

# BREAST CANCER 101





# OUR MISSION

Susan G. Komen North Central  
Alabama's mission is to save lives by  
meeting the most critical needs in our  
communities and investing in  
breakthrough research to prevent and  
cure breast cancer.

# KIDS FOR THE CURE

Komen North Central Alabama's Kids for the Cure program teaches kids just like you about breast cancer. After this presentation, you'll be able to share great information with your family and friends - and join the fight against breast cancer in your own community!

# kids



# FOR THE CURE®

# **BREAST CANCER AWARENESS**

**BREAST CANCER IS THE  
MOST COMMON CANCER  
AMONG WOMEN.**

# OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

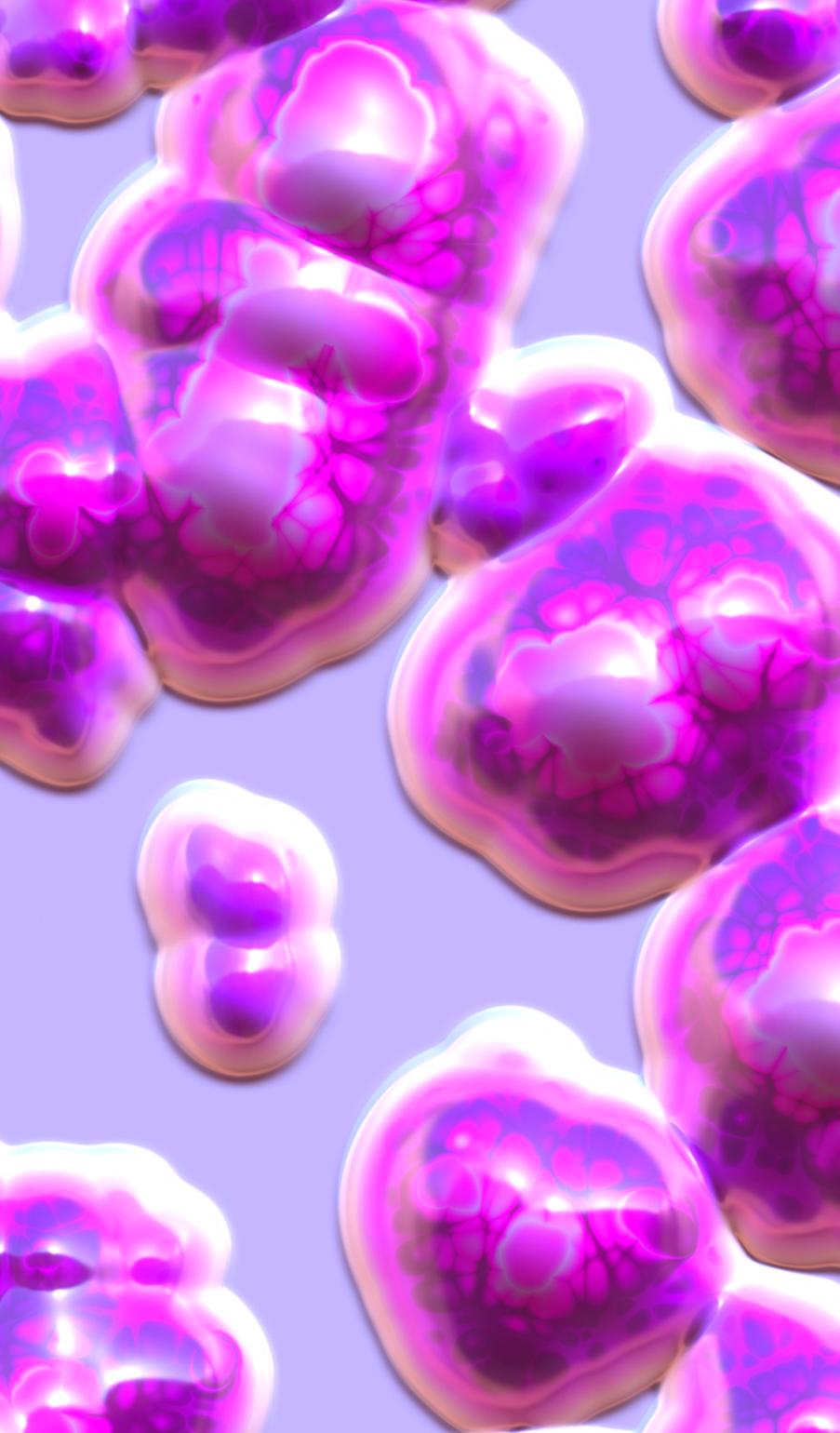
Each October, you may notice a lot of pink popping up in your community or you may see people wear those little pink ribbons on their clothes.

You may have also heard about special events, like the Race for the cure, that raise money for breast cancer research and services for breast cancer patients and survivors.

# BREAST CANCER OCCURS RARELY IN MEN AND HARDLY EVER IN KIDS.

But kids might want to learn about it because they know someone who has it, they want to share the information with the adults in their lives, or because they want to learn what to look for when they are older.

# WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?



# IT'S ALL ABOUT CELLS

The human body is made of tiny building blocks called cells. Your body creates them, replacing those that die with new ones.

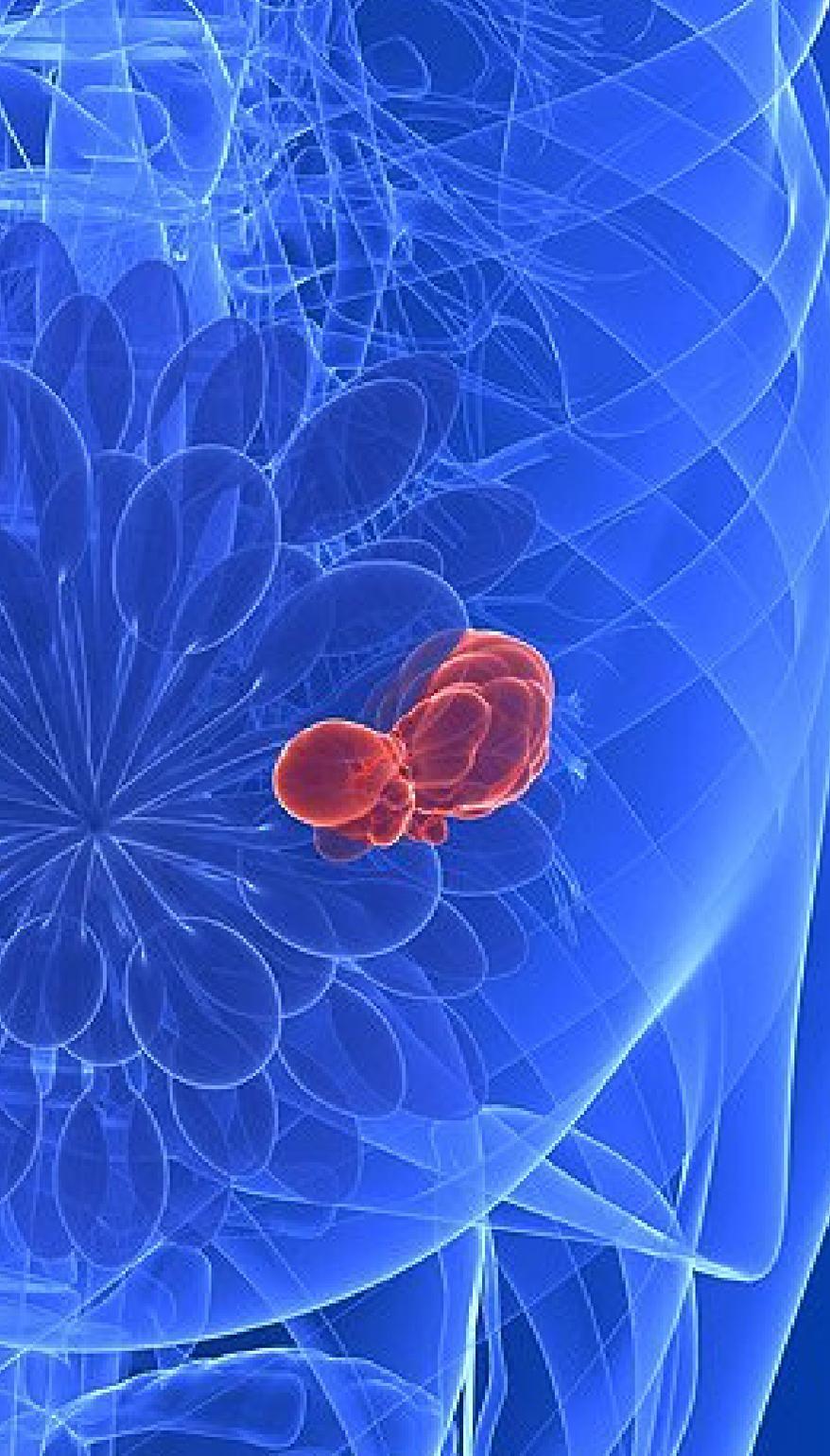
Usually, the body creates healthy, normal cells that do just what they're supposed to do. This includes cells in the breasts - the two rounded areas on the front of the chest.

# HOW TUMORS FORM

But if a cell changes into an abnormal, sometimes harmful form, it can divide quickly over and over again without dying, making many, many copies of itself.

When this happens, a **tumor** - abnormal body cells grouped together in the form of a mass or lump - can start to form and grow.





# BREAST CANCER TUMORS

Breast cancer is a kind of tumor that develops in the cells of a person's breast.

You may think that only women can get breast cancer, but because all people have breast tissue, men can get breast cancer as well — but this is very rare.

Someone with breast cancer may have cancer cells in just one part of the breast, which might be felt as a lump.

The cancer can spread throughout one or both breasts. Sometimes breast cancer spreads to other parts of the body, like the bones, the liver, or elsewhere. Breast cancer that has spread is called **metastatic breast cancer**.



# **WHY DO PEOPLE GET BREAST CANCER?**

**What causes breast cancer? We don't know yet...but we do know that some things can make someone more likely to get it:**

## **FAMILY HISTORY**

A woman whose mother, sister, aunt, or daughter has had breast cancer is more likely to get it.

## **AGE**

As women get older, they are more at risk for breast cancer. Teens — as well as women in their twenties and thirties — are less likely to get breast cancer.

## **LIFESTYLE CHOICES**

Women who smoke, eat high-fat diets, drink alcohol, and don't get enough exercise may be more at risk for developing breast cancer.

# **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BREAST CANCER?**

Changes that should be reported include:

- ♦ Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area



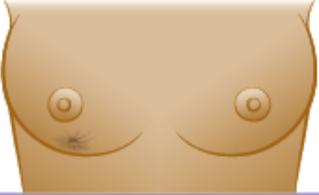
- ♦ Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast



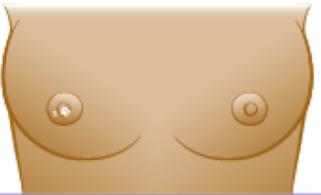
- ♦ Change in the size or shape of the breast



- ♦ Dimpling or puckering of the skin



- ♦ Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple



- ♦ Pulling in of your nipple or other parts of the breast



- ♦ Nipple discharge that starts suddenly



- ♦ New pain in one spot that does not go away



# WHAT TO LOOK FOR

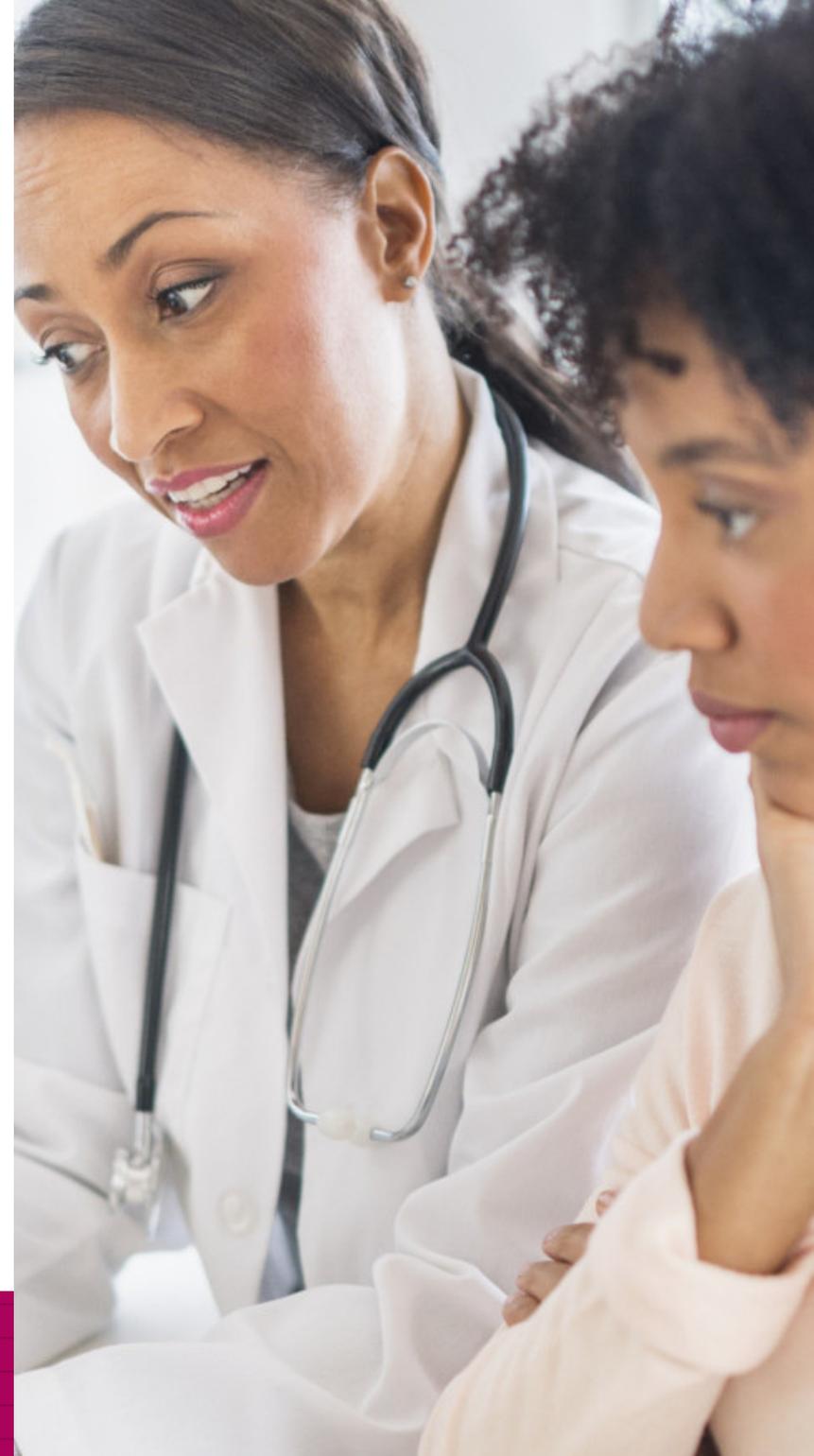
A woman who has breast cancer may have no problems, or she may find a painless lump in her breast. Women should examine their breasts regularly so they know what is normal for them.

They should tell their doctor about any changes they notice.

# IT'S NOT ALWAYS CANCER

Most breast lumps are not cancer, but all lumps should be checked out by a doctor to be sure.

Breast lumps that are not cancer may be scar tissue or cysts (fluid-filled lumps or sacs) or they can be due to normal breast changes associated with hormone changes or aging.



# KNOW YOUR NORMAL EARLY

**Girls who are beginning puberty might notice a lump underneath the nipple when their breasts start developing.**

**Usually, this is a normal. You can ask a parent or your doctor about it to be sure.**

# HOW IS BREAST CANCER FOUND?

# BREAST CANCER DETECTION

**Sometimes a doctor will discover a lump in a woman's breast during a routine examination or a patient might come to the doctor with questions about a lump she found.**



In other cases, a **mammogram** (say: MAM-uh-gram) may find a lump in the breast that can't be felt. A mammogram is a special kind of X-ray of the breast that helps doctors see what's going on inside. Sometimes, other kinds of pictures, like an **MRI**, also can be taken.

# BREAST CANCER DETECTION



When a lump is found, the doctor will want to test it. The best way to do this is usually with a **biopsy**. In a biopsy, a small amount of breast tissue is removed with a needle or during a small operation. Then, the tissue is examined under a microscope to look for cancer cells.

# BREAST CANCER DETECTION



The biopsy may be **benign** (say: bih-NINE), which means the lump is not cancer. If the biopsy shows cancer cells, the lump is **malignant** (say: muh-LIG-nunt). If a breast lump does contains cancer cells, the woman, along with her doctor and family, will decide what to do next.

# HOW IS BREAST CANCER TREATED?

Treatment for breast cancer usually depends on the type of cancer and whether the cancer has spread outside of the breast to other parts of the body.

Here are some common treatments:

## LUMPECTOMY

The cancerous tumor is removed from the breast.

A woman usually has this surgery when the cancer is found early and when the lump is small and in only one part of the breast.

## MASTECTOMY

This surgery removes the whole breast and is done when cancer cells have spread through the breast or into other parts of the body.

It's a good way to remove all or most of the cancer, and can help prevent the cancer from spreading or coming back.

## RADIATION & CHEMOTHERAPY

Radiation therapy uses high-energy X-rays to kill the cancerous cells.

Chemotherapy is special medicine that travels throughout the entire body and kills cancer cells.

# LIVING WITH BREAST CANCER

# LIFE WITH BREAST CANCER

Dealing with breast cancer can be very hard for a woman and her family. A woman who has breast cancer surgery or treatment may not feel well for a while. She may be depressed if she had her breast removed. If a woman needs chemotherapy, she may lose her hair and she may feel sick to her stomach. She also may worry that the cancer will return and she'll get sick again.

The good news is that many times, especially if it is caught early, women with breast cancer go on to live full, healthy lives after treatment. Some join support groups so they can talk to other women with breast cancer who are feeling the same emotions.

There are even groups that kids or other family members can join to talk about their feelings when someone they love has breast cancer. Find a trusted adult to talk with if you're worried about a loved one.



# BREAST CANCER PREVENTION

Doctors and scientists are working to find cures for breast cancer.

They are researching new medicines that may even help prevent the disease.  
But in the meantime, it's important for women to catch the disease early.

Regular mammograms — and paying attention to their body and what's normal for them — are the best ways for women to protect themselves. You may want to ask the women you care about if they are taking these important steps to stay healthy.



**WANT MORE INFO?**

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