**BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**

**OCTOBER 2022 | QUICK FACTS**

* The American Cancer Society estimates 2,570 Nevadans will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2022 and 440 will die of the disease.
* **Breast cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in Nevada, only behind skin cancers.**
* Black women are less likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer white women, but more likely to die from the disease than any other racial group.

**SCREENING / EARLY DETECTION**

* **Women at average risk should begin screening for breast cancer with mammogram annually starting at age 40.** They should discuss with their healthcare provider family history and any other risk factors that may require screening to begin before age 40.
	+ Risk factors for breast cancer include a family or personal history of the disease, genetic factors, and being of a certain ethnicity, such as Eastern European, to name a few.
* The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force is in the process of updating its recommendations for breast cancer screening. Among the questions reviewers are evaluating:
	+ How do structural racism, social inequalities, unequal access to high-quality healthcare, and other factors contribute to disparities in breast cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment, and health outcomes? In particular, what may account for higher breast cancer mortality among Black women in the United States?
* **In 2020, 69.9% of women in Nevada aged 40+ said they had been screened for breast cancer with mammogram within the past two years.**
* Monthly breast self-exams are no longer recommended, but women are urged to be aware of changes in their breasts. A regular check by sight and touch can help women to track these changes.
* People with breasts should be aware of signs and symptoms of breast cancer to discuss with their healthcare provider, including:
	+ A lump or pain in the breast
	+ Thickening or swelling in part of the breast
	+ Irritation or dimpling of the breast skin
	+ Redness or flaky skin on the breast
	+ Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area
	+ Fluid other than breast milk from the nipple, especially blood
	+ A change in the size and shape of breast
* A [meta-analysis](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8520861/) of studies on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer screening found that screening for breast cancer decreased significantly in 2020. However, data for screening in Nevada has yet to reveal whether that impact was felt within the state.
* Nevada’s Women’s Health Connection screening program, administered by Access to Healthcare Network, as recognized in May 2022 by the CDC as one of the top 5 breast and cervical cancer screening programs in the nation, able to maintain breast and cervical cancer screening numbers during COVID-19.
	+ Women’s Health Connection provides breast and cervical cancer screening to low-income Nevadans ages 21-64 who are uninsured or underinsured.
* Post-pandemic, some people may continue to have challenges getting screened for breast cancer, including:
	+ Limited access to appointment times due to some playing catch-up
	+ Limited access to screening facilities due to location closures and a shortage of healthcare workers
	+ Loss of employer-sponsored health insurance and inability to cover the cost of screening