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## Breast Cancer

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_ Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

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- I. The client/caregiver can define breast cancer.**
- A. Breast cancer is second only to lung cancer as cause of cancer deaths in American women. One in every nine women may get breast cancer.
  - B. It is staged according to size of primary lesion, extent of spread to regional lymph nodes, and metastasis to other parts of body.
  - C. Paget's disease is found in 1% to 4% of breast cancer. It involves skin changes in the nipple caused by a tumor growing through the ducts into the nipple.
- II. The client/caregiver can list factors regarding risk of breast cancer.**
- A. Factors that increase risk
    - Females (males also get breast cancer)
    - Aging increases risk (80% of breast cancers occur in women older than 50 years)
    - Personal history of breast cancer
    - Positive family history (mother, sister, or daughter with either breast or ovarian cancer)
    - Genetic predisposition
    - Radiation exposure (the younger the exposure, the greater the risk)
    - Excess weight (especially weight around the waist)
    - Exposure to estrogen (late menopause, after age of 55; early menses, before age of 12; women who have never had children; or first pregnancy after 35)
    - Higher risk of developing breast cancer in white women (but black women are more likely to die of breast cancer)
    - Hormone therapy (especially combination of estrogen plus progestin)
    - Talk with physician about the current reports of birth control pill use as a risk factor.

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- Smoking (even exposure to secondhand smoke)
  - Exposure to pesticides, chemical components of cigarette smoke, and so forth
  - Excessive use of alcohol
  - Breast density
- III. The client/caregiver can list measures for early detection.**
- A. Mammograms. The American Cancer Society (2003) and National Cancer Institute (2004) guidelines suggest an annual mammogram for women 40 years old and older.
  - B. Self-breast exams. Know how your breasts normally feel, and report any changes to your doctor. Starting in your 20s, breast self-examination is an option.
  - C. A health care professional exam is important every 3 years until the age of 40, and then annual exams should be performed.
- IV. The client/caregiver can list warning signs of breast cancer.**
- A. A lump or thickening (often painless) in the breast or in the underarm area
  - B. A change in the size or shape of the breast
  - C. Nipple tenderness
  - D. A retraction or indentation of nipple or of the skin over breast
  - E. Spontaneous clear or bloody discharge from nipple
  - F. Redness or pitting of the skin over the breast, areola, or nipple (like the skin of an orange)
- V. The client/caregiver can list treatments for breast cancer.**
- A. Surgery
    - Lumpectomy
    - Partial or segmental mastectomy

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- Simple mastectomy
  - Modified radical mastectomy
  - Sentinel lymph node biopsy
  - Reconstructive surgery
- B. Radiation
- C. Chemotherapy
- D. Hormonal therapy to reduce estrogen

## RESOURCES

National Cancer Institute  
[www.cancer.gov/cancer\\_information/](http://www.cancer.gov/cancer_information/)

National Cancer Society  
[www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp)

Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization  
[www.y-me.org/](http://www.y-me.org/)

Susan G. Komen for the Cure  
[www.komen.org/](http://www.komen.org/)

Support groups

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