nipple pain
- swelling of all or part of a breast
- nipple discharge, not including breast milk
- skin irritation or dimpling
- nipple turned inward
- redness, scaling or thickening

Regular mammograms can find cancer at an early stage when treatment is most likely to be successful. Talk with your doctor about when you should begin having screening mammograms.\*

*\*For benefit coverage, visit TRICARE's Covered Services page at [www.tricare.mil/coveredservices](http://www.tricare.mil/coveredservices). Ask your doctor for age recommendations and risk guidelines.*



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