

# Your Guide to Breast Health

Access MSK Direct at [www.mskcc.org/nycdcc](http://www.mskcc.org/nycdcc) or call the dedicated toll-free phone line for NYCDCC Welfare Fund participants and their loved ones: **833-786-3368** (US) or **646-449-1541** (International).

Memorial Sloan Kettering is recognized as a world leader in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Our breast cancer specialists take a comprehensive approach to cancer treatment. We prioritize the quality of life of the people we care for, providing social services, emotional support, integrative medicine, and access to the latest advancements in cancer science.

The NYCDCC Welfare Fund partners with MSK to offer MSK Direct, a program that provides guided access to expert clinical care as well as practical and emotional support.



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center



New York City District Council of Carpenters  
**BENEFIT FUNDS**

## WHAT IS BREAST CANCER SCREENING?

Breast cancer screening exams are designed to identify cancer at early stages, when it is more easily and successfully treated. MSK's breast imaging experts recommend the following guidelines designed to save the most lives.

### WHEN SHOULD YOU BE SCREENED?

#### Women age 25 and older:

- Practice breast self-awareness.
- Begin yearly clinical breast exams by a doctor.

#### Women age 40 and older:

- Begin yearly mammograms.
- Ultrasound may be recommended for women with dense breast tissue.

#### Women with a family history of breast cancer:

- Begin yearly imaging exams ten years before the age of the earliest diagnosis in your immediate family, but not earlier than age 25 or later than age 40.
- Consider additional screenings exams.

If you have any questions about when you should start having mammograms, you should talk to your doctor. If you think you are at increased risk of getting breast cancer, you can make an appointment to see one of our specialists.

## MSK'S RISE PROGRAM

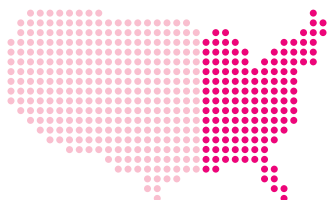
Our specialists perform risk assessment and design personal breast cancer screening plans for women and men with higher risk of breast cancer.

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR BREAST CANCER SCREENING

- Discuss your personal risk factors for developing breast cancer with your doctor.
- Be familiar with your breasts. Report any and all changes to your doctor, such as new lumps or nipple discharge, even if imaging exams are negative.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Mammography has helped reduce breast cancer mortality in the United States by **40%**.



**1 in 8** women will be diagnosed with breast cancer.

A woman is diagnosed with breast cancer every

**2 minutes.**



**3 out of 4** women who are diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history of the disease and are not considered at a high risk for developing it.



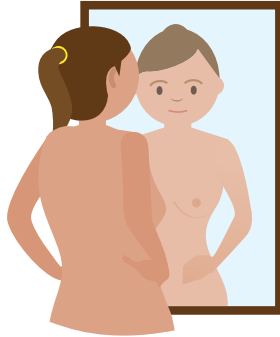
**1 in 6** breast cancers occurs in women ages **40 to 49.**

## GET TO KNOW YOUR BREASTS

You can become familiar with your breasts at any time, but if you still menstruate it is best to wait a few days so they are not swollen or tender.

### In front of a mirror

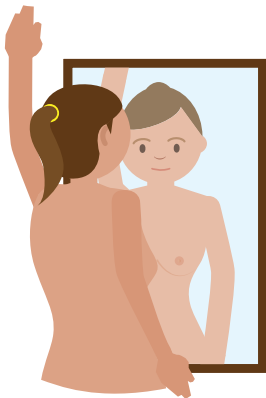
1. Stand in front of a mirror with your breasts exposed and your hands pressing firmly down on your hips.



2. Look in the mirror for any of the following changes in your breasts:



- changes in size, shape, or contour
- dimpling
- redness or scaliness of your nipples or breast skin
- any discharge from your nipples



3. Raise one of your arms slightly and examine that underarm. Feel that underarm for any changes or lumps. Do the same thing with your other underarm. Don't raise your arm straight up because this tightens the tissue in this area and makes it harder to examine.

### While lying down

1. Lie down on your back and place your right arm behind your head. When you lie down, your breast tissue spreads out as thinly as possible, making it easier to feel all the tissue.



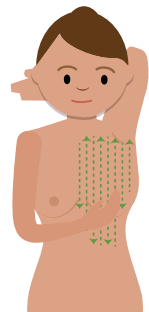
2. Use the pads of the three middle fingers on your left hand to feel for lumps in your right breast. Move your fingers in overlapping dime-size circles up and down your breast.



You will need to use three different levels of pressure. Use all three pressure levels on each spot to feel the breast tissue before moving on to the next. If you're not sure how hard to press, talk with your doctor or nurse.

- Use light pressure to feel the tissue closest to your skin.
- Use medium pressure to feel a little deeper.
- Use firm pressure to feel the tissue closest to the chest and ribs. It's normal to feel a firm ridge in the lower curve of each breast.

3. Next, feel your entire breast using an up-and-down pattern, sometimes called the vertical pattern. Start in your underarm and move your fingers downward little by little until they reach the bottom of your rib cage. Then move your fingers slightly toward the middle and move back up until you reach your collarbone. Continue this pattern, covering your entire breast all the way to the middle of your chest bone (also called the sternum or breastbone).



4. Repeat on your left breast using your right hand.

## BREAST SELF-AWARENESS

A breast self-exam (BSE) is a way to become familiar with your breasts and to check for any changes.

You can do BSEs once a month, occasionally, or not at all. If you choose not to do BSEs, you should still make sure you know how your breasts normally look and feel.



We recommend that all women ages 25 and older practice self-awareness.

## MEN CAN GET BREAST CANCER TOO

Some men have an increased risk of breast cancer because of genetic mutations like BRCA. For those men we recommend starting self-exams at age 35.

## HOW EXERCISE CAN HELP REDUCE YOUR RISK OF BREAST CANCER



### IMMUNE SYSTEM

Exercise may make your immune system stronger, which can help prevent cancer.

### HORMONE LEVELS

Exercise may lower your estrogen levels. Lower estrogen levels can help prevent breast cancer.

### BODY WEIGHT

Exercise may help you manage your weight. A healthy weight may reduce your risk of cancer and other diseases.

### INFLAMMATION

Exercise may reduce inflammation in your body. Over time, chronic inflammation can lead to cancer.



## OUR LOCATIONS

(seven locations across New York and New Jersey)

### New York

MSK Breast and Imaging Center  
MSK Commack  
MSK Nassau  
MSK Westchester

### New Jersey

MSK Basking Ridge  
MSK Bergen  
MSK Monmouth

## CONTACT

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For more information, visit us at [mskcc.org/mammogram](http://mskcc.org/mammogram).



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