

BUILD A LIFELONG HABIT

3-Minute Monthly Check



LOOK
in the mirror



FEEL
gently



REFLECT
notice changes

This is not a test—
it is **self-awareness**.

PROACTIVE BREAST CARE



Stay physically active



Maintain a healthy weight



Limit alcohol



Prioritize sleep and
stress management



Eat a balanced diet
rich in fruits, vegetables
and whole foods



Healthy choices support long-term
breast health—but do not eliminate risk.

START ONE CONVERSATION TODAY



Share this message with
young women in your circle
—friends, family, colleagues.

**Awareness begins with the
people we already know.**

This BCYW Foundation evidence-informed resource has undergone expert review by Rakesh Kumar, PhD; Samantha Heller, MD, PhD; Masakazu Toi, MD, PhD; Luis Costa, MD, PhD; and Carlos Garcia-Cantu, MD.

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BCYWF
BREAST CANCER IN YOUNG
WOMEN FOUNDATION

The Women of 2040 Are 19 Today

Breast health is not a future concern.
It is a lifelong **self-care** habit
you build today.



Breast cancer is increasingly affecting
younger women worldwide.

Early detection begins with **awareness**,
self-care, and **knowing your body**.

Know Your Normal. Act Early. 



WHY BREAST HEALTH MATTERS



Breast cancer incidence
is rising in women under 40.



Younger women often present with
more aggressive disease.



Delays in diagnosis are
common in younger age groups.



Many cases occur in women
with no family history.



**“No family history”
does NOT mean “no risk.”**

KNOWN & EMERGING RISK FACTORS



Genetics /
family history



Hormonal
influences



Dense
breast tissue



Lifestyle factors
(activity, alcohol,
weight, stress)



Delayed childbirth
or no childbirth



Increasing
age

Every woman's risk is unique. Many women with risk factors never develop breast cancer, and many diagnosed women have no identifiable risk factors.

WHAT DOES “BREAST AWARE” MEAN?



Know how your breasts
normally look and feel.



Be comfortable noticing changes.



Act early without hesitation.



**You are the first and most
consistent observer of
your body.**

YOUR BREAST HEALTH JOURNEY: 5 STEPS TO TAKE CHARGE

-  **1 Know your usual**
Get familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel.
-  **2 Notice any change**
Be aware of what's new, continuous, or different.
-  **3 Don't ignore it**
Painless changes can still be serious.
-  **4 Get it checked**
Early evaluation brings clarity and peace of mind.
-  **5 Share & support**
Talk to the women in your life. Your words can save lives.

 **You are not alone.**
Awareness. Action. Support.
That's how we **change outcomes.**

WHAT PUTS YOU AT HIGHER RISK?

-  Family history of breast or ovarian cancer
-  Genetic mutations (BRCA1, BRCA2, and others)
-  Increasing age
-  Long-term exposure to estrogen (e.g., early menstruation, late menopause)
-  Excess alcohol use
-  Overweight or obesity
-  Physical inactivity

 **Many risk factors are modifiable.**
Small changes today can protect tomorrow.

..... CHANGES YOU SHOULD NEVER IGNORE



 **Painless does NOT mean harmless.**
Don't wait for pain to take action.

COMMON MYTHS & FEARS

MYTHS

-  I'm too young to get breast cancer.
-  If it doesn't hurt, it's not serious.
-  No family history means no risk.

FEARS

-  Fear of diagnosis
-  Fear of tests and procedures
-  Fear of disruption to life or career

 **Early detection reduces fear—**
it does not create it.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU NOTICE A CHANGE

-  **1 Do not wait.**
Early action can make the biggest difference.
-  **2 Get it checked.**
Consult a healthcare professional.
-  **3 Ask about imaging if needed.**
Ultrasound is often first-line for younger women.

 **Early action = more options, better outcomes.**

WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS IN YOUNG WOMEN

- ✓ Tumors in young women can grow faster.
- ✓ Delays often lead to more advanced stage at diagnosis.
- ✓ Early detection:
 - Expands treatment options
 - Reduces treatment intensity
 - Improves outcomes

 **Early detection is not optional—**
it changes outcomes.

WHEN SHOULD YOU ACT IMMEDIATELY?

-  Any new lump lasting more than 2 weeks
-  Persistent pain in one area of the breast or armpit
-  Any visible skin or nipple change (redness, dimpling, peeling, rash)
-  Any change that feels different from your usual pattern

If it is new, persistent and unusual—
get it checked.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT BREAST HEALTH

-  Start with a simple question: "Have you ever checked what's normal for you?"
-  Share one key message (e.g., painless doesn't mean harmless).
-  Normalize the conversation, not the fear.

Conversations make awareness real.

SCREENING IN YOUNG WOMEN: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

-  Routine mammograms are not recommended under 40 for average risk women.
-  Ultrasound is often the first-line imaging for evaluating symptoms in younger women.
-  Dense breasts can make detection more challenging.

Every woman's risk is unique. Consult your doctor about your known risk factors by age 25. Breast imaging is about doing the right test, at the right time, for the right reason. Early detection in young women does not begin with machines, but with taking proactive steps for self-breast health.

SELF-AWARENESS vs SELF-EXAM

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Self-Awareness</p>  Ongoing familiarity with your body, integrated into daily life. | <p>Self-Exam</p>  A more systematic monthly check that reinforces awareness. |
|--|--|

Both help you act earlier.
Neither replaces medical evaluation.

References:

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4. Costa L et al. Breast. 2023;73:103623.
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6. 2026 BCYWF Edu Resources - An Ongoing Initiative <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7454294481044025345/>

Visit: BCYW Foundation's Website
Resource Page
Life Stories Page



The future of breast cancer in young women will not change—unless young women and adolescents are engaged early—when risk begins—and are part of the solution from the start.

Institutional Co-branding space/name/Info
Those pledging reach out in 2026



Awareness, Advanced Research, and Advocacy
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Youth Council for Breast Health

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