

Indiana Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the **second** leading cause of cancer death among women, and excluding skin cancers, the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women in both Indiana and in the United States.¹ To note, there were 26,972 new cases of breast cancer diagnosed during 2018-2022 in Indiana.¹

Sex and age are the two greatest risk factors for developing breast cancer. Women have a greater risk for developing breast cancer; their risk increasing with age. Additionally, breast cancer is rare among men; however, they are often diagnosed at later stages and have poorer prognoses.²

Signs and Symptoms of Breast Cancer

Individuals should perform regular self-exams to account for any possible changes. If a new lump or mass has developed, it is pertinent to consult a healthcare provider as this is the most common symptom of breast cancer.

Breast cancer can take on various forms and sizes as it can either be completely painless and hard or can be soft and painful.³ According to the American Cancer Society, signs and symptoms of breast cancer to look out for are as follows:

- Swelling of part or the entire breast
- Skin dimpling
- Breast/nipple pain
- Nipple retraction
- Nipple discharge
- Nipple/breast skin that is dry or red
- Swollen lymph nodes near the arm or collar bone area

It is also important to note that one's breasts may change during pregnancy, menstruation, or menopause. Additionally, certain medications can cause changes in breasts.

How is Breast Cancer Diagnosed?

The first step in a breast cancer diagnosis is noticing any of the questionable signs or symptoms. Once this occurs, it is important that a mammogram takes place. If one's mammogram generates abnormal results, healthcare providers will use additional testing to determine a breast cancer diagnosis.⁴ A

referral to a surgeon or breast specialist often occurs as these individuals specialize in diagnosing breast issues.

Next screening steps may include:

- **Breast Ultrasound:** A machine that produces sonograms of the internal breast
- **Diagnostic Mammogram:** More detailed than a typical screening mammogram, this version is a more comprehensive x-ray
- **Breast Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI):** A magnetic body scan directly linked to a computer used to generate detailed images of the internal breast
- **Biopsy:** Tissue or fluid removal that will be examined under a microscope to determine if more testing is required

What Can You Do to Prevent Breast Cancer?

While there are no guarantees that an individual will not get breast cancer, there are protective factors that can contribute to the reduction of one's risk of breast cancer. These include:

- Maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle
- Having a pregnancy before the age of 35
- Limiting hormone replacement therapy
- Prophylactic surgery (removal of tissues/organs done on individuals that have specifically inherited a gene that puts them at high risk for breast cancer)
- Staying up to date on mammograms starting at the age of 40

Risk Factors

There are various factors to be aware of when considering if one is at risk of breast cancer. The [CDC](#) lists factors that both can and cannot be changed.⁵

Factors that **can** be changed are the following:

- Low physical activity levels
- Being overweight/obese (especially after menopause)
- Taking hormones (i.e. birth control or HRT)
- Reproductive history (i.e. older pregnancy or no breastfeeding)
- Alcohol Consumption

Factors that **cannot** be changed are the following:

- Aging
- Genetic Mutations
- Reproductive history (i.e. menstruation/menopause age)
- Having dense breasts



- Previous breast cancer diagnosis
- Family history of breast/ovarian cancer
- Previous use of radiation therapy treatment
- Exposure to diethylstilbestrol (DES) during fetal development

Breast Cancer Awareness Promotion

Breast Cancer Awareness Month takes place nationally every October. Here are four easy steps to take to promote breast cancer screening.

1. Use social media messaging to encourage breast cancer screening. Consider one of these examples:

- Annual wellness exams and mammograms are an important part of staying healthy! Start the conversation with your healthcare provider today to understand your risks for certain diseases and catch any potential issues early.
- October is #BreastCancerAwarenessMonth. Set an example for the people you love by scheduling your annual wellness exam or mammogram and encourage them to do the same.
- Screening saves lives! They are key to preventing and detecting breast cancer early. When you know your risks, you are better equipped to take charge of your health. Some risks are within your control, like physical activity and alcohol use. However, some others, such as age and family history, are not. Talk with your healthcare provider to find the screening method that is right for you.
- The Indiana Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IN-BCCP) provides access to breast and cervical cancer screenings, diagnostic testing and treatment for low-income Hoosiers across the state. Call 317-233-7901 for more information.

2. Encourage healthcare professionals to review educational materials for breast cancer and share that information with patients

- [Komen Educational Resources](#) for healthcare professionals, their office staff, and general patient population.

3. Support breast cancer survivors

- Review the [free audio program](#) provided by the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship to hear first-hand survival stories.
- Connect survivors in Indiana with community resources such as Pink4ever and Cancer Support Community. There are also additional resources in the state of Indiana.

4. Stay current on breast cancer prevention, screening, and treatment by reviewing these resources

- American Cancer Society (ACS) <https://www.cancer.org/health-care-professionals/american-cancer-society-prevention-early-detection-guidelines/breast-cancer-screening-guidelines.html>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/breast-cancer/prevention/index.html>



- Indiana Department of Health
 - i. [Indiana Cancer Facts and Figures](#)
 - ii. [Cancer Dashboard](#)
- American Society of Clinical Oncology [Cancer Treatment and Survivorship Care Plans](#)

Incidence and Mortality

Indiana Female Breast Cancer Incidence and Mortality 2018-2022

	Incidence		Mortality	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
White non-Hispanic	23,616	132.1*	3,996	22.6
Black non-Hispanic	2,211	128.0	438	25.8*
Hispanic	644	80.9*	92	11.4*

Data Source: Indiana State Cancer Registry

Excludes in situ and benign tumors

Rates are Age-adjusted per 100,000 people to 2000 Standard Population

*Statistically significantly different (high or low) compared to Indiana ($p < 0.05$)

Differences in health outcomes exist in breast cancer mortality between white and Black women. Black women are at an increased risk for poor outcomes relating to breast cancer, in part because they are often diagnosed at a younger age, at a later stage of disease and with more aggressive forms of breast cancer. In Indiana, during 2018-2022 the breast cancer incidence rates for Black and white females were similar, but the mortality rate for Black females was significantly higher than the rate for whites, with the mortality rate for Black females being 25.8 and the rate for white females being 23.4.¹

Indiana Female Breast Cancer Incidence 2018-2022 by County

County	Count	Age-Adjusted Rate
Indiana	27,194	130.54
Adams	126	124.05
Allen	1,406	126.06
Bartholomew	313	126.31
Benton	33	104.21
Blackford	45	93.46
Boone	323	157.63
Brown	72	104.82
Carroll	81	114.26



Cass	114	84.79
Clark	461	117.48
Clay	86	95.93
Clinton	129	124.22
Crawford	44	118.12
Daviess	85	89.21
Dearborn	248	148.28
Decatur	121	136.04
DeKalb	176	124.65
Delaware	489	141.76
Dubois	180	128.23
Elkhart	789	132.91
Fayette	70	86.31
Floyd	340	127.56
Fountain	71	130.57
Franklin	106	131.35
Fulton	65	104.61
Gibson	146	137.68
Grant	287	126.02
Greene	120	108.21
Hamilton	1,569	159.16
Hancock	411	160.90
Harrison	154	121.97
Hendricks	695	134.72
Henry	273	169.72
Howard	416	139.69
Huntington	168	140.11
Jackson	177	121.69
Jasper	139	125.75
Jay	85	129.52
Jefferson	163	147.95



Jennings	111	127.77
Johnson	644	133.88
Knox	168	139.37
Kosciusko	301	121.94
LaGrange	117	111.42
Lake	2,215	136.81
LaPorte	484	130.88
Lawrence	204	130.26
Madison	578	132.18
Marion	3,589	133.02
Marshall	185	121.96
Martin	43	138.92
Miami	109	97.17
Monroe	469	128.33
Montgomery	158	125.98
Morgan	314	130.22
Newton	61	128.05
Noble	195	126.53
Ohio	28	133.72
Orange	67	109.11
Owen	83	119.27
Parke	69	126.73
Perry	74	128.80
Pike	42	93.76
Porter	756	135.22
Posey	117	138.45
Pulaski	43	102.85
Putnam	148	129.90
Randolph	98	105.43
Ripley	129	130.53
Rush	75	134.20



Scott	85	101.62
Shelby	175	112.15
Spencer	89	137.31
St. Joseph	1,024	125.29
Starke	86	116.80
Steuben	120	97.27
Sullivan	67	98.66
Switzerland	41	121.11
Tippecanoe	555	127.60
Tipton	75	136.58
Union	36	162.60
Vanderburgh	721	126.45
Vermillion	60	107.62
Vigo	359	110.22
Wabash	135	115.88
Warren	27	99.73
Warrick	288	132.55
Washington	109	119.34
Wayne	313	129.70
Wells	103	111.96
White	123	137.45
Whitley	149	132.67

Data Source: Indiana State Cancer Registry

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National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP): To find out if you qualify for free or low-cost breast and cervical cancer screening services in Indiana and where to get screened, contact [Indiana Breast and Cervical Cancer Program](#).



References:

1. [Indiana State Cancer Registry](#)
2. American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2026*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2026.
3. "Breast Cancer Signs and Symptoms." *American Cancer Society*, American Cancer Society, INC., 25 February 2025. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/breast-cancer-signs-and-symptoms.html>
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. September 11, 2024. *Diagnosing Breast Cancer*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/breast-cancer/screening/diagnosis.html>
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. September 22, 2025. *Breast Cancer Risk Factors*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/breast-cancer/risk-factors/index.html>

