



Lower your risk

Risk factors are things that raise your chances of having a disease. One risk factor for breast cancer is being older than 50. You are also at extra risk if you started your period before age 12.

While you can't change those things, there are other things you can do. To lower your risk:

- **Keep moving.** Research shows exercise helps ward off breast cancer. Try to get 45 to 60 minutes of exercise on 5 or more days a week.
- **Drop extra pounds.** Being overweight or obese raises your risk for breast cancer. This is more important after menopause. Also, breast cancer tends to be harder on heavier women.
- **Limit or stop drinking alcohol.** Even light drinking raises your risk a little. If you drink, don't have more than one drink per day.

- **Avoid hormone replacement therapy.** Women who have hormone therapy may be at an added risk of getting breast cancer. Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of this therapy.
- **Eat better.** A diet high in fat (especially animal fat) may increase breast cancer risk. Skip the fried foods and eat more fruits and veggies.

MetroPlus has Case Management services for members with complex needs, such as cancer. For more information, call MetroPlus at our Customer Services number, 1.800.303.9626.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your doctor. There may be variations in treatment that your doctor may recommend based on individual facts about you.

MetroPlus Health Plan

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Hours of operation: Monday–Saturday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Breast cancer What to know





How does breast cancer happen?

One out of every 8 women in the U.S. will have breast cancer at some time. Men sometimes get breast cancer too.

Doctors do not know why some people get breast cancer and some don't. When you are healthy, the cells that make up your body grow and divide and form new cells. Sometimes, though, our body forms new cells that aren't needed. Or it fails to get rid of old or damaged cells.

This buildup of unnecessary, old, or damaged cells is called a lump or a tumor. Tumors that do not hurt you or any part of your body are called "benign." A cancer tumor is called "malignant."

As a cancer tumor spreads, it gets bigger and/or stronger and can harm more parts of your body. This is why you need to catch breast cancer early. This gives you the best chance for stopping it.

While breast cancer can be deadly, there are good treatments. Women who get breast cancer now are more likely to survive than in the past.

Get your mammogram

The best way to spot breast cancer early on is to have a test called a mammogram. Your doctor can tell you the best place to have this test.

How it works

A mammogram is a safe, low-dose X-ray of the inside of your breast. It can pick up changes in the breast that are too small to feel. Your breast is pressed between two plates to get a good picture. This takes only a few seconds and, for most women, causes only mild discomfort.

Most women should have a mammogram every 1–2 years once they turn age 40. If you are at extra risk, you may need to start earlier. At your next appointment, ask your doctor about whether or not you should have a mammogram and how often.

Breast self-exams

Checking your breasts at home is also helpful. A self-exam helps you get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts. This way, you'll notice if something changes. Ask your doctor for details on the best way to do this home exam.

MetroPlus covers the cost of mammograms for women age 40 and older. Call 1.800.303.9626 to find out more.



What if you have cancer?

Women have many treatment choices if they have breast cancer. Sometimes the best option is to combine more than one treatment. These are the most common treatments:

Surgery removes the cancer. You may need to have just the area affected by cancer taken out. Or you and your doctor may decide it's safer to remove the whole breast. Removing the whole breast is called a mastectomy.

Radiation therapy destroys cancer cells. This therapy uses high-energy rays or particles. You may have daily treatments or stronger doses of radiation less often.

With chemotherapy, cancer-killing drugs are put into your body. This is done through a vein or taken by mouth.

Hormone therapy targets the most common kinds of breast cancer. Estrogen helps these kinds of cancers to grow. This therapy blocks the effect of estrogen or lowers the amount of estrogen in your body to prevent certain types of cancer from growing further.

Targeted biologic therapy takes aim at the changes in cancer cells. Certain drugs, for instance, go after some of the proteins that promote cancer cell growth.