

## Breast Cancer Awareness

The month is about more than pink ribbons. It's also about more than just women. While some feel inspired, many people living with breast cancer feel like the month overlooks their experience with the disease.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month can mean different things to different people. For some, it's a trigger – 31 days in the fall of pink-ribbon reminders of a disease that forever changed them. For others, it's a chance to show their support for the more than 2 million women around the world who are diagnosed with the disease each year.

Understanding the goals behind the global campaign and the emotions felt by the many different people living with the disease may help you decide if and how you want to commemorate the month.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an international health campaign that's held every October. The month aims to promote screening and prevention of the disease, which affects 2.3 million women worldwide. Known best for its pink theme color, the month features a number of campaigns and programs – conducted by groups ranging from breast cancer advocacy organizations to local community organizations to major retailers – aimed at:

- \* supporting people diagnosed with breast cancer, including those with metastatic breast cancer
- \* educating people about breast cancer risk factors
- \* encouraging women to go for regular breast cancer screening starting at age 40 or earlier, depending on personal breast cancer risk fundraising for breast cancer research

In the month of October, there are also specific dates designed to raise awareness of specific groups within the breast cancer community.

### **Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day (October 13)**

October 13 is nationally recognized in the U.S. as Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day. About 168,000 women in the U.S. are estimated to have metastatic breast cancer (cancer that spreads beyond the breast to other parts of the body). Researchers estimate that about 30% of early-stage breast cancers eventually metastasize. The day, which began in 2009, is meant to educate the public about the need for more money to go to the study of metastatic breast cancer and the development of new metastatic cancer treatments.

### **Men's Breast Cancer Awareness Week (October 17–23)**

Although breast cancer is much more common in women, breast cancer affects men, too. In 2021, President Joe Biden designated October 17 to October 23 Men's Breast Cancer Awareness Week. According to the American Cancer Society, 2,790 men in the U.S. will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2024, and about 530 are expected to die from the disease. But lack of awareness and stigma can be barriers to detection and care in men, trans men, and non-binary people.

### **U.S. breast cancer statistics**

People of every country, race, ethnic group, and income level are affected by breast cancer. In the U.S., the percentage of women diagnosed with breast cancer has been slowly rising for the past couple of decades.

A woman in the U.S. today has a 1 in 8 chance of developing breast cancer over her lifetime and a 1 in 39 chance of dying from breast cancer.

Nearly 30% of women diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer later develop metastatic breast cancer.

U.S. men make up 1 of every 100 breast cancer diagnoses in the country.

There are about 4 million breast cancer survivors in the U.S., including women receiving breast cancer treatment.

While the percentage of women dying from breast cancer has gone down in recent decades, Black women remain more likely to die from breast cancer than women of any other racial or ethnic group.

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