



# **Southeast Asian Women and Breast Cancer**

*Facts about breast cancer for Southeast Asian women ages 50 and older*

**Here are some facts to know about breast cancer. Breast cancer affects women of all cultures. It can be a serious disease if not found early. Many women do not like to complain of pain or discomfort. Because of this some women may delay seeking attention for a disease until it is in the advanced stages. Your chance of getting breast cancer increases with age and having a close relative with breast cancer.**

## **Common Beliefs About Breast Cancer:**

- "You can catch breast cancer from another person."
- "Most women will die if they have breast cancer."
- "If I don't feel sick why should I get screened?"
- "Many women have a fear of disfiguring surgery."
- "There is nothing you can do to prevent breast cancer — it will happen anyway."

## **Truths About Breast Cancer**

- Breast cancer cannot be caught by another person. It is not your fault if you get cancer.
- If breast cancer is found early most women will not die from the disease.
- There are tests that can find cancer very early *before* you feel sick (screening tests).
- Most lumps, if small, can be removed without losing your breast.

***Finding breast cancer early can save your life. Most women find cancer lumps themselves.***

## **Self-Exam**

***By performing a breast self-examination, you can help detect any changes that require medical attention.***

### **Three Things You Can Do Right Now**

**1. Mammography:**

It is best to have your first mammogram between the ages of 40 and 50. A mammogram is an x-ray or picture of the inside of your breast. It can often find cancers too small to be felt by you or your doctor. It may be a little uncomfortable but is not painful. It takes just a few minutes.

**2. Clinical Breast exam:**

A clinical breast exam is done by your doctor or nurse at each annual check-up. This is a good time to ask questions and talk about any concerns you have.

**3. Breast self-examination:**

- Examine your breasts a few days after your menstrual period. If you are not having periods, try and remember to do it on the first day of each month. *You may be shy at first but that is ok!*
- Look for changes in your breasts. Look at your breasts in the mirror for any dimpling, a change in the shape of the breast, swelling, redness or dry skin around the nipple. Raising your hands over your head may show the skin changes better in the mirror.

- The exam:
  - While lying on your back place a pillow under the breast you want to check first.
  - Raise your hand above your head on the side that your are doing the check first.
  - With your other hand, feel your breast with the flat of your first three fingers.
  - Start near the nipple and go around the breast in a circular motion and up into the armpit.
  - Repeat on the other breast.



Tell your doctor or nurse right away about any changes. If you do not have a doctor tell a sister, close family relative, or friend who may help you.

*For many women their breasts will feel lumpy. After a while you will know when something is not right. Cancer is usually small and hard like a pebble and does not move.*

**Questions?**

Call (206) 598-5500

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. The UWMC Clinic staff is also available to help at any time.

---

---

---

---

---

**Notes:**



**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
MEDICAL CENTER**

**Women's Health Care Center**  
Box 354765  
1959 NE Pacific St. Seattle WA 98195  
**(206) 598-5500**