

# LifeTimes™

Your guide to health, wellness and fitness

## Breast Cancer Signs, Risks and Prevention

### What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a disease in which cells in the breast grow out of control. Breast cancer remains the second leading cause of cancer death in women overall and the leading cause of cancer death among Hispanic women.



*continued on page 2*

H0927\_BENQ2NEWSLTR24 ACCEPTED 04112024

233833.0324

Blue Cross Community MMAI (Medicare-Medicaid Plan) is provided by Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company (HLRC), an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. HLRC is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and Illinois Medicaid to provide benefits of both programs to enrollees. Enrollment in HLRC's plan depends on contract renewal.

Member Services: 1-877-723-7702 (TTY: 711)

24/7 Nurseline: 1-877-213-2568 (TTY: 711)

c/o Member Services  
P.O. Box 3836  
Scranton, PA 18505

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
SCRANTON, PA  
Permit No. 290

# Breast Cancer Signs, Risks and Prevention

*continued from page 1*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 240,000 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in women and about 2,100 in men. About 42,000 women and 500 men in the U.S. die each year from breast cancer. Additionally, Black women have a higher rate of death from breast cancer than all other women.

## **What are the risk factors?**

There are many factors that contribute to your risk of getting breast cancer, such as:

- Being a woman
- Increased age
- Family history/genetics
- Hormone therapy (birth control pills)
- Starting menstrual periods before age 12
- Starting menopause after age 55
- Drinking alcohol
- Obesity and lack of physical activity

## **How do I reduce my risk?**

Ways to reduce your risk for breast cancer include:

- Keeping a healthy weight
- Being physically active
- Choosing not to drink alcohol or limit the amount of alcohol you drink
- Discussing the risks of hormone replacement therapy and oral contraceptives (birth control pills) with your doctor
- Breastfeeding your children, if possible

**If you have a family history of breast cancer, talk with your doctor about other ways to lower your risk.**

## **What are the symptoms of breast cancer?**

Some warning signs of breast cancer are:

- New Lump in breast or underarm (armpit)
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple or breast area
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood
- Any change in the size or shape of the breast
- Pain in any area of the breast

**If you have any signs or symptoms that worry you, be sure to see your doctor right away.**

## **When should I get a mammogram?**

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women who are 50 to 74 years old and are at average risk for breast cancer get a mammogram every two years. Women who are 40 to 49 years old should talk to their doctor about when to start and how often to get a mammogram. Women should weigh the benefits and risks of screening tests when deciding whether to begin getting mammograms before age 50.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

# Cervical Cancer Signs, Risks and Prevention

## What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer often occurs in people over the age of 30, with human papillomavirus (HPV) being the main cause of cervical cancer. HPV is a common virus that is passed from one person to another during sex. According to the CDC, at least half of sexually active people will have HPV at some point in their lives, but few will get cervical cancer. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and can lead to better health outcomes.

## What are the risks factors?

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV, but there are many different types of HPV. Some can change your cervix while other can cause genital or skin warts. It is important to know that HPV usually causes no symptoms so you can't tell that you have it unless you have completed testing. Other factors include smoking tobacco and having HIV or another condition that makes it hard for your body to fight off health problems.

## How do I reduce my risk?

- Get vaccinated against HPV
- Complete regular screening tests such as Pap and/or HPV tests as well as reviewing screening test results that are not normal with your doctor
- Use condoms during sex
- Limit your number of sexual partners



## What are the symptoms of cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer may not cause any signs or symptoms, but advanced cervical cancer may lead to bleeding and discharge that is not normal for you, like bleeding after sex.

**If you have any signs or symptoms that worry you, be sure to see your doctor right away.**

## The CDC recommends cervical screenings for women by age:

- 21-29 years old: Pap test screening
- 30-65 years old: Pap test and HPV test. These two tests can be screened together.
- Older than 65 years old: If previous tests were negative and you have had three Pap tests or two HPV tests (with or without the Pap test), cervical screening is typically not needed, but in some situations your doctor may recommend to continue Pap testing.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## How to Schedule a Ride

If you need a ride to the doctor, call Member Services at **1-877-723-7702** (TTY: **711**) at least 72 hours before your appointment.

The hours that you can receive a ride are Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Qualified members can also book and manage trips through the Modivcare App. You can access the Modivcare App on Google Play® or the Apple App Store®.

# Why Dental Health Matters

Keeping your teeth healthy is important. As we grow older, our teeth need special attention. Good dental health helps prevent problems like gum disease, inflammation and tooth loss. But guess what? It's not just about teeth—your overall health benefits, too. Research shows that gum inflammation (gingivitis) is linked to lung disease, heart disease, blood vessel blockage and strokes. Additionally, tooth loss from gum disease may raise the risk of dementia.

Here's what you need to know:

- Visit your dentist every six months for check-ups, X-rays, and cleanings.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily to remove plaque.
- Drink water that contains fluoride.
- Do not use tobacco products. If you smoke, try to quit.
- Limit consumption of alcoholic drinks.

**Remember, taking care of your teeth now means fewer problems later.**

## Your Voice Matters

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois it is important to us that you get the health care and support services you need. To make sure we are on track, we want to hear from you.

Every three months we ask Blue Cross Community MMAI<sup>SM</sup> members to give us feedback during our Member Advisory Board meetings. We want to hear what you have to say about our services, programs and even the doctors you've used. This is your chance to help us improve.

We invite you to come to our next meeting on June 20, 2024. This meeting is online only.



To learn more, visit [www.bcbsil.com/mmai](http://www.bcbsil.com/mmai) or call Member Services at **1-877-723-7702** (TTY: **711**).

**Scan this code to register**

ModivCare is an independent company that has contracted with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois to provide transportation services for members with coverage through BCBSIL.

BCBSIL makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding third-party vendors and the products and services offered by them.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

We have free interpreter services to answer any questions you may have about our health or drug plan. To get an interpreter, just call us at 1-877-723-7702 (TTY: 711). Someone who speaks English/Language can help you. This is a free service.

Spanish: Tenemos servicios de intérprete sin costo alguno para responder cualquier pregunta que pueda tener sobre nuestro plan de salud o medicamentos. Para hablar con un intérprete, por favor llame al 1-877-723-7702 (TTY:711). Alguien que hable español le podrá ayudar. Este es un servicio gratuito.

Umożliwiamy bezpłatne skorzystanie z usług tłumacza ustnego, który pomoże w uzyskaniu odpowiedzi na temat planu zdrowotnego lub dawkowania leków. Aby skorzystać z pomocy tłumacza znającego język polski, należy zadzwonić pod numer 1-877-723-7702 (TTY: 711). Ta usługa jest bezpłatna.