

Michigan Cancer Consortium Tool of the Month  
October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



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- [Sample Article](#) – for MCC member organization employee newsletters; can also be used as the basis for a press release
- [Resources](#) – find **Provider** and **Patient** resources to share within your organization and community
- [Social Media](#) – ready-to-use breast cancer awareness posts and tweets

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## Sample Newsletter Article

**Intended use:** use this article in your employee newsletters and as the basis for a press release; to promote awareness.

## October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and women should understand how to detect it early, understand their risk, and the lifestyle-related factors that can reduce their risk such as a healthy diet, being physically active, and reducing consumption of alcohol.

Do you know your risk for breast cancer? By being a woman and getting older, your risk for breast cancer increases. A personal or [family history](#) of breast cancer also increases your risk as does [dense breast](#) tissue, which can mask or hide breast cancer. In Michigan in 2020, it is estimated there will be 8,800 new cases of breast cancer and that 1,380 women will die from the disease.

African American women are more likely to be diagnosed at a younger age than white women and diagnosed at a later stage. Compared to white women, African American women also have a higher death rate from breast cancer and across all stages of cancer diagnosis, they have poorer survival than white women. Factors that may contribute to the higher death rate in black females include barriers to early detection and screening, access to clinical trials, and the higher likelihood of being diagnosed with a more aggressive form of cancer known as triple-negative cancer.

You can limit your risk by incorporating healthy behaviors in your life and getting regular breast cancer screenings.

Healthy behaviors that can help lower your risk include:

- [Increasing physical activity](#)
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- [Quitting smoking](#)
- Limiting alcohol

Being tested for breast cancer is important. The United States Preventive Services Task Force, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, and the American Cancer Society recommend:

- Women should be able to start screening as early as age 40. A good idea is to start talking to your health care provider at age 40 about when you should begin screening.
- Women who are more at risk should begin screening at age 40.
- Women with an average risk of breast cancer – most women – should begin yearly mammograms by age 45. All women should begin mammography screening by age 50 at the latest.
- Breast exams, either from a medical provider or self-exams, are no longer recommended.

Know your family history of cancer. Approximately 5-10 percent of breast cancers are hereditary – meaning breast cancer runs in the family. Also, be aware that for women who are identified at an increased risk for developing breast cancer (and not previously diagnosed), there are approved medications that can reduce this risk. These women should discuss the risks and benefits associated with these medications, in addition to possible lifestyle changes, with their health care provider.

Talk with your health care provider about breast cancer prevention and screening. If you are uninsured or need help paying for mammograms call 1-844-I-GOT-SCR (446-8727) for more information.

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## Data Resources

### Breastfeeding and Breast Cancer Risk

Breastfeeding can lower cancer risk, especially if a woman breastfeeds for longer than a year. The risk of developing breast cancer is reduced by 39% if a woman has ever breastfed. The study also found that the longer a mom breastfed, the greater the reduction in cancer risk (53%).

There are many reasons why breastfeeding decreases cancer risk:

- Breastfeeding increased differentiation, or maturation, of the ductal cells in the breast, making them more resistant to cancer.
- Reduction in the number of menstrual cycles that lowers exposure to hormones that help cancer cells grow.
- Healthier lifestyle choices while nursing, such as decrease in smoking and alcohol and an increase in healthier food choices.

A study published in 2015 found breastfeeding is associated with better prognosis and survival among breast cancer patients. Women who breastfed, and then later developed breast cancer, were 30% less likely to have their cancer return and 28% less likely to die from it, than women who never breastfed.

*Source: Zhou, Y., Chen, J., Li, Q., Huang, W., Lan, H., & Jiang, H. (2015). Association between breastfeeding and breast cancer risk: evidence from a meta-analysis. Breastfeeding medicine, 10(3), 175-182.*

*Source: Kwan, M. L., Bernard, P. S., Kroenke, C. H., Factor, R. E., Habel, L. A., Weltzien, E. K., ... & Langholz, B. M. (2015). Breastfeeding, PAM50 tumor subtype, and breast cancer prognosis and survival. Journal of the National Cancer Institute, 107(7), djv087.*

### National, State, and Local Data Resources:

- American Cancer Society
  - [Cancer Facts & Figures 2020](#)
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
  - [Breast Cancer Fact Sheet](#)
- [Michigan Cancer Surveillance Program](#) – easily-accessed Michigan and county-level data
- [State Cancer Profiles](#) (National Cancer Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [United States Cancer Statistics: Data Visualizations: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

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## **Resources for providers and patients**

**Intended use:** promote available breast cancer resources to both health care providers and patients

[Provider Resources](#) – breast cancer resources for providers

- [Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Tool](#) Designed by scientists, at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the [National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project \(NSABP\)](#) this is an interactive tool to estimate a woman's risk of developing invasive breast cancer
- [Breast Density](#) Information for patients and providers about breast density and breast cancer risk

[Patient Resources](#) – breast cancer resources for patients including educational materials, websites of interest, and more information

- For women who are uninsured or need help paying for mammograms call 1-844-I-GOT-SCR (446-8727) or visit [Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Navigation Program \(BC3NP\)](#) for more information.

[Public Outreach](#) – breast cancer resources for the communities you serve

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## Social Media – Quick Posts and Tweets

**Intended use:** use social media below to create interest and a call-to-action for women and their families

### Sample Tweets:

- When should you be tested for #breastcancer? What increases breast cancer risk? What are the symptoms? [Find answers and more](#)
- #Breastcancer is easiest to treat when it is found early. Know when you should start being [tested for breast cancer](#).
- Studies indicate that [exercise reduces your risk of #breastcancer](#). Being active is good for your health.
- October is #breastcancer awareness month. Do you know what you should about #breastdensity? If not, [learn more](#) and talk with your doctor

### Sample Facebook posts:

- How do I find breast cancer early? For women at average risk, [follow expert recommendations](#):
  - Women should be able to start screening as early as age 40, if they want to. It's a good idea to start talking to your health care provider at age 40 about when you should begin screening.
  - Women with an average risk of breast cancer – most women – should begin yearly mammograms at age 45.
  - Regular mammograms should continue for as long as a woman is in good health
  - Breast exams, either from a medical provider or self-exams, are no longer recommended.
- Women who are at higher than average risk for breast cancer, based on certain factors, should follow these [recommendations](#).
- Do you have a personal or family history of breast cancer? Talk with your health care provider about [your risk of being diagnosed with the disease](#).
- October is breast cancer awareness month. Do you know what you should about breast density? Learn more about [Breast Density](#).

## Promote your posts with popular Breast Cancer hashtags!

#screensafelyMI    #breastcancerawareness    #breastcancer    #breastcancermonth