

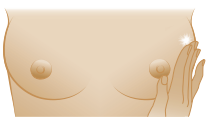
## Know what is normal for you

The signs of breast cancer are not the same for all women. It's important to know how your breasts normally look and feel.

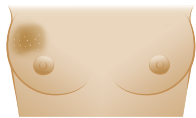
Breast tissue often has bumpy texture. Lumps that feel harder or different than the rest of the breast tissue (or the tissue of the other breast) or that feel like a change should be checked. If you feel or see any change in your breasts or underarm, see a doctor.

### Don't ignore the warning signs:

- Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area



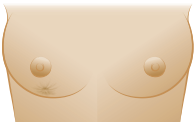
- Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast



- Change in the 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



## Resources

### SUSAN G. KOMEN®

1-877 GO KOMEN  
(1-877-465-6636)  
[komen.org](http://komen.org)

### AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

800-227-2345  
[cancer.org](http://cancer.org)

### NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)  
[cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov)

### Related educational resources:

- [Breast Self-Awareness Messages](#)
- [Benign Breast Conditions](#)
- [Breast Density](#)
- [Risk-Lowering Options for Women at Higher Risk of Breast Cancer](#)
- [If You Find a Breast Lump or Change](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Doctor: If You Find a Lump or Change in Your Breast](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Doctor: Mammography](#)

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# Breast Cancer Screening and Follow-Up Tests

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FACTS FOR LIFE

## Breast cancer screening tests

Screening tests are used to find a disease (such as breast cancer) in a person without signs or symptoms.

Regular screening tests (along with follow-up tests and treatment, if diagnosed) reduce the chance of dying from breast cancer.

- **Mammography** uses X-rays to create images of the breast. These images are called mammograms. Mammography can find breast cancers early, sometimes before a lump can be felt. It's the best screening test used today to find breast cancer in most women.
- A **clinical breast exam** is done by a doctor or nurse to check the breasts and underarm areas for any lumps or changes. It's often part of a yearly check-up.
- A **breast MRI** uses magnetic fields to create an image of the breast. Breast MRI is part of screening for some women at higher risk (such as those with a *BRCA1/2* gene mutation). It's not recommended for screening women at average risk.

Other tools are under study. More research is needed to find out if they play a role in breast cancer screening for all women or certain groups at higher risk.

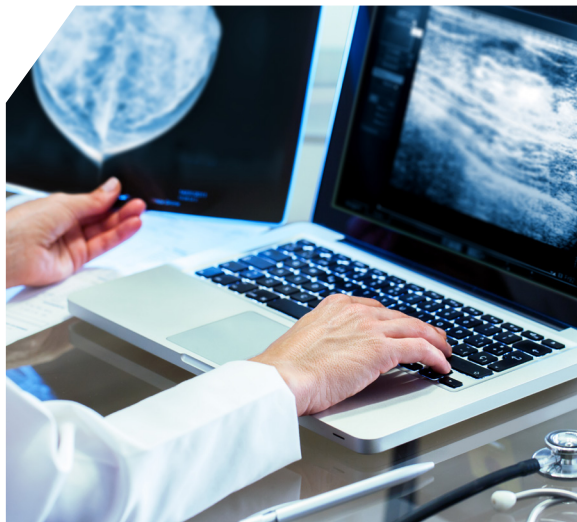
Talk with your doctor about your risk of breast cancer and the screening plan that's best for you.

## Follow-up tests

Follow-up tests may be needed if a screening test finds something abnormal or if you find a lump or other change.

- A **diagnostic mammogram** is like a screening mammogram, but more images are taken. Although it's called a "diagnostic" mammogram, it doesn't diagnose breast cancer. It's used to look at an abnormal finding on a screening mammogram. A **biopsy** is needed to diagnose or confirm breast cancer.
- A **breast ultrasound** uses sound waves to make images of the breast. It can show the difference between a liquid-filled cyst and a solid mass (which may or may not be cancer).
- In some cases, a breast MRI may be recommended.

If a follow-up test suggests breast cancer, a biopsy is done. A biopsy removes cells or tissue to check for cancer.



## Questions to ask your doctor

1. Am I at higher risk of breast cancer?
2. When should I get a mammogram?  
Do you recommend other tests for me?
3. What are the pros and cons of mammography screening?
4. How often should I get a mammogram?
5. Where can I get a mammogram?
6. What if I can't afford a mammogram?

If you are asked to come back for a follow-up test:

1. What kind of test will I have?
2. Why do I need this test?
3. How accurate is the test?
4. When and how will I get the results?
5. If a problem is found, what are the next steps?