



BREAST CANCER FACTS AND FIGURES

It's easy to understand why breast cancer is the most feared disease among women today. Of the 668,470 women* who will be afflicted with cancer this year, **32 percent** will suffer from breast cancer. In 2004 alone, an estimated **215,000 women will be diagnosed** with breast cancer; more than **40,000 will lose their lives** to the disease.

- Over the course of a lifetime, women have a **one in seven chance** of developing breast cancer.
- Although breast cancer affects both men and women, 99 percent of cases occur in women.
- In 2003, almost 40,000 women died of the disease—**one every 13 minutes**.
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women ages 20-59.
- In Minnesota, breast cancer accounts for one of every three new cancer diagnoses and one in five cancer deaths.

Despite the prominence of the disease, breast cancer death rates have been decreasing due to improved treatment, early detection and increased awareness. Doctors stress the importance of detecting breast cancer early and the American Cancer Society puts forth the following screening guidelines:

- Yearly mammograms and clinical breast exams are recommended starting at age 40 and continuing throughout good health.
- For women in their 20s and 30s, a clinical breast exam should be completed every three years.
- Monthly self-exams, beginning in a woman's early 20s, are a key part in detecting any abnormalities or changes.
- Women with an increased risk, including family history and genetic tendency, should talk with their doctors regarding the benefits of and limitations to starting mammography screening earlier and having additional or more frequent tests.
- As screening programs become more common, more cases are being detected when they can be more easily and successfully treated.

Throughout the United States and specifically in the Twin Cities, health insurance is a major concern – a lack of insurance is associated with lower survival rates among cancer patients. With an ongoing increase of part-time jobs and small companies with limited or no benefits, many patients are unable to afford treatment.

For more information see the American Cancer Society's Web site at www.cancer.org.

* Approximate