

Breast Cancer

1 in 8 Canadian women will develop breast cancer during their lifetime.¹

2x Women with one first degree relative with breast cancer have 2x greater risk.¹

1 in 34 Canadian women will die from breast cancer.¹

Risk Factors

- Previous personal history of breast cancer
- Family history of breast cancer
- BRCA gene mutations
- Dense breasts
- Alcohol
- Obesity
- Oral contraceptives and HRT

What is BRCA?

BRCA genes are normally found in the body and are believed to play a role in controlling the growth of cancer cells. These genes are passed down by one or both of your parents. When the BRCA gene has a mutation or 'change' in its structure, it no longer controls cancer growth, putting you at higher risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer. These mutations are rare, occurring in about 1 in 500 people. Women with inherited BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations have up to an 85% chance of developing breast cancer in their lifetime.²

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian women. There are many different types of breast cancer, each named depending on the part of the breast where the cancer first develops. The breast is made up of lobules, ducts and fatty connective tissue.

Lobules are the glands responsible for producing breast milk - cancer that develops in this area is called lobular carcinoma. Ducts are the small tubes that carry milk from the glands to the nipple - cancer that develops in this area is called ductal carcinoma. The fatty connective tissue, or stroma, surrounds the ducts and lobules to help keep them in place - cancer that develops in this part of the breast is called a phyllodes tumor.

Ductal carcinoma is the most common form of breast cancer accounting for over 70% of cases.¹ Both ductal and lobular tumors can be 'in situ' or invasive depending on whether the tumour has started to grow and invade surrounding tissues. There are other less common forms of breast cancer that start in other parts of the breast such as Paget's disease which can often develop in the nipple.

Symptoms

Breast changes

- A change in shape/size to one or both breasts
- A lump or thickened tissue in the breast or armpit

Skin Changes

- Nipple inversion or change in shape/position
- Skin puckering, pitting or redness

Nipple discharge

- Can vary in colour and sometimes contains blood



Diagnosis

There are many different changes that can occur in the breast, some are not cancerous but may feel or look very similar to cancer. This is why it is impossible to be certain of a diagnosis based on examination alone. Diagnosis of breast cancer is made using mammogram, ultrasound and biopsy.

A mammogram is a specialized x-ray used to visualize breast tissue.

Mammogram Screening¹

If you are 40 to 49 years old, talk to your doctor about your risk for breast cancer, and whether a mammogram is right for you.

If you are 50 to 74 years old, have a mammogram every 2 years.


If you are 75 or older, talk to your doctor about whether a mammogram is right for you.

How can Teladoc Health help?

If you have been diagnosed with breast cancer and would like a second opinion on treatment options, our [Expert Medical Opinion](#) service can locate a specialist to review your case.

Our [Mental Health Navigator](#) services can help you find mental health resources in your community to support you through your cancer journey.





This guide is not meant to provide medical advice or service and should not be construed as the professional advice of Teladoc Health. As such, Teladoc Health does not guarantee or assume responsibility for the correctness of the information or its applicability regarding any specific factual situation. Personal health problems should be brought to the attention of physicians and appropriate health care professionals.

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- 1 "Breast Cancer." Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Cancer Society, cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/breast. Accessed 5 Jan. 2024.
 - 2 Huszno, Joanna, et al. "BRCA1 mutation in breast cancer patients: Analysis of prognostic factors and survival." *Oncology Letters*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.3892/ol.2018.9770>.
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About Teladoc Health: Teladoc Health is empowering all people everywhere to live healthier lives by transforming the healthcare experience. Recognized as the world leader in whole-person virtual care, Teladoc Health leverages clinical expertise, advanced technology and actionable data insights to meet the evolving needs of consumers and healthcare professionals.

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