

## Statistics of Breast Cancer

Everyone has the chance of developing breast cancer. Of course, the risk greatly increases for women, and increase again with age. It's a devastating disease that can affect you, or anyone you know, without warning.

The best way to prevent the spread of breast cancer is through early detection and knowledge. The following list of statistics can help you learn about the disease. Only through education can you clearly understand the dangers and risks, and only then will you appreciate how essential it is to take necessary precautions.

- \* Breast cancer is one of the leading causes of death by cancer in women, second only to lung cancer.
- \* Every year, as many as 1.2 million women worldwide will be diagnosed with breast cancer.
- \* Women under the age of 45 have a five-year survival rate of 81 percent.
- \* About 77 percent of all breast cancer diagnoses occur in women aged 50 and over.
- \* Breast cancer can occur in men, as well as women. While the cases are substantially lower in men than in women, an estimated 1,860 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year.
- \* Those of white, Hawaiian and African-American ancestry face the highest risk of breast cancer. The rate of breast cancer risk for these groups are roughly four times that of the lower-risk group.
- \* In 2000 alone, more than 200,000 women were diagnosed with new cases of the disease.
- \* More than 51,000 breast cancer fatalities were recorded in North America in 2000.
- \* Every woman faces a 1 in 8 chance of developing breast cancer in her lifetime. Before the age of thirty, the rate is significantly lower, at 1 in 2,212.
- \* After women reach the age of forty, it is highly recommended that they have a mammogram every year. However, only 66.9 percent of women over 40 have reported having a breast mammogram examination in the past two years.
- \* In women aged 40 to 59, breast cancer is the leading cause of death.
- \* The rate of breast cancer occurrences is staggering and the disease is very serious. However, statistics show that the death rates of women due to breast cancer in the United States have decrease by about 2.8 percent every year from 1990 to 2000.

Breast cancer is a universal and potentially life-threatening disease that can affect anyone. It's unfortunate that these statistics do not show that 100 percent of women are receiving yearly mammograms. Women in high-risk categories must take measures to prevent themselves from being among the 33.1 percent of women who are unsure about their breast health. Early detection of breast cancer leads to immediate treatment, and can help you to overcome the disease. Fear is no excuse for avoiding a yearly mammogram. This is an important and essential practice for all women, particularly those in high-risk categories.

If you are a woman over forty, call your doctor right away to schedule a mammogram. If a woman you care about is over forty, encourage her to take this important and potentially lifesaving step.