

How can I reduce my risk of getting breast cancer?

- Keep a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Choose not to drink alcohol, or drink in moderation
- Speak to your GP about referral to a family risk clinic if you have a family history of breast and or ovarian cancer. You may be referred for genetic testing
- Seek advice from a genetic counsellor, specialist in genetics or your GP on how to decrease your risk of breast cancer if you have inherited a fault in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes or other less common genes that may increase your risk of breast cancer
- Check your breasts regularly and see your GP if you notice a change. Nine out of ten breast changes are not cancer but it is very important to get checked out just to be sure.

What is breast screening and when can I have it?

Breast screening helps find cancer at an early stage. If it's found early, it's easier to treat and there's a better chance of recovery. Breast screening does not find all breast cancer. However, screening has been proven to lower the number of people born female dying from breast cancer.

Women in Ireland are invited for a mammogram (breast x-ray) every two years from age 50 to 69. This is a free service offered by BreastCheck which is our National Breast Screening Programme.

Contact your GP if you're worried about any symptoms you may have. Do not wait for your invitation for screening before getting checked out.

Make sure that you are on the register by contacting BreastCheck on **Freephone 1800 45 45 55** or checking online at www.breastcheck.ie.

early detection may save lives



The Breast Awareness 5-point Code

- Know what is normal for you
- Know what to look and feel for
- Look and feel for changes at least monthly
- Report any changes to your GP without delay
- Attend routine breast screening if you are aged between 50 and 69

About the Marie Keating Foundation

Following their mother Marie's death in 1998 from breast cancer, the Keating family committed to ensuring men and women in every community in Ireland had access to the necessary information to prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest stages. Their collective aim was "making cancer less frightening by enlightening".

Through its community information service, the Foundation's dedicated nurses have enlightened thousands of people of the causes and risk factors of all cancers. The Foundation is continuing to expand its awareness campaigns on each of the common cancers, at local level through its community outreach approach as well as through national campaigns.

Today, the Marie Keating Foundation are one of the leading voices in Ireland for cancer prevention, early detection, awareness and support.

"We are committed to being there for people diagnosed with cancer, and their families at every step of this cancer journey, and our services reflect that. Through our information and support services, we reach thousands of people a year, giving education, information and advice focused on cancer prevention and early detection, as well as providing support services and financial assistance to those living with and beyond cancer.

At the time of her death and all through her illness, we could do nothing to help our Mother who had, all our lives, done everything for us. We, the Keating family have set up this charity in her name to try to help and prevent others going through what Mam went through and what we are still going through to this day. This is also to show that such a wonderful mother and person did not die in vain."

Take care,



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FOUNDATION

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Breast Cancer

How to spot the symptoms
and reduce your risk



Marie Keating
FOUNDATION

making cancer less frightening by enlightening

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Breast Cancer

the facts

- Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women in Ireland after non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC)
- The incidence of female breast cancer is rising significantly since 2014
- 1 in 7 women in Ireland will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime
- Most breast cancers occur in women over 50 but it can be diagnosed at any age
- Men can also get breast cancer but it is rare
- Survival rates are improving all the time. 5 year survival rate for breast cancer is now 88%

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is when abnormal cells in the breast begin to grow and divide in an uncontrolled way and eventually form a growth (tumour). The most common type of breast cancer starts in the cells that line the milk ducts of the breast. This is invasive breast cancer or invasive ductal carcinoma. Invasive ductal carcinoma means the cancer cells have spread outside the ducts where they started and into the surrounding breast tissue.

Breast cancer can also start in the lobules of the breast. This is called invasive lobular breast cancer and this is the second most common type of breast cancer. Invasive lobular breast cancer means that the cancer has spread outside the lobules and into the surrounding breast tissue.

There are also other rarer types of breast cancer.

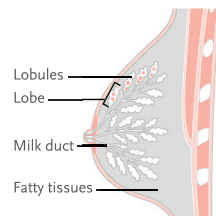
If left unchecked, breast cancer can spread to another part of the body. This is called metastatic breast cancer which is also known as stage IV or secondary breast cancer.

The breasts

Breasts are made up of:

- fat
- glandular tissue divided into lobes (each containing lots of lobules)
- a network of ducts or milk ducts
- connective tissue

The lobules produce milk for breastfeeding and connect to the ducts. The ducts spread from the lobes towards the nipple.



Taken from the patient information website of Cancer Research UK:
<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerhelp>

Risks of getting breast cancer

Anything that increases the risk of getting a disease is called a risk factor. Different cancers have different risk factors. Having one or more of these risk factors doesn't mean that you will definitely get breast cancer.

Many people who have these risk factors never get breast cancer and some people with no risk factors develop it.

Key Risk Factors

1. **Age:** The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age. It is more common in women aged 50 or older who have been through the menopause. About 8 out of 10 cases of breast cancer cases happen in women over 50. However, younger women can get breast cancer too.
2. **Dense breast:** Breast cancer risk is higher in women with the most dense breast tissue compared to less dense breast tissue. Women with dense breast tissue have less fat and more breast cells and connective tissue in their breasts. Scientists don't know for sure why this is true.
3. **Family history:** Having a mother, sister or daughter diagnosed with breast cancer increases the risk. This risk is higher when more close relatives have breast cancer, or if a relative developed breast cancer under the age of 50.
4. **Inherited genes:** Some people have an increased risk of breast cancer because they have an inherited gene fault. We know about several gene faults that can increase breast cancer risk. Having one of these faulty genes means that you are more likely to get breast cancer than someone who doesn't but it is not a certainty. Examples of inherited gene faults include faults in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.
5. **Age when periods started and stopped:** You have an increased risk of breast cancer if your periods started early (before the age of 12) or stopped late (menopause after the age of 55). This increased risk is likely due to longer exposure to the female hormone oestrogen.
6. **Being overweight and obese:** Women who are overweight after the menopause have a higher risk of breast cancer than women who are not overweight. Men also have an increased risk of breast cancer

if they are overweight or obese. For both men and women, the risk increases as more weight is gained.

7. **Alcohol:** Drinking even small amounts of alcohol is linked with an increased risk of breast cancer. Alcohol can raise oestrogen levels in the body, which may explain some of the increased risk. Less is best but none is even better when it comes to breast cancer.
8. **Contraceptive pill:** Women who take the contraceptive pill have a slightly increased risk of developing breast cancer. The risk starts to decrease once you stop taking the pill. The risk goes back to normal 10 years after stopping the pill.
9. **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** There is an increased risk of developing breast cancer if you are on hormone replacement therapy (HRT) but the risk is very low. The risk of breast cancer is higher if you are taking combined HRT as opposed to oestrogen only HRT. For many people the benefits of taking HRT far outweigh the risks. Discuss with your GP if you have any concern.
10. **Children:** Having no children or having your first child later in life (after age 30) slightly increases your risk.

Be breast aware

Being breast aware means knowing what's normal for you so you can spot any unusual changes as soon as possible. Most breast changes are not breast cancer. However, if it is breast cancer, the sooner it is diagnosed the more successful treatment is likely to be. Get to know your breast so that you will be more confident about noticing any unusual changes that might be a symptom of breast cancer:

- look and feel your breast
- know what changes to look for
- see your GP without delay if you feel or see a change that's not normal for you
- attend routine breast screening if you're aged 50 to 69
- visit www.breastcheck.ie if you need to check that your name is on the register, or **Freephone 1800 45 45 55**

Even though it is uncommon, men can also get breast cancer so they need to be breast aware too.

Early detection provides the best possible chance of surviving the disease.

How should I check my breasts?

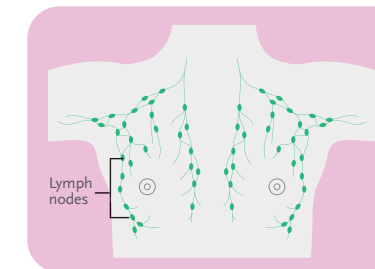
- Try to do a breast self-examination once a month
- Do this in the shower or lying on your bed
- Remember to look for changes as well as feel for changes
- If you are still menstruating, a breast self-exam should be performed a few days after the period ends when your breasts are least likely to be swollen or tender
- If you no longer have a period, choose a day that's easy to remember, such as your birthday date
- Remember to check all parts of your breast, including your armpits and the area above your breasts up to the collarbone



To watch a video on how to check your breasts, Visit www.mariekeating.ie/check-your-breasts.

What to look and feel for?

- A new lump, thickening or bumpy areas in your breast or armpit
- A change in size, shape or feel of your breast
- Skin changes in the breast such as puckering, dimpling, a rash or redness
- Changes to the nipple, such as crusting, ulceration, unusual discharge or bleeding
- Changes in the direction of the nipple
- Veins that stand out more than usual for you
- Swelling in your armpit or around your collarbone
- Pain in the breasts isn't usually a sign of breast cancer but should be checked out by your GP



How to be breast aware:

Look and feel your breasts, armpits and collar bone.

www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/breast-cancer/about