

WELL BALANCED

- OCTOBER 2025 -

Breast Cancer and Liver Cancer Awareness



While October is best known for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, it's also an important time to highlight liver cancer—as October marks Liver Cancer Awareness Month, too. Together, these two cancers impact hundreds of thousands of people each year. With greater awareness and education people can make more informed decisions to take control of their health through prevention, screening, and treatment.

Breast and Liver Cancer at a Glance

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States, excluding skin cancer. Although men can develop breast cancer, it is more prevalent among women, making up 30% of new female cancers each year. Furthermore, approximately 1 in 8 women in the U.S. will develop breast cancer, and it is the second leading cause of cancer death among women.

Liver cancer, though less common than breast cancer, is one of the fastest-growing causes of cancer-related deaths. It is the third leading cause of cancer death worldwide and the sixth leading cause in the U.S., largely due to late detection and underlying liver disease.

Both cancers have risk factors that can and can't be controlled. Understanding the difference can help you focus your energy on the choices that have the most impact on your health.

Risk Factors Beyond Your Control

While these factors may not be within your direct control, they are important topics to discuss with your physician. This list is not comprehensive, and there may be other factors such as certain rare disease or benign conditions that are not included here, for example.



Did You Know?

Beginning at age 40, women have the option to start screening for breast cancer with a mammogram every year, unless a personal or strong family history suggests starting sooner. According to the [American Cancer Society](#), once women reach age 45, it is recommended that they complete a mammogram annually.

- **Being born male or female.** Breast cancer is more common in women than men, and liver cancer is more common in men than women. However, it is still possible for men to get breast cancer and for women to get liver cancer.
- **Age.** As you get older your risk for developing cancer increases, specifically breast cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, most breast cancers are found in women age 55 and older.
- **Family history and genetics.** Specific to breast cancer, having a close blood relative with the disease increases a person's risk, although it is still possible to develop it without any family history. Additionally, some gene mutations, such as BRCA1/BRCA2, can be inherited and further increase the risk for breast cancer. While liver cancer is not typically considered directly hereditary, certain conditions such as hereditary hemochromatosis can raise the risk for developing it.
- **Hormonal history.** Early menstruation (before age 12) or late menopause (after age 55) can raise breast cancer risk, possibly due to longer lifetime exposure to the hormones of estrogen and progesterone.



Did You Know?

The risk for developing liver cancer increases with both the number of years a person has smoked and the number of cigarettes smoked per day. The sooner someone quits smoking and using tobacco, the sooner they begin reducing their risk.

Healthy Habits that Reduce Your Risk

Although some factors that affect breast and liver cancer are outside of your control, it is possible to reduce your risk through meaningful steps centered around healthy habits and a balanced lifestyle. Here are some ideas to consider.

- **Limit alcohol.** Alcohol consumption is linked to an increased risk for many types of cancer, including both breast and liver cancers, and even moderate drinking can raise that risk. Heavy alcohol use is the number one cause for cirrhosis in the U.S., which in turn significantly increases the risk for developing liver cancer, specifically. Limiting or stopping alcohol consumption is a significant step to improve health and reduce the risk of developing cancer.
- **Avoid tobacco.** While tobacco use is known to increase the risk for liver cancer, some studies suggest that heavy, long-term smoking may also be linked to a slightly higher risk of breast cancer. Regardless, the harm tobacco causes to overall health and its connection to cancer, is reason enough to avoid it, experts caution.
- **Stay or get physically active.** The American Cancer Society recommends that adults aim for at least 150-300 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity or 75-150 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week. Research shows that physical activity can lower the risk of many cancers, help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, and support an overall healthy lifestyle.

• **Eat a healthy and balanced diet.** Following a mediterranean-style eating pattern that is high in non-starchy vegetables and low in animal products and refined carbs has been associated with a lower risk of developing breast cancer. Increasing fish consumption may also help reduce the risk of liver cancer.

• **Follow prevention strategies.** Staying on top of self-examinations and age recommended screenings, such as mammograms, can play an important role in detecting breast cancer early. Additionally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that children and adults up to age 59, along with older adults at higher risk, get the hepatitis B vaccine to help protect against liver cancer.

Resources

- » [Breast Cancer Awareness Month \(aacr.org\)](https://www.aacr.org)
- » [Liver Cancer Awareness Month \(aacr.org\)](https://www.aacr.org)
- » [American Cancer Society Recommendations for Early Detection of Breast Cancer \(cancer.org\)](https://www.cancer.org)

Sources

- » <https://www.cancer.gov/types/liver/what-is-liver-cancer/causes-risk-factors>
- » <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/liver-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html>
- » <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/about/how-common-is-breast-cancer.html>
- » <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/risk-and-prevention/lifestyle-related-breast-cancer-risk-factors.html>
- » <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/risk-and-prevention/breast-cancer-risk-factors-you-cannot-change.html>

