

Early Detection Breast Cancer Screening



Breast Cancer & Screening

Breast cancer occurs when cells in breast tissue change and divide uncontrolled, typically resulting in a lump or mass. Most breast cancers begin in the milk glands (lobules) or in the tubes (ducts) that connect milk glands to the nipple. Breast cancer typically has no symptoms when it is small and easily treated, which is why mammography screening is important for early detection. In the U.S., 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer, and 1 in 43 will die from the disease.

Screening mammograms are widely available without cost sharing for individuals starting at age 40, increasing access and utilization. However, mammography alone cannot confirm a cancer diagnosis and is only the initial step in early detection of breast cancer.

Follow-up diagnostic screenings, often required for abnormal results or high-risk patients, frequently involve significant out-of-pocket costs. These financial barriers prevent many individuals from accessing the full benefits of early detection, limiting the effectiveness of breast cancer screening.



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

Breast Cancer in North Dakota

Breast cancer continues to be the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women and is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women in the U.S. In 2025, approximately 640 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and an estimated 70 lives will be lost to the disease in North Dakota.

Early detection, through screening, significantly improves survival rates by identifying cancer at an earlier, more treatable stage, underscoring the importance of accessible breast cancer screenings.