

Warning Signs of Breast Cancer

Due to the increased use of mammography, most women are diagnosed at very early stages of breast cancer before symptoms appear. However, not every breast cancer is detected through mammography. The most common symptoms of breast cancer are a change in the look or feel of the breast, a change in the look or feel of the nipple and nipple discharge. These are described below:

Warning Signs of Breast Cancer

A change in the look or feel of the breast.

- A change in the size or shape of the breast.
- A lump or thickening in the breast, the area surrounding the breast or the underarm.
- A warm sensation in the breast.

A change in the look or feel of the nipple.

- A nipple turned inward or sunken into the breast.
- The shape of the nipple becomes irregular.
- A rash on the nipple or areola.
- Nipple tenderness, increased sensitivity or pain.

Nipple discharge.

- Blood or fluid other than breast milk secreted from the nipple.

A change in the look or feel of the skin on the breast, nipple or areola.

- Dimpling of the skin on the breast (appears like the skin on an orange).
- The appearance of irritated, red, scaly, or swollen skin on the breast, nipple, or areola.

Breast pain.

- Although breast pain is usually associated with benign breast conditions rather than breast cancer, it can be a symptom of either condition.

It is important to discuss any of these symptoms with a health care provider as soon as possible so that if breast cancer is present, it is more likely to be diagnosed at an early stage when it is most treatable.

Adapted from National Cancer Institute, American Cancer Society, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.