

Saving Lives Through Screening and Early Detection

Breast Cancer Cases and Deaths

Breast cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second-leading cause of cancer death in women.

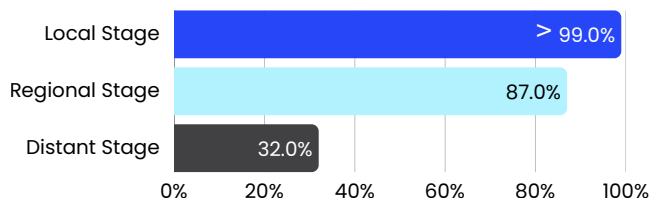
New Cases: 321,910; 2,670 men¹

Deaths: 42,140 women, 530 men¹

Early Detection & Survival

These sobering statistics underscore the critical importance of early detection and timely screening. Early diagnosis reduces the risk of death and expands treatment options by detecting cancer before symptoms appear. Early detection is key to improving outcomes.

5-Year Survival Rate²



Insurance Coverage and Costs

Insurance coverage and patient cost can be barriers to getting screened, resulting in delays in follow-up testing and treatment which impact survival. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) provides cost-effective breast and cervical cancer screening, diagnostic testing, and treatment referral services to thousands of women who have limited incomes, are underinsured and otherwise underserved, many of whom would not be screened without the program. For individuals with private insurance, federal law requires plans to cover recommended breast cancer screening services starting at age 40 without cost-sharing, making it easier for individuals to access these important services. However, some individuals may still be charged a fee when follow-up screening tests, such as MRI, are recommended.

Breast Cancer Screening in the US



1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime.²



Breast Cancer death rates dropped 44% since 1998 due to advances in early detection and treatment.¹



Uneven gains have led to no improvement for American Indian/Alaskan Native women; Black women face 37% higher mortality.¹



Breast cancer is rising in younger women - 16% of new cases of invasive breast cancer are in women under 50.²

Increasing Access to Patient Navigation³

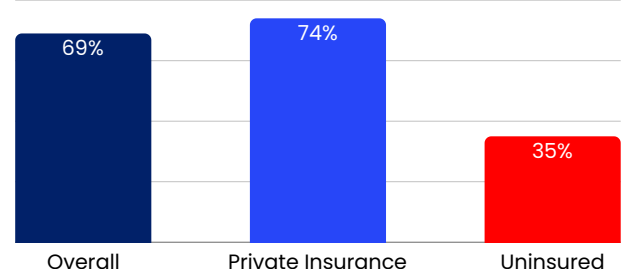
Patient navigators can help reduce patient barriers to breast cancer screening including: helping patients access health insurance; educating patients about breast cancer screening tests; ensuring follow-up tests are completed; and assisting patients to navigate the health care system. However, due to a lack of long-term funding to pay for patient navigation, these services are absent or limited in many different health care settings.

A 2025 meta-analysis found the breast cancer screening rates were 13.8% higher with patient navigation⁴

As of 2026, patient navigation services are required to be covered by most private insurance plans.

Insurance Coverage Strongly Influences Breast Cancer Screening Rates

While most women age 40 and older report being up to date on breast cancer screening (69%), screening rates drop sharply among uninsured women (35%), highlighting the critical role insurance coverage plays in access to early detection.⁵



Understanding Breast Cancer Risk Factors

A risk factor is anything that increases the chance of developing a disease like breast cancer. Learning about risk factors can help you make informed decisions about your health and better understand your personal risk. This is especially important for younger women, who may not yet be eligible for routine screening but can still take steps to protect their health. Breast cancer risk is shaped by a combination of factors, some of which can be modified. Visit the American Cancer Society's [Breast Cancer Risk and Prevention](#) webpage to learn more.

ACS CAN Support Access to Breast Cancer Screening

Ensuring access to affordable, timely breast cancer screening is essential to detect cancer early and reduce preventable death. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) urges Congress to reauthorize the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program and to pass the [Screening for Communities to Receive Early and Equitable Needed Services \(SCREENS\) for Cancer Act \(H.R. 2381/S. 1866\)](#). This legislation is critical to ensuring that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat and survive cancer.

Additionally, the rising incidence of breast cancer among younger women underscores the need for action. The impact of breast cancer on young women's lives can be devastating. Breast cancer in young women is more likely to be found at a later stage and is often more aggressive and harder to treat.⁷ To address this issue, ACS CAN supports the [EARLY Act Reauthorization of 2025 \(H.R. 4541/S. 2339\)](#), which supports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's programs and services that address the unique needs of young women who have breast cancer or who are at risk for breast cancer.

1. American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2026*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2026.

2. American Cancer Society. *Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2024-2025*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2024.

3. American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. Sustainably funding patient navigation: final fact sheet. Published October 17, 2024. Accessed June 8, 2026.

4. Nelson HD, Cantor AG, Pappas M, Blackie K, Yu Y, Fu R. *Patient Navigation Services for Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening and Follow-Up: A Meta-Analysis*. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2025;185(8):976-985. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2025.1590.

5. American Cancer Society. *Cancer Prevention & Early Detection Facts & Figures 2026*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2026.

6. American Cancer Society. (n.d.). Breast cancer risk and prevention. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/risk-and-prevention.html>

7. Zhu JW, Charkhchi P, Adekunle S, Akbari MR. *What Is Known about Breast Cancer in Young Women?* *Cancers (Basel)*. 2023 Mar 22;15(6):1917. doi: 10.3390/cancers15061917. PMID: 36980802; PMCID: PMC10047861.