

BREAST CANCER

Queensland^{1,2}

- ✦ Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women (excluding non-melanoma* skin cancers such as basal and squamous cell cancer).
- ✦ 3539 Queenslanders were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016 (the most recent statistics available), of which 3510 were females and 29 were males.
- ✦ Of the 586 people who died as a result of the disease in 2016, 581 were women and 5 were men.
- ✦ On average, women diagnosed with breast cancer were 92 per cent as likely to live for another five years compared to the general population.
- ✦ The approximate lifetime risk of a Queensland woman to be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85 is one in seven.
- ✦ The approximate lifetime risk for a Queensland woman to die of breast cancer before the age of 85 is one in 50.

Trends in Queensland²

- ✦ Between 2004 and 2016, breast cancer incidence rates have significantly increased by 0.8 per cent per year. This followed a brief period where incidence rates were stable (2000-2003), while prior to that (2000-2003) incidence rates had increased by 2.2 per cent per year.
- ✦ Mortality rates due to breast cancer have decreased by 1.9 per cent per year between 1993 and 2016. Prior to this, mortality rates were stable between 1982 and 1992.

Australia³

- ✦ Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in Australia and is the second most common cause of cancer deaths in Australian women, behind only lung cancer.
- ✦ One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85.
- ✦ In 2015, 16,852 women were diagnosed with breast cancer across Australia.
- ✦ There were 2976 Australian women that died from breast cancer in 2016.
- ✦ Breast cancer accounted for 28 per cent of all new cancers diagnosed in Australian women in 2015 and 15 per cent of all cancer deaths among females in 2016.

* Includes Basal and Squamous Cell Carcinoma. Excludes other skin cancers such as Merkel Cell Carcinomas

¹ Queensland Cancer Register, 2019. Unpublished data (1982-2016).

² Queensland Cancer Statistics On-Line, 2019. Viertel Cancer Research Centre, Cancer Council Queensland (qcsol.cancerqld.org.au). Based on data released by the Queensland Cancer Register (1982-2016; released July 2019).

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2018 Cancer Data in Australia; Australian Cancer Incidence and Mortality (ACIM) books: breast cancer Canberra: AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/cancer/cancer-data-in-australia/>.

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.
 - 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 cancer⁵:

- ✦ Women aged 50-74 should have a mammogram every two years through BreastScreen Australia. Women aged 40-49 and 75 years and older should talk to their GP about whether they should participate in breast cancer screening. Screening mammograms are not effective for women under 40.
- ✦ Women should become 'breast aware' by familiarising themselves with the normal look and feel of their breasts.
- ✦ Women should see a doctor immediately if they notice any unusual breast changes. Most changes are not due to breast cancer however it is important to have them checked straight away.

Risk factors⁴

- ✦ Being a woman is a 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 5 per cent of all breast cancers diagnosed.
- ✦ Women who have already had breast cancer have an increased risk of developing a second breast cancer.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Breast cancer, Cancer Council, (<https://www.cancer.org.au/about-cancer/types-of-cancer/breast-cancer/>)

Prevention

Age, sex, family history, obesity and moderate to heavy alcohol intake are important risk factors to consider. Cancer Council Queensland recommends that to reduce your overall cancer risk you quit smoking, maintain a healthy body weight, eat a healthy diet, be physically active, stay SunSmart, limit alcohol, participate in cancer screening programs (if eligible) and report unusual changes to your doctor immediately.

Information and Support

Cancer Council 13 11 20

Being diagnosed with cancer or supporting a loved one can leave you with many questions. We want to help you find the answers. Call Cancer Council 13 11 20 Information and Support line to talk with one of the team.

Our team can provide you with cancer information, emotional and practical support. We can also refer you to Cancer Council Queensland's support programs and services.

This confidential service is available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm (excluding public holidays).

Cancer Connect

Cancer Connect is a confidential telephone-based peer support service that connects you, your carer or loved ones with a peer support volunteer who has had a similar cancer experience. You can be matched with a Cancer Connect volunteer based on cancer diagnosis, treatment, family or work issues.

Cancer Counselling Service

Living with a cancer diagnosis, or supporting someone along the way, is rarely easy. Talking things through with a counsellor or psychologist can help you manage your cancer related concerns.

Our Cancer Counselling Service is available for anyone distressed by cancer at any stage. We are a telephone-based counselling service, with face to face appointments available in some regional offices. Our team included nurse counsellors and psychologists trained and experienced in helping people affected by cancer.

For further information and support, please call Cancer Council 13 11 20

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.

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