

# WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND RISK FACTORS FOR BREAST CANCER

*Risk factors are things that can put you at high risk of breast cancer and determine how often you should get tests to check for cancer. All women should know what risk factors they have, especially women with disabilities.*

*Having a risk factor for breast cancer, or even several, doesn't mean you'll get breast cancer. But, if you have one or more of the following risk factors, as many women with disabilities do, talk to your health care provider about getting screened earlier and/or more often than recommended for women without risk factors.*

*Most women who develop breast cancer have NO risk factors.*

## Here are some overall risk factors for developing breast cancer that can't be changed

- Gender: being a woman is the main risk factor.
- Age: your risk increases as you get older.
- Genes: some breast cancer cases are thought to be due to gene defects that you get from a parent.
- Family History: breast cancer risk is higher among women whose mother, sister, or daughter has had this disease.

- Personal History: a woman with cancer in one breast has an increased risk of developing a new cancer in the other breast or in another part of the same breast. This is different from a recurrence (return) of the first cancer.
- Race: African-American women are slightly less likely to develop breast cancer than White women but are more likely to die of this cancer.
- Early Menstruation (Periods): women starting menstruation early (before age 12)
- Late Menopause: women going through menopause later (after age 55)
- Previous Chest Radiation: women who received chest radiation as treatment for another cancer or for a disability are at significantly increased risk for breast cancer.
- Mutation (change) in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes



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## Here are some risk factors that are related to how you live and your lifestyle

- Having had no children or first child after 30: is related to slightly higher breast cancer risk
- Alcohol: linked to increased risk of developing breast cancer

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## Here are some risk factors that are related to how you live and your lifestyle

- Being overweight or obese: found to increase breast cancer risk, especially after menopause
- Physical inactivity
- Hormone therapy after menopause: used to help reduce menopause symptoms and prevent osteoporosis (thinning of bones). This can also increase the risk of getting breast cancer and the chances of dying from breast cancer.

## Women with disabilities need to be concerned about breast cancer because they may have these risk factors

- Early menstruation
- Previous chest radiation/or radiation
- Never having children
- Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Being a woman

REMEMBER—know your breast cancer risk factors and talk about them with your health care provider.

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For more information, please contact Komen Project Coordinator at 301-545-6140 x203 or visit our website at [www.aahd.us](http://www.aahd.us)

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