

What is Breast Cancer?

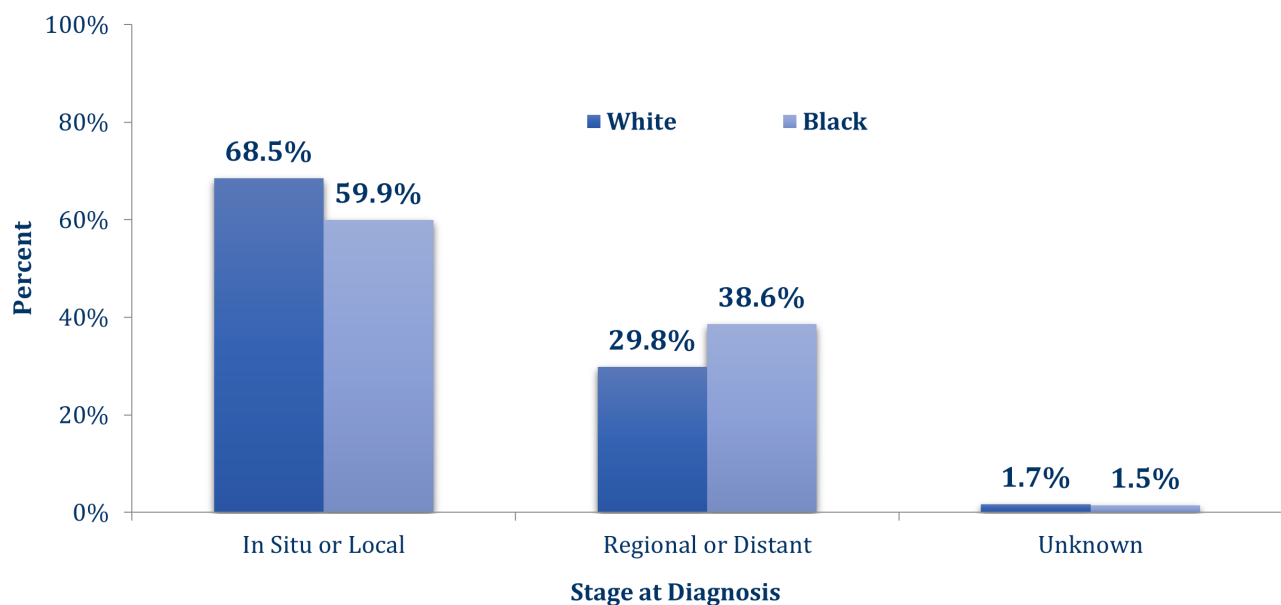
Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death and diagnosed cancer among women in Indiana and the United States.² There were 26,972 new cases of breast cancer diagnosed during 2018-2022 in Indiana.²

Sex and age are the two greatest risk factors for developing breast cancer. Women have a higher risk for developing breast cancer, and that risk increases with age. Breast cancer is rare among men; however, they are often diagnosed at later stages and have poorer outcomes.¹

Factors associated with increased breast cancer risk include weight gain after the age of 18, being overweight, use of menopausal hormone therapy, physical inactivity, and alcohol consumption.¹

The United States Preventative Service Task Force (USPSTF) recommends biennial screening mammography for women ages 40-74 as mammography screening is the most effective way to improve survival rate against breast cancer. If breast cancer runs in your family, talk with your healthcare provider about starting screening earlier and help reduce the odds of breast cancer mortality.

Percent of Female Breast Cancer Cases by Stage of Diagnosis and Race – Indiana 2018-2022



Source: Indiana State Cancer Registry

Differences in Health Outcomes

Differences exist in breast cancer mortality rates between white and Black women. Black women are at an increased risk for poor outcomes relating to breast cancer, in part because they are often diagnosed at a younger age, at a later stage of disease and with more aggressive forms of breast cancer [Figure 1]. In Indiana, from 2018-2022, the breast cancer incidence rates for Black and White women were similar, but the mortality rate for Black women was significantly higher, at 25.8 compared with 23.4 for White women.

Female Breast Cancer Diagnoses and Mortality (Death) Rates Trends by Race Indiana 2018-2022

	Incidence Rate	Mortality Rate
All Females	129.5	22.6
White Non-Hispanic Female	132.1*	23.4
Black Non-Hispanic Female	128.0	25.8*
Hispanic Female	80.9*	11.4*

*Rate is statistically significantly higher or lower than the state rate ($p < 0.05$)

Source: Indiana State Cancer Registry

Prevention

While there are no guarantees that an individual will not develop breast cancer, several protective factors can decrease a person's risk. These include:

- Maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle
- Having a pregnancy before age 35
- Specific medications for both premenopausal and postmenopausal women
- Prophylactic surgery (removal of tissues/organs done on individuals that have specifically inherited a gene that puts them at high risk for breast cancer)
- Staying up to date on mammograms

References

1. American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts and Figures 2026*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2026. <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/all-cancer-facts-figures/2026-cancer-facts-figures.html>
2. Indiana State Cancer Registry
3. National Cancer Institute. *Breast Cancer Prevention*. <https://www.cancer.org.gov/types/breast/causes-risk-factors/prevention>

For additional information on breast cancer:
<https://www.in.gov/health/cdpc/cancer/early-detection/>

