

## Fact Sheet

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### BREAST CANCER

#### Queensland<sup>1</sup>

- ✦ In 2008, breast cancer was the leading type of cancer diagnosed in women (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers).
- ✦ 2,784 Queenslanders were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008 (the most recent statistics available), of which 2,769 were females and 15 were males.
- ✦ Of the 487 people who died as a result of the disease in 2008, 484 were women and three were men.
- ✦ Compared to the general population, 89.0 per cent of females diagnosed with breast cancer will survive for at least five years.
- ✦ The approximate lifetime risk of a Queensland woman to be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85 is one in 8.<sup>2</sup>
- ✦ The approximate lifetime risk for a Queensland female to die of breast cancer before the age of 85 is one in 38.<sup>2</sup>

#### Australia<sup>3</sup>

- ✦ Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in Australia and has only recently been surpassed by lung cancer as the most common cause of cancer death in Australian women.<sup>4</sup>
- ✦ One in nine women will be diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85.
- ✦ In 2007, 12,567 women were diagnosed with breast cancer across Australia.
- ✦ There were 2,680 Australian females that died from breast cancer in 2007.
- ✦ The median age at diagnosis was 59 years.<sup>4</sup>
- ✦ Breast cancer accounted for 27.1 per cent of all new cancers diagnosed in Australian women and 15.5 per cent of all cancer deaths among females in 2007.

#### Detection and symptoms<sup>4</sup>

- ✦ If the cancer is found and treated early, there is an increased chance of surviving the disease.
- ✦ There are a number of breast changes that women should look out for. Women should consult their GP about the following:
  - A persistent lump, lumpiness or thickening;
  - Changes to the nipple such as crusting, ulceration, redness or drawing in of the nipple;
  - Discharge from the nipple;
  - Any change of the shape, feel, size or colour of the breast;
  - Dimpling or puckering of the skin; and
  - Unusual breast pain which is not associated with a monthly menstrual cycle.

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Cancer Council Australia has three recommendations for women for the early detection of breast cancer:

- ✦ Women aged 50-69 have a mammogram every two years through BreastScreen Australia. Mammography is not recommended for women under 40, however if there are serious concerns they may choose to attend BreastScreen Australia. Women aged over 70 should discuss the role of continuing mammography with their doctor;
- ✦ Women should become 'breast aware' by familiarising themselves with the normal look and feel of their breasts; and
- ✦ Women should see a doctor immediately if they notice any unusual breast changes.

### Who is at risk<sup>5</sup>

- ✦ Being a woman is the main risk factor for developing breast cancer. While men can be diagnosed with breast cancer, it is approximately 100 times more common in women.
- ✦ The risk for developing breast cancer increases with age. In Queensland, around three-quarters of women diagnosed are over the age of 50.<sup>2</sup>
- ✦ Nine out of 10 women who develop breast cancer have no other risk factors.
- ✦ The risk increases for women who have a family history of breast cancer, but hereditary breast cancer accounts for less than five per cent of all breast cancers diagnosed.
- ✦ Women who have already had breast cancer have an increased risk of developing a second breast cancer.

Cancer Council Queensland's Breast Cancer Support Service is a free and confidential service where trained volunteers who are breast cancer survivors provide information and support to women with breast cancer.

The Breast Cancer Support Service is an opportunity for women with breast cancer to speak to someone who has had a similar experience. Where possible, women are matched with a volunteer according to age and type of treatment.

To be matched with a Breast Cancer Support volunteer, or for more information about breast cancer, please call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Cancer Registry. 2011. *Cancer in Queensland, Incidence, Mortality, Survival and Prevalence 1982 to 2008*, Brisbane: Cancer Council Queensland. Queensland Health and QCR.

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Cancer Statistics On-Line, 2011. Viertel Centre for Research in Cancer Control, Cancer Council Queensland ([www.cancerqld.org.au/research/qcsol](http://www.cancerqld.org.au/research/qcsol)). Based on data released by the Queensland Cancer Registry (1982-2008; released November 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2010. *ACIM (Australian Cancer Incidence and Mortality) Books: Breast Cancer* (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/acim-books/>). Canberra: AIHW.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre 2009. *Breast cancer in Australia: an overview, 2009*. Cancer series no. 50. Cat. no. CAN 46. Canberra: AIHW.

<sup>5</sup> Youlden DR, Cramb SM, Baade PD. 2009. *Current status of female breast cancer in Queensland: 1982 to 2006*. Brisbane: Viertel Centre for Research in Cancer Control, Cancer Council Queensland.

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