



# Breast Cancer: Your Keys to Early Detection

**B**reast cancer is the most common cancer among women, but it is not the most common cause of cancer death. The five-year survival rate for breast cancer is 89 percent when it is detected and treated at an early stage, and early detection is more possible than ever thanks to new research, screening guidelines and technology. Throughout the Tri-State, women are taking the steps needed for early detection and prevention by visiting the



Breast Health Center at Cabell Huntington Hospital and the Diagnostic Breast Center at the Edwards Comprehensive Cancer Center. Breast surgeon Mary Legenza, MD, offers this advice for early detection and prevention:

## 1. Keep up with breast exams.

Self-exams and clinical exams play a critical role in the early detection of breast cancer.

“Schedule a day every month to conduct a self-exam,” said Marsha Dillow, RN, MSN, CBCN, director of the Breast Health Center and the Diagnostic Breast Center. “If you notice anything that seems abnormal, call your doctor right away.”

Regular clinical exams are necessary to determine what is “normal” for each individual. Clinical breast exams should be conducted annually, especially for women over 40, or as often as every six months for high-risk patients. Primary care physicians and obstetrician-gynecologists conduct these exams, or doctors may refer patients to specialists like those at the Breast Health Center.

## 2. Make time for mammograms.

By the time cancer can be felt during an exam, it is often at stage 2 or higher. The best way to catch breast cancer at the earliest stage is with regular mammograms. The Breast Health Center uses 3D mammography, the most advanced screening technology available. 3D mammography helps radiologists pinpoint abnormalities more accurately and efficiently, saving valuable time.

“3D mammography can detect hard-to-find cancers in their earliest stages,” Dr. Legenza said. “It is especially effective for younger women, who have denser breasts.”

Dr. Legenza partners with the ECCC’s medical and radiation oncology staff to provide the region’s most comprehensive cancer care.

Another key component in the center’s commitment to early detection is making mammograms convenient. Women can schedule mammograms online at [www.cabellhuntington.org/services/breast-health/](http://www.cabellhuntington.org/services/breast-health/) or by phone at 304.526.2270, and the center offers convenient parking, same-day results and evening hours twice a week.

“Women are caregivers. We care for our children when they are young, and as we age we start caring for our spouses and our parents. But sometimes we forget to take care of ourselves.”

—Mary Legenza, MD



Mammograms are recommended every year for women over 40. If a woman is at a higher personal risk for developing breast cancer, she may be advised to have additional screenings, such as a breast MRI, or begin having mammograms before the age of 40.

## 3. Know your risk.

Certain risk factors increase the likelihood of developing breast cancer, including age, ethnicity, family history, having no children or having children later in life, having a menstrual period before age 12 and post-menopausal weight gain. A more comprehensive early detection program is necessary for women with a higher breast cancer risk.



Jack Traylor, MD  
Breast Surgeon

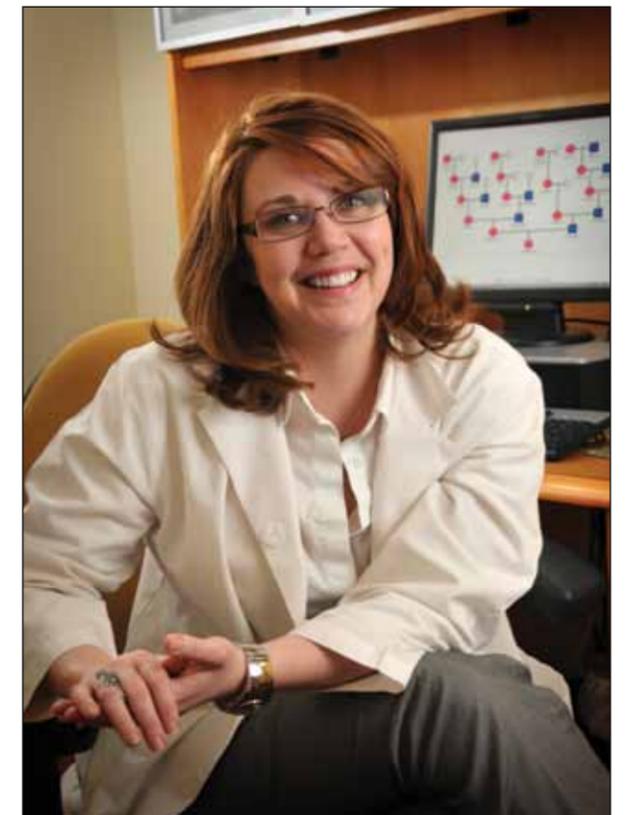
Patients who would like to more fully understand their risk for breast cancer can be evaluated through the Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Program. A genetic nurse practitioner will conduct an extensive evaluation of their personal and family history and genetic testing when needed. If a patient is deemed high risk, her care is monitored closely by a dedicated breast surgeon such as Dr. Legenza or Jack Traylor, MD.

If a patient has a gene mutation that increases her risk of breast cancer, the Edwards Comprehensive Cancer Center offers both medical and surgical risk-reducing options, ranging from risk-reducing medications to bilateral prophylactic mastectomy.

“We treat cancer day in and day out, but we don’t often have the chance to prevent cancer altogether,” said genetics

counselor Lisa Muto, DNP, WHNP-BC, APNG, OCN. “Once we know that a patient is high risk for breast cancer, it is rewarding to be able to say, ‘We have options.’ We can do things to reduce her risk and, if she does develop cancer, greatly increase the chances that we’ll find her cancer early.”

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 304.526.2270. ☎



Genetics counselor Lisa Muto helps women determine their genetic risk of developing breast cancer.