



Young Women and Breast Cancer

Young Survival Coalition (YSC) is the premier global organization dedicated to the critical issues unique to young women and breast cancer. YSC works with survivors, caregivers and the medical, research, advocacy and legislative communities to increase the quality and quantity of life for women diagnosed with breast cancer ages 40 and under.

The Facts

Despite the prevailing opinions that young women don't get breast cancer, the reality is that they **can** and they **do**. Here are some important and startling facts about breast cancer in young women:

- In 2009, the American Cancer Society projects 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer and 62,280 cases of non-invasive breast cancer in females; it is estimated that 25,100 of these women will be under 45 years of age.¹
- One in 14 women with breast cancer is under age 40 when diagnosed. One in eight women diagnosed with breast cancer is younger than 45 when diagnosed.²
- Breast cancer accounts for 26% of all cancer in females 15-39 years of age and 39% of all cancer in 35-39 year olds.²
- Young women's breast cancers are generally more aggressive and result in lower survival rates, particularly in African-Americans and Latinas.
- Increasingly, evidence suggests that breast cancer before age 40 is biologically different from the majority of breast cancer that occurs in older women. Women younger than 25 may have a third type of biologically distinct breast cancer.
- As the incidence of young women with breast cancer is much lower than in older women, young women are often an underrepresented population in research studies.
- There is no effective breast cancer screening tool for women 40 and under.

The Issues

Young women diagnosed with breast cancer face a myriad of issues that may significantly impact their quality and quantity of life. Some of these concerns include:

- **Body Image:** It may be challenging for some women to embrace their new body after breast cancer-related surgery.
- **Relationships & Dating:** Whether married or single, intimacy issues may arise for women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.
- **Early Onset Menopause:** Chemotherapy and hormonal treatments can sometimes bring on premature menopause. Symptoms of menopause can significantly impact quality of life.
- **Fertility:** Breast cancer treatment may affect a woman's plans to have children.
- **Financial Challenges:** Breast cancer can dramatically impact a woman's financial stability when it pertains to workplace issues, lack of health insurance or being underinsured.