

BREAST CANCER

Queensland^{1, 2}

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women (excluding nonmelanoma skin cancers).
- 3152 Queenslanders were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2012 (the most recent statistics available), of which 3125 were females and 27 were males.
- Of the 519 people who died as a result of the disease in 2012, 512 were women and seven were men.
- Over 90 per cent of females diagnosed with breast cancer will survive for at least five years. The approximate lifetime risk of a Queensland woman to be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85 is one in eight.
- The approximate lifetime risk for a Queensland female to die of breast cancer before the age of 85 is one in 42.

Australia³

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in Australia and has only recently been surpassed by lung cancer as the most common cause of cancer death in Australian women.
- One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85.
- In 2010, 14,181 women were diagnosed with breast cancer across Australia.
- There were 2914 Australian females that died from breast cancer in 2011.
- The median age at diagnosis was 60 years.⁴
- Breast cancer accounted for 28 per cent of all new cancers diagnosed in Australian women in 2010 and 16 per cent of all cancer deaths among females in 2011.

Detection and Symptoms⁴

- If the cancer is found and treated early, there is an increased chance of surviving the disease.
- There are a number of breast changes that women should look out for. Women should consult their GP about the following:
 - A persistent lump, lumpiness or thickening;
 - Changes to the nipple such as crusting, ulceration, redness or drawing in of the nipple;
 - Discharge from the nipple;
 - Any change of the shape, feel, size or colour of the breast;
 - Dimpling or puckering of the skin; and
 - Unusual breast pain which is not associated with a monthly menstrual cycle.

Cancer Council Australia has three recommendations for women for the early detection of breast cancer:

- Women aged 50-69 have a mammogram every two years through BreastScreen Australia. Mammography is not recommended for women under 40, however if there are serious concerns they may choose to attend BreastScreen Australia.
- Women aged over 70 should discuss the role of continuing mammography with their doctor; Women should become 'breast aware' by familiarising themselves with the normal look and feel of their breasts; and
- Women should see a doctor immediately if they notice any unusual breast changes.

Who is at risk⁵

- Being a woman is the main risk factor for developing breast cancer. While men can be diagnosed with breast cancer, it is approximately 100 times more common in women.
- The risk for developing breast cancer increases with age. In Queensland, around three-quarters of women diagnosed are over the age of 50.²
- Nine out of 10 women who develop breast cancer have no other risk factors. The risk increases for women who have a family history of breast cancer, but hereditary breast cancer accounts for less than five per cent of all breast cancers diagnosed.
- Women who have already had breast cancer have an increased risk of developing a second breast cancer.
- It has been estimated that 40 per cent of breast cancers in Australia can potentially be prevented by addressing the major modifiable risk factors such as overweight and obesity, physical inactivity and alcohol consumption.⁶

Cancer Council Queensland's Breast Cancer Support Service is a free and confidential service where trained volunteers who are breast cancer survivors provide information and support to women with breast cancer.

The Breast Cancer Support Service is an opportunity for women with breast cancer to speak to someone who has had a similar experience. Where possible, women are matched with a volunteer according to age and type of treatment.

To be matched with a Breast Cancer Support volunteer, or for more information about breast cancer, please call 13 11 20.

References

¹ Queensland Cancer Registry 2014, Cancer in Queensland, Incidence, Mortality, Survival and Prevalence 1982- 2012. Brisbane: Cancer Council Queensland, Queensland Health and QCR.

² Queensland Cancer Statistics On-Line, 2014. Viertel Cancer Research Centre, Cancer Council Queensland (www.cancerqld.org.au/research/qcsol). Based on data released by the Queensland Cancer Registry (1982-2012; released December 2014).

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014. ACIM (Australian Cancer Incidence and Mortality) Books: Breast Cancer (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/acim-books/>). Canberra: AIHW.

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Cancer Australia 2012. Breast cancer in Australia: an overview. Cancer series no. 71. Cat. no. CAN 67. Canberra: AIHW.

⁵ Youlden DR, Cramb SM, Baade PD. 2009. Current status of female breast cancer in Queensland: 1982 to 2006. Brisbane: Viertel Centre for Research in Cancer Control, Cancer Council Queensland.

⁶ Baade PD, Meng X, Sinclair C, Youl P. Estimating the future burden of cancers preventable by better diet and physical activity in Australia. *Med J Aust* 2012 Mar 19; 196(5):337-40 [Abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22432673>].

Disclaimer: The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for advice from a properly qualified medical professional who can advise you about your own individual medical needs. It is not intended to constitute medical advice and is provided for general information purposes only. Information on cancer, including the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer, is constantly being updated and revised by medical professionals and the research community.

Cancer Council Queensland does not warrant that the information in this publication is correct, up to date or complete nor that it is suitable for any particular purpose. Your use of the information in this publication is at your own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, Cancer Council Queensland does not accept any liability for any reliance placed on information that is not correct, complete or up to date, or that is not suited to the purpose for which it was relied upon. If any warranty or guarantee cannot by law be excluded, then, to the extent permitted by law, Cancer Council Queensland's liability for such warranty or guarantee is limited, at Cancer Council Queensland's option, to supplying the information or materials again or paying the cost of having the information or materials supplied again.