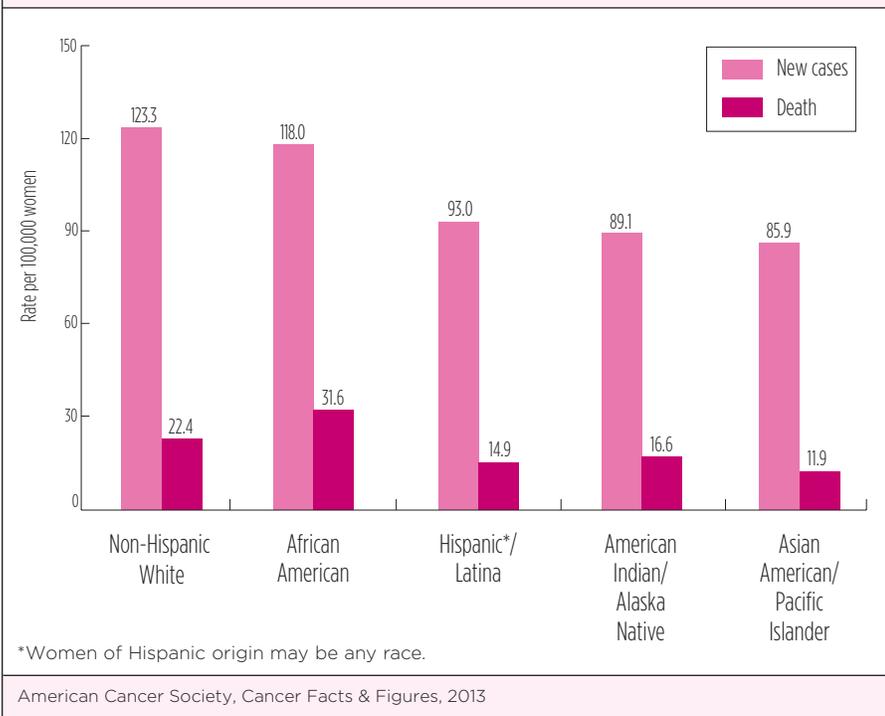


Breast cancer differences

Aside from skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the U.S. It is the most common cancer found among every racial and ethnic group.

Race is not a risk factor for breast cancer. But, the rates of getting and dying from breast cancer differ among ethnic groups.

Rates of new cases (incidence) and death (mortality) from invasive breast cancer by race and ethnicity, United States (2005-2009)



Screening may save lives

Get screened regularly. Screening and good treatment for breast cancer can lower your risk of dying. Mammograms can find breast cancer early, when survival is highest. Talk with your doctor about which screening tests are right for you.

- Have a mammogram every year starting at age 40 if you are at average risk.
- Have a clinical breast exam at least every 3 years starting at age 20, and every year starting at age 40.

Incidence (new cases) rates

White women have the highest breast cancer incidence rate of any racial or ethnic group. Under age 45, African American women have a higher incidence of breast cancer than white women.

African American and Hispanic/Latina women are more likely than white women to be diagnosed with later stage breast cancers. They also tend to have larger tumors than white women.

Breast cancer incidence is lower among Asian American and Pacific Islander women than for white and African American women. Asian American women who are new immigrants have lower rates of breast cancer than those who have lived in the U.S. for many years. For those born in the U.S., the risk is similar to that of white women (60 percent higher than women born in Asia).

Survival rates

African American women tend to have poorer survival rates than women from other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. White women are more likely to get breast cancer. Still, African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer (see graph on front side). Studies have found that they often have aggressive tumors with a poorer prognosis (chance for recovery). Hispanic/Latina women are also more likely to die from breast cancer than white women diagnosed at a similar age and stage. Women from some racial and ethnic groups may be less likely to get breast cancer screening. Also, their breast cancers are often found at a later stage. The chance of dying from breast cancer is higher if a tumor is found at a late stage.

Why are there racial and ethnic differences in rates of breast cancer?

Differences in established risk factors may explain the difference in breast cancer incidence among racial and ethnic groups. Also, they also may play a role in breast cancer survival differences across these groups. These include differences in:

- The biology of some breast cancers
- Access to health care (Women from some races/ethnicities are more likely than others to have low income and lack health insurance. This often means they have less access to breast cancer screening and treatment)
- Breast cancer screening practices (Mammograms and clinical breast exams help find breast cancer at early stages, when the chances of survival are highest)

Studies are looking at other reasons for this difference. These include possible genetic links to decreased survival. Research is ongoing.

Resources

Susan G. Komen®
1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636),
www.komen.org

American Cancer Society
1-800-ACS-2345, www.cancer.org

Intercultural Cancer Council
www.iccnetwork.org

National Cancer Institute
1-800-4-CANCER, www.cancer.gov

Related fact sheets in this series:

- Breast Cancer Risk Factors
- Breast Cancer Detection
- Breast Cancer Resources

The above list of resources is only a suggested resource and is not a complete listing of breast cancer materials or information. The information contained herein is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or to replace the services of a medical professional. Komen does not endorse, recommend or make any warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, quality or non-infringement of any of the materials, products or information provided by the organizations referenced herein.