

■ Breast Cancer Awareness

Early Detection Saves Lives

What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a disease in which abnormal cells in the breast grow out of control, forming a tumor. It is one of the most common cancers affecting women worldwide, but with early detection and treatment, survival rates are high.

Quick Facts & Statistics

■ Global	2.3 million women diagnosed yearly	670,000 deaths worldwide (2020)	1 in 8 women affected in their lifetime
■ St. Kitts & Nevis	377 cancer cases (2018-2022)	19.5% of deaths due to cancers (2017-2021)	26th most cancer cases in 2019, 7 more by mid-2025

Risk Factors

- Age (risk increases with age)
- Family history of breast cancer
- Genetic mutations (BRCA1, BRCA2)
- Hormonal factors (early menstruation, late menopause)
- Lifestyle (obesity, smoking, alcohol use, lack of exercise)

Signs & Symptoms

- Lump in the breast or underarm
- Change in breast size or shape
- Nipple discharge or inversion
- Skin changes (dimpling, redness, thickening)
- Persistent breast pain

Prevention & Early Detection

- Regular mammograms from age 40+ (earlier if high risk)
- Monthly breast self-checks
- Healthy lifestyle: balanced diet, exercise, limit alcohol, avoid smoking
- Genetic testing for high-risk individuals

Treatment Options

- Surgery (lumpectomy, mastectomy)
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormone therapy
- Targeted therapy & immunotherapy

Hope & Support

Survival rates have improved significantly with early detection. Many survivors lead healthy, fulfilling lives after treatment. Support groups and counseling are available for patients and families.