

# HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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## National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Breast cancer symptoms vary widely — from lumps to swelling to skin changes — and many breast cancers have no obvious symptoms at all.

In some cases, a lump may be too small for you to feel or to cause any unusual changes you can notice on your own. Often, an abnormal area turns up on a screening mammogram (X-ray of the breast), which leads to further testing.

In other cases, however, the first sign of breast cancer is a new lump or mass in the breast that you or your doctor can feel. A lump that is painless, hard, and has uneven edges is more likely to be cancer. But sometimes cancers can be tender, soft, and rounded.

### It's important to have anything unusual checked by your doctor.

According to the American Cancer Society, any of the following unusual changes in the breast can be a symptom of breast cancer:

- swelling of all or part of the breast
- skin irritation or dimpling
- breast pain
- nipple pain or the nipple turning inward
- redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- a nipple discharge other than breast milk
- a lump in the underarm area



These changes also can be signs of less serious conditions that are not cancerous, such as an infection or a cyst. It's important to get any breast changes checked out promptly by a doctor.

**Breast self-exam** should be part of your monthly health care routine, and you should visit your doctor if you experience breast changes. If you're over 40 or at a high risk of breast cancer, you should also have an **annual mammogram and physical exam** by a doctor. The earlier breast cancer is found and diagnosed, the better your chances of beating it.



Lifestyle changes have been shown in studies to decrease breast cancer risk even in high-risk women. The following are steps you can take to lower your risk:

**Limit Alcohol** – No more than one drink per day, as even small amounts have been shown to increase the risk.

**Don't Smoke** – Increases the risk, particularly in younger premenopausal women.

**Control your weight** – Being overweight or obese increases your risk of developing breast cancer.

**Exercise** – Regular moderate or intense exercise for 4 or more hours a week lowers your risk.

**Limit Hormone Replacement Therapy** – Limit dose and duration.

**Get Enough Vitamin D** – Have your vitamin D level checked and get enough from either sunlight or supplements.



Show Your Care...Stay Aware!



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## National Bullying Prevention Month

Bullying is a form of youth violence. The Center for Disease Control defines bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners, that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.

As a form of childhood adversity, bullying can include aggression that is physical (hitting, tripping), verbal (name calling, teasing), or relational/social (spreading rumors, leaving out of group). Bullying can also occur through the use of technology, which is called electronic bullying or cyberbullying. A young person can be a perpetrator, a victim, or both (also known as “bully/victim”).

Bullying can result in physical injury, social and emotional distress, self-harm, and even death. It also increases the risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, and dropping out of school. Youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems, and experiencing violence later in adolescence and adulthood. Youth who bully others and are bullied themselves suffer the most serious consequences and are at greater risk for mental health and behavioral problems.

There are resources available to help prevent, recognize, and stop bullying.

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/parents/helping-your-child.asp>

<https://www.stompoutbullying.org/parents-page/>



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