



# BREAST & OVARIAN

## CANCER IN THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

Cancer is a scary topic, but cancer is more treatable and survivable when caught early.

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the world.
- Ovarian cancer is the deadliest gynecological cancer.
- The biggest risk factors for both are having ovaries and getting older.
- Breast and ovarian cancer can be genetically linked. A family history of breast, ovarian, prostate, or pancreatic cancer puts you at higher risk for these cancers.
- Younger people can develop cancer and so can people with no family history.

### CANCER OUTCOMES IN LGBTQIA+ INDIVIDUALS

- Because many LGBTQIA+ individuals have experienced discrimination and barriers to care, those with ovaries are less likely to get regular gynecological exams and breast cancer screenings and seek help when concerned. This lack of connection to trusted care also leads to more delayed and later-stage cancer diagnoses, refusal of treatment, and cancer recurrence.
- The impact of these cancers on the LGBTQIA+ community is not well understood due to lack of inclusion in research. Newer cancer studies are now including information about sexual orientation and gender identity.

Source: <https://www.breastcancer.org/research-news/lgbtq-breast-cancer-disparities>



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### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. BE PROACTIVE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH.

Because of the limited representation of LGBTQIA+ and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals in cancer research, it is extra important to know your biological family health history (if available).

#### Take Action

*Share your family history (if known) of breast, ovarian, prostate, and pancreatic cancer with your healthcare provider. Work with them to create a plan to monitor your health (for example, when to start getting mammograms).*

Due to discrimination in the healthcare system and lack of knowledge about issues unique to LGBTQIA+ people, it is especially important to find a healthcare provider you trust and who makes you feel heard.

#### Take Action

*Bring a trusted friend or family member to your appointments to help advocate for you and your health concerns and to help you process information. If possible, try to find a LGBTQIA+ friendly provider.*

Hormone therapy of any kind (menopause, gender transition, etc.) can affect your risk for these cancers.

#### Take Action

*Cis women, transgender women, and transgender men taking hormones, especially those with a family history of breast, ovarian, prostate, or pancreatic cancer, should talk with their healthcare provider about their risks.*

Many factors play into a person's risk. Some are within your control. Some are not.

#### Take Action

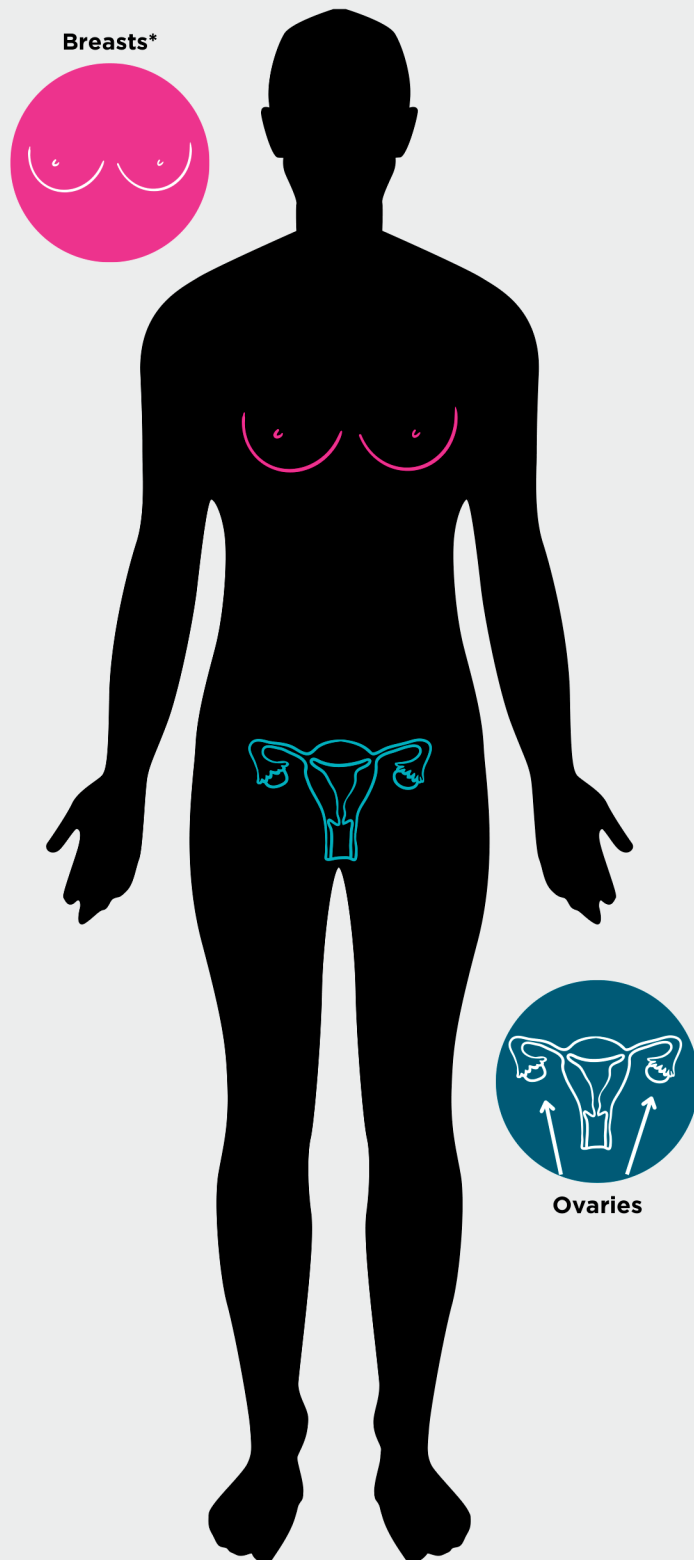
*Take control of the risk factors you can. The following are scientifically proven to decrease cancer risk:*

- *Be physically active & maintain a healthy weight*
- *Limit alcohol intake & do not smoke*
- *Eat a healthy, balanced diet*

**KNOW YOUR BODY** and the symptoms of breast and ovarian cancer. This may be uncomfortable if you do not feel connected to these parts of your body, but no one knows your body better than you do. You are always your best advocate.

These symptoms can also be caused by conditions that are not cancer, but if you notice anything that is **NEW** or **DIFFERENT** to you, get it checked out. Provide as many specifics as possible to your healthcare provider. What kind of symptom are you experiencing? How long have you been experiencing it? Has it gotten worse?

## AREAS OF THE BODY WE ARE TALKING ABOUT



## BREAST CANCER SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Look for:

- Changes in outline or shape
- Changes in look or feel of skin, such as puckering or dimpling
- Changes in nipple position, such as being pulled up or pointing differently
- Nipple discharge or bleeding from the nipple
- Rash on or around the nipple or on the breast

Feel for:

- Anything new and different. Not all cancer shows up as a lump. It could feel like a string bean, a Twinkie, or a cluster of uncooked rice
- Thickening or bumpy areas on the breast or armpit that differs from the same part of the other breast and armpit
- Moist, red areas on the nipple that don't heal easily
- Site may or may not be painful

\*At the same time each month, look at and touch the entire breast area from top to bottom, side to side - from your collarbone to the top of your abdomen, and from armpit to armpit.

*Note: Top surgery does not remove all breast tissue. Transgender men should continue to monitor their breast health after surgery.*

## OVARIAN CANCER SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

The four most common signs and symptoms for ovarian cancer are:

- Bloating
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Frequent or urgent urination

These symptoms are very common and usually they are not ovarian cancer. But, if any of these symptoms are new, persistent, and progressive (lasting two or more weeks a month and for less than a year), get it checked out.

There is no standard screening recommendation for ovarian cancer (like regular mammograms to check for breast cancer) so it is important to know your normal. A Pap smear **ONLY** screens for cervical cancer.

