

Breast cancer disparities for African-American women are startling. In 2012 (most recent data available), breast cancer mortality was 42 percent higher in the U.S. for African-American women than Caucasian women. And, African-American women are often diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer when treatment options are limited, costly and the prognosis is poor. Susan G. Komen® believes this is unacceptable and is working to change these outcomes. See more here:

- [Ending Breast Cancer Disparities to Achieve Health Equity for All](#)
- [Breast Cancer Statistics](#)
- [Race and Ethnicity](#)
- [Disparities in Breast Cancer Screening](#)
- [Komen Educational Materials for African-Americans](#)
- [Breast Cancer Education Toolkits – Black and African-American Communities](#)

Incidence

- An estimated 27,060 new cases of breast cancer were expected to occur among African-American women in 2013 (most recent data available).^{1 p3}
- One in nine African-American women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.^{1 p2}
- Breast cancer is the most common cancer among African-American women.^{1 p10}
- Black women have a higher breast cancer incidence rate than white women before age 45.^{2 p4}
- When considering all ages together, incidence rates for white and black women in the U.S. are becoming more similar.^{2 p7}
- The median age of diagnosis is 58 years old for black women, compared to 62 years old for white women.^{2 p4}
- Premenopausal African-American women appear to be at particular risk of triple negative breast cancer; an aggressive type of breast cancer associated with shorter survival.^{1 p10}
- Studies have shown that certain reproductive patterns that are more common among African-American women (including giving birth to more than one child, younger age at first period and early age at first pregnancy), may be associated with increased risk of aggressive subtypes of breast cancer.^{1 p10}

Mortality

- An estimated 6,080 deaths from breast cancer were expected to occur among African-American women in 2013 (most recent data available).^{1 p3}
- Breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death among African-American women, exceeded only by lung cancer.^{1 p10}
- The higher mortality rate in black women may be related to a combination of factors, including differences in stage at diagnosis, obesity and comorbidities, tumor characteristics, as well as access, adherence and response to treatment.^{2 p8}



Specific Populations and Breast Cancer Black/African-Americans

Survival

- The overall 5-year relative survival rate for breast cancer diagnosed in 2008-2012 among black women was 81 percent, compared to 92 percent among white women; this difference may be attributed to both later stage at diagnosis and poorer stage-specific survival among black women.^{2 p10}
- About 51 percent of all breast cancers diagnosed among African-American women are at a local stage, compared to 61 percent among white women.^{1 p10}
- Possible reasons for lower survival of African-American women compared to white women include biologic and genetic differences in tumors, prevalence of risk factors, barriers to access to quality health care, lifestyle choices and later stage of breast cancer at diagnosis.^{1 p10}

Risk Factors

- Being overweight and obese (known risk factors for postmenopausal breast cancer) are more common among African-American women and girls than white women and girls.^{1 p19}

Screening

- Since 2000, mammography screening in black women has been relatively stable.^{1 p15}
- In 2013 (most recent data available), 70 percent of non-Hispanic black women 45 years and older reported having received a mammogram within the past two years, compared to 69 percent of non-Hispanic white women in the same age range.^{2 p19}
- Despite generally similar screening rates, breast cancer is detected at an advanced stage more often in African-American than in white women. This difference has been largely attributed to longer intervals between mammograms and lack of timely follow-up of suspicious results.^{1 p15}

Note: The terms African-American, black and white and are used in different statements listed above. These are the terms that were used in the references that informed the statements.

¹[Cancer Facts and Figures for African-Americans](#), 2013-2014, ACS

²[Breast Cancer Facts and Figures](#), 2015-2016, ACS