

## Breast Cancer

### The facts:

- One in 8 women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime.
- In 2000, the American Cancer Society estimated:
  - 1,000 women would die of breast cancer in Georgia.
  - 4,600 new cases of breast cancer would be diagnosed among women in Georgia.
  - 40,800 women would die from breast cancer in the United States.

### Possible risk factors

- Alcohol
- Age
- Race
- Age at first live birth over 30
- Family history of breast cancer
- Breast density of 75% or greater
- Age at first menstrual period under 12
- Personal history of breast abnormalities
- Genetic alterations
- Radiation therapy
- Lack of exercise
- Not breastfeeding
- Personal history of breast cancer
- Estrogen replacement therapy
- Taking oral contraceptives
- Poor diet
- Being female

### Detection

The American Cancer Society recommends that:

- ❖ Women aged 40 and older should have a screening mammogram every year.
  - ❖ Between the ages of 20 and 39, women should have a clinical breast examination by a health professional every 3 years. After age 40, women should have a breast exam by a health professional every year.
  - ❖ Women aged 20 or older should perform a breast self-examination (BSE) every month. By doing the exam regularly, you get to know how your breasts normally feel and you can more readily feel any change.
  - ❖ Mammography is the best available method to detect breast cancer in its earliest, most treatable stage an average of 1.7 years before the woman can feel the lump. If all women 50 and over had mammograms at the recommended intervals, the mortality rate would be reduced by 30 percent -- 13,000 American lives would be saved per year.
- **Possible symptoms include:**
    - New lump or mass
    - Generalized swelling of part of a breast
    - Skin irritation or dimpling
    - Nipple pain or retraction
    - Discharge other than breast milk
    - Obviously enlarged underarm lymph nodes



**Sources:**

- ❖ [Breast Cancer Info Service](#)
- ❖ [American Cancer Society](#)
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics Data, [Underlying Causes of Death, 1992-1996](#)

*This information is being provided as a source of education and information and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. The OWH recommends consultation with your doctor or healthcare professional.*