



BREAST CANCER



What is Breast Cancer?

The breast is made of lobes and ducts. Each lobe is made up of lobules, and at the end of the lobules are tiny bulbs that can produce milk. The lobes, lobules, and bulbs are connected by tiny tubes called ducts. Each breast has 15 to 20 lobes. Most breast cancers rise in either the lobules or the ducts in the breast. The breast also has lymph vessels which lead to the lymph nodes under the arms. The lymph nodes, also found in other parts of the body, make up the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system plays the critical role of helping the body fight off infection. Breast cancer often spreads to the lymph nodes under the arm and then through the lymphatic system. Breast cancer screenings, such as a mammography or a clinical breast exam, are used to detect breast cancer before it spreads to the lymph nodes, giving a much better prognosis.

What are the Risk Factors for Breast Cancer?

Risk factors for breast cancer are:

- Older age
- Menstruating at an early age
- Having first birth at an older age or never giving birth
- A personal history of breast cancer or benign breast disease
- A mother or sister who has been diagnosed with breast cancer
- Treatment with radiation therapy to the breast or chest
- Taking hormones such as estrogen or progesterone
- Alcohol use
- White race/ethnicity

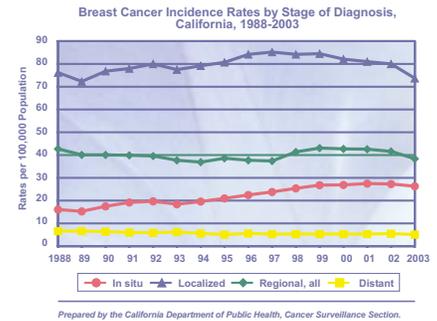
What are the Symptoms for Breast Cancer?

The most common symptom of breast cancer is a mass or lump detected by the patient. It is important to have anything unusual checked by a doctor. The earlier breast cancer is found, the better the prognosis of survival will be. It is important to have routine mammograms and clinical breast exams to detect breast cancer before the symptoms are present. Other signs of breast cancer are:

- Swelling of part of the breast
- Skin irritation or dimpling
- Nipple pain or the nipple turning inward
- Redness or scaliness of the nipple or breast skin
- A nipple discharge other than breast milk
- A lump in the underarm area

Who Gets Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is the most common diagnosed cancer among women. Furthermore, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths (following lung cancer) among women. It is estimated that 19,710 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in California in 2007 and 4,165 California women will die of breast cancer. Breast cancer is most common among older women. Approximately eight out of ten women diagnosed with breast cancer are over the age of 50. The occurrence of breast cancer is more common among white and African American women than Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander women. Women with a family history of the disease, such as mother, daughter or sister, are twice as likely to develop cancer.



What are the Treatments for this Cancer?

The four standard treatment options for breast cancer depending on the prognosis of the cancer are surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and hormone therapy. Most patients have surgery to remove the cancer from the breast. This could be anything from a lumpectomy, which removes the tumor and some surrounding tissue, to a radical mastectomy, which removes the entire breast invaded by cancer, the chest wall muscles under the breast, and all the lymph nodes under the arm. Often times, a patient will undergo surgery to remove the cancer in combination with radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or hormone therapy.

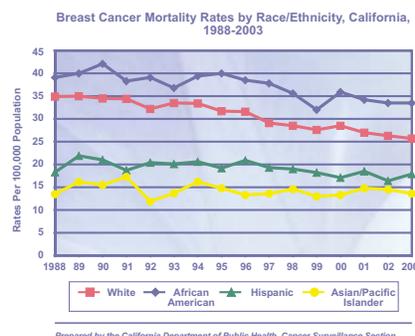
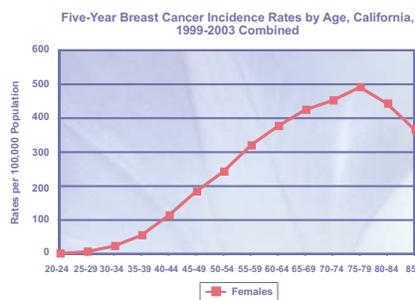
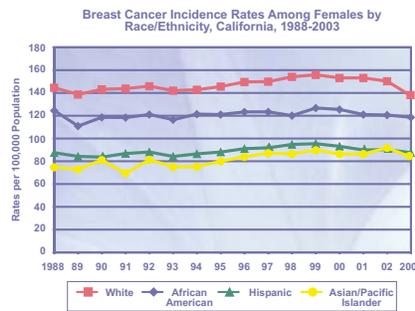
Who Survives Breast Cancer?

Stage of diagnosis is an important factor of the survival of the patient. Receiving breast cancer screenings regularly helps detect breast cancer at an earlier stage; therefore, the patient has a much better five-year survival rate.



Localized*	97 percent
Regional**	79 percent
Distant***	21 percent

- *Localized Stage: Means the cancer is confined to the breast.
- **Regional Stage: Means the cancer has spread beyond the breast into the surrounding tissue or to nearby lymph nodes
- ***Distant Stage: Means the cancer has metastasized (spread) to other organs such as the lung or the liver.



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