

Research Saves Lives

Breast cancer in young women (also called early-onset breast cancer) is rare. Fewer than five percent of all breast cancers diagnosed in the U.S. occur in women under 40. Although we don't know all the risk factors for breast cancer in young women, having a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation greatly increases risk. Young African-American women also appear to have an increased risk compared to older African-American women and young women of other ethnicities.

Young women face some unique challenges when it comes to breast cancer. Breast cancers in younger women are more likely to be fast-growing, higher-grade and hormone receptor-negative, which makes

them more aggressive and more likely to require chemotherapy.

A main concern for some young women facing breast cancer is loss of fertility. Chemotherapy can damage the ovaries, and both chemotherapy and tamoxifen can cause irregular periods or stop periods altogether. Early menopause can cause changes that decrease sexual pleasure. These unique concerns can make younger survivors feel isolated, making support especially important.

Read about Jaime Savage's experience as a young breast cancer survivor.

<http://sgk.mn/1EyIPMj>



Learn more about topics related to breast cancer and young women
<http://sgk.mn/1CNDJFZ>

Our Research Investment

More than **\$16 million** in over **35 research grants** and **20 clinical trials** focused on early-onset breast cancer.

What We're Investigating



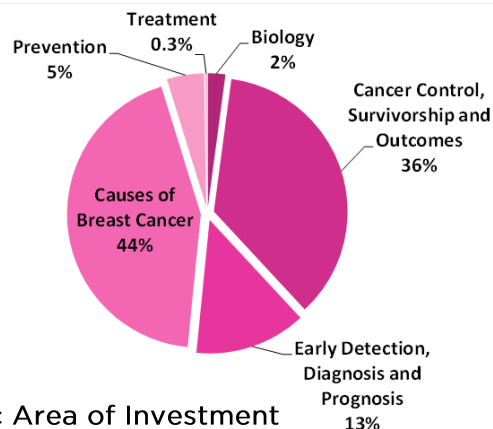
Identifying the genetic factors that contribute to poorer breast cancer outcomes in young women



Identifying the unique medical and emotional issues facing young breast cancer survivors such as fertility concerns, treatment decisions and body image



Testing approaches, such as meditation, to reduce stress and promote healthy living in young breast cancer survivors



Topic Area of Investment



Read how Komen grantee Dr. Clarice Weinberg (*third from right*) is identifying environmental factors that affect breast cancer risk in young women from the Two Sisters Study.

<http://sgk.mn/1B6GCn7>

What We've Learned from Komen-funded research



A young woman's overall response to hormones during different phases of life may be related to her risk of developing early-onset breast cancer.



Genetic factors as well as psychosocial factors, such as anxiety, are influencing some young women to choose mastectomy over breast conserving surgery.



Using vaginal estrogen tablets may improve menopausal symptoms and sexual dysfunction in young women with breast cancer.



Learn more about breast cancer



More Komen-funded Research Stories



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