

Breast Cancer in Men



Men account for about 1% of breast cancers reported in the United States

Approximately 2,550 men are diagnosed with breast cancer annually with a mortality rate of 480 deaths each year.

Most cases of male breast cancer are detected in men between the ages of 60 to 70 years old although this disease can develop in men of **any** age.

Black men have the highest incidence rates (2.7 out of every 100,000 men), followed by white men (1.9 out of every 100,000 men). Well known black men who were diagnosed with breast cancer are actor Richard Roundtree “Shaft”, Ernie Green, NFL football player, and Senator Edward Brooke. They all had a double mastectomy, surgery and chemotherapy. However, Montel Williams was diagnosed in error, had a double mastectomy; doctors later discovered it was a torn pectoral muscle.

Men diagnosed with breast cancer usually discover the disease later than women and have later-stage disease progression. At the time of diagnosis, tumors are larger and the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes and is present in the ductal and papillary glands. Survival rates are not significantly different between men and women.

Characteristics and symptoms of breast cancer in men are the same as women and also include:

- Several close members of their family (female or male) have a history of breast cancer.
- A close relative diagnosed with breast cancer in both breasts or diagnosed with breast cancer under the age of 40.
- A family history of ovarian, colon and/or prostate cancer may also increase a man’s risk of developing breast cancer.

African American men that have a family history of breast cancer may carry the BRCA-1 gene. The BRCA-1 gene increases risk for other cancers such as prostate cancer. The BRCA-1 gene has a hereditary component making it possible to pass the gene to offspring, male and female.

The treatment options for male breast cancer are the same as that for females. Treatment options include lumpectomy, mastectomy, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and hormone therapy.

The cause of breast cancer in men is not completely understood. While most male breast changes are due to benign (non-cancerous) abnormalities, such as gynecomastia (non-cancerous tissue growth) men should report any unusual breast changes to their healthcare provider for clinical evaluation.

Unfortunately, many men ignore the warning signs of breast cancer. For example, a man may feel a lump or have pain in their chest dismissing it as a pulled muscle. A medical professional to rule out breast cancer must review any changes or problems in the upper body.

Sources:

- <https://malebreastcancer.org/>
- <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancerinmen/detailedguide/breast-cancer-in-men-what-is-breast-cancer-in-men>
- <http://www.hisbreastcancer.org/>
- <https://www.menshealth.com/health/g19547905/male-celebrities-with-breast-cancer/?slide=6>