

JULY 2024

PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS



You Need to Prioritize

BY HEALTH FOR ALL

MOST IMPORTANT CHECKUPS

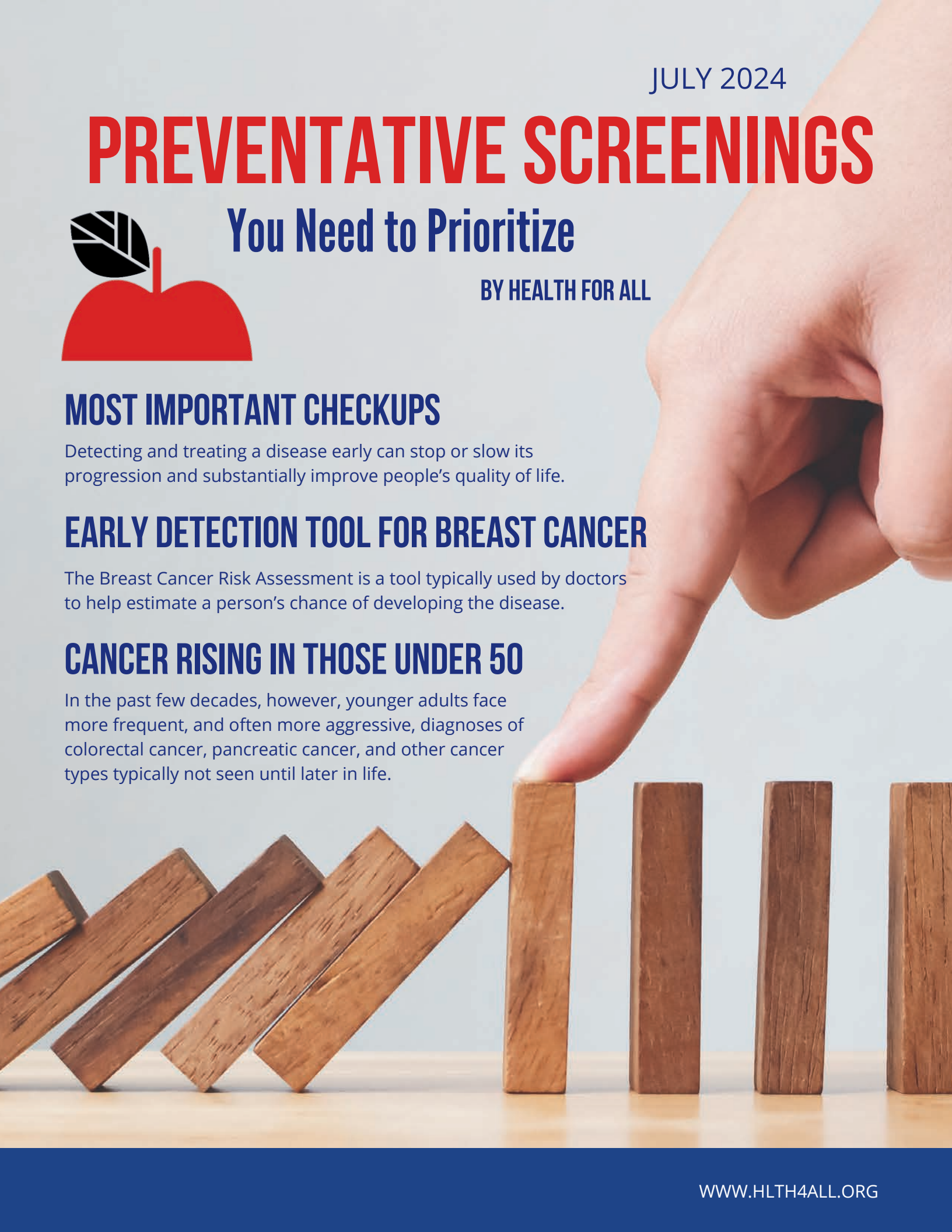
Detecting and treating a disease early can stop or slow its progression and substantially improve people's quality of life.

EARLY DETECTION TOOL FOR BREAST CANCER

The Breast Cancer Risk Assessment is a tool typically used by doctors to help estimate a person's chance of developing the disease.

CANCER RISING IN THOSE UNDER 50

In the past few decades, however, younger adults face more frequent, and often more aggressive, diagnoses of colorectal cancer, pancreatic cancer, and other cancer types typically not seen until later in life.



Preventative Health Appointments— Here Are the Checkups to Prioritize

“The reason that we do these tests is to catch things early,” Dr. Nancy Dickey, MD, the Clinical Director for Health for All, Bryan Texas, “There are always things we can do.” It begins with bloodwork.

Routine Blood Work

Routine blood work allows doctors to measure lipids, cholesterol levels, blood sugar levels, and complete blood count. These numbers can indicate disorders—like anemia or immune system issues—or chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinology recommends that women at normal risk get screened for lipid disorders every one to two years starting at age 55.

Most should plan to have their blood sugar levels screened around age 35. But individuals with a family history of diabetes should have their blood sugar levels screened earlier than that.

“In general, people should plan to have their blood work done every three or so years. However, many individuals will need to do so annually—or potentially every three or six months—if they have abnormal test results or an underlying health condition like high blood pressure or diabetes”, said Dr. Dickey.





Blood Pressure Screening

Blood pressure is typically taken at the start of every medical appointment. Elevated blood pressure levels can be a marker of heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure, all of which can be treated with medications and lifestyle changes like diet or weight loss

Mental Health Screening

Mental health screenings generally involve a brief questionnaire and can be conducted by primary care physicians, community centers, or clinics. Everyone 18 and older should be screened for depression at least once a year. The frequency of these screenings will vary based on each individual's risk factors, comorbid conditions, and life events.

Colon Cancer Screening

Colon cancer is curable when it's detected early. Colonoscopies are considered "the gold standard" for detecting colon cancer, however, people without risk factors who want to go a less-invasive route can get a stool test done. Routine colonoscopies should begin at age 45.

"AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE."

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Sexual HEALTH



Sexually-Transmitted Infection (STI)

While there are a number of STIs that women can get tested for, there are four that people should be screened for: syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV.

Chlamydia rarely causes symptoms in women; however, it's strongly associated with infertility. Gonorrhea, on the other hand, is easier to detect since it triggers noticeable symptoms. Untreated, it can lead to further health issues like pelvic inflammatory disease for women and liver damage, and arthritis for others.

People under the age of 25 should be screened for chlamydia and gonorrhea at least once. People over 25 who have new or multiple sexual partners should plan to get tested for chlamydia and gonorrhea more frequently, ideally once a year, and if need be, every three to six months.

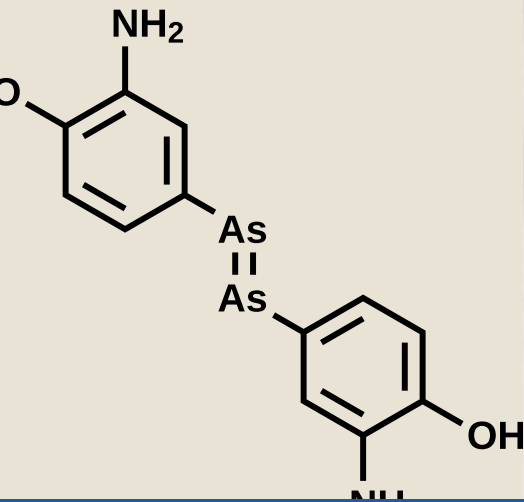
Everyone is advised to get tested for HIV at least once—those at risk should get tested at least once a year.

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The CDC found that syphilis cases are the highest they've been since the 1950s

Experts recommend seeing a doctor if you believe you've been exposed to syphilis, as well as wearing condoms or dental dams anytime you have sex with someone who isn't your regular partner to decrease your risk of infection.



LOCAL STD TESTING

Brazos County Health District
201 North Texas Avenue · Bryan, TX 77803-5317
(979) 361-4440
healthdept@brazoscountytexas.gov · www.brazoshealth.org

Community Health Services

Tuberculosis Testing

Schedule

Skin TB Testing Fees*: \$25

Regular Immunization Clinic Hours

QFT TB Testing Fees*: \$70

By Appointment Only Tue: 8:30-11:30 am

Hep B Testing

Schedule

Hepatitis B Titer*: \$40

\By appointment on Tuesdays

HEP C Screening Schedule

Free with any clinic visit

\$10 without a clinic visit

Sexually Transmitted Infections Clinic

Schedule for Testing, Treatment & Counseling
for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea

Mon: 8:30 am–1:30 pm

Trichomoniasis, Syphilis & HIV*: \$60

Wed: 1:30-4:00 pm

Herpes Testing*: \$50

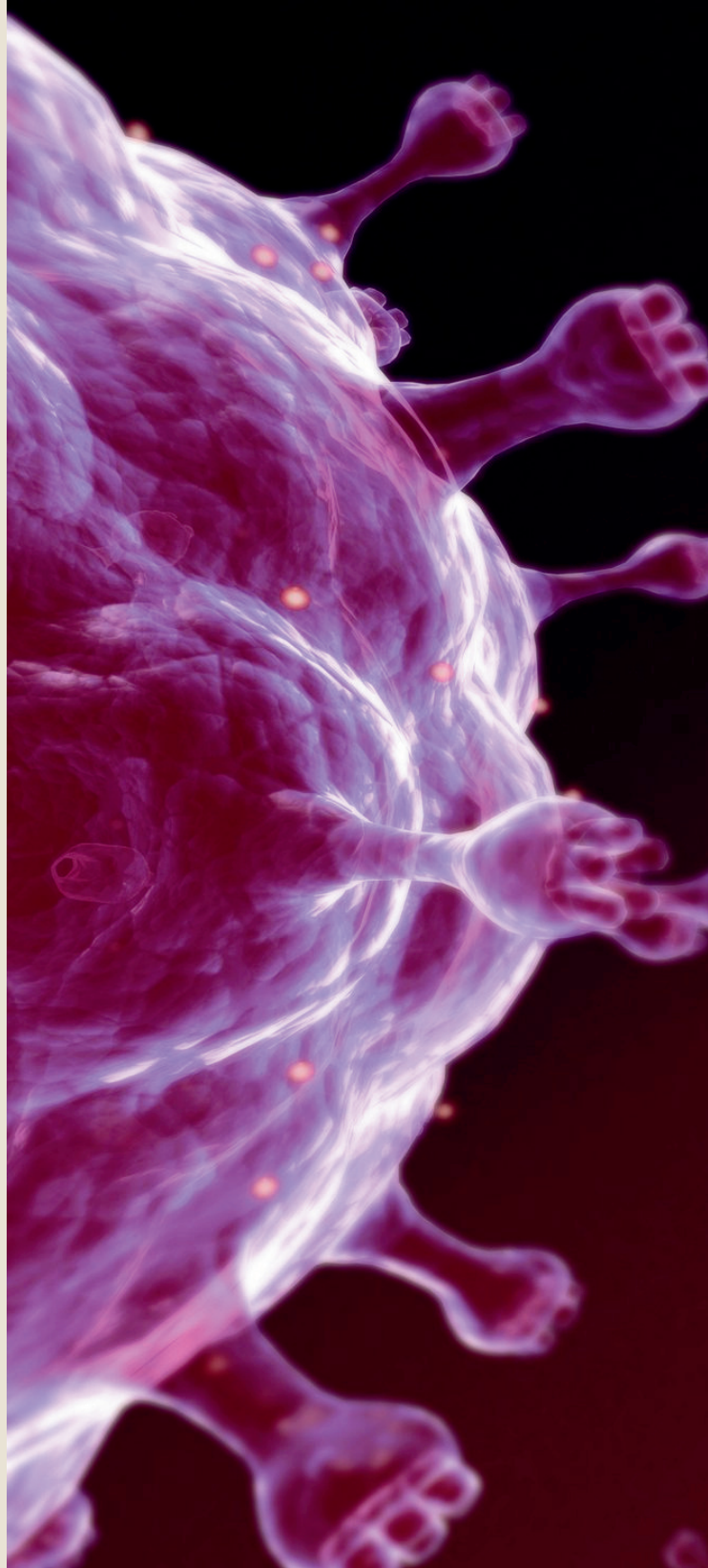
Fri: 7:45 am-12:00 pm

Herpes Treatment*: \$20

Last Wed of the Month: 1:30-6:00 pm

Rapid HIV*: \$20

HPV Treatment: \$20 per session



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Lung Cancer Screening

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths, largely because it's rarely caught early. Early-stage lung cancer has a better prognosis, making routine screenings potentially life-saving. Detecting lung cancer early can significantly improve longevity and quality of life.

People between the ages of 50 to 80 who smoke or used to smoke heavily should get their lungs examined for lung cancer. The lungs are screened via a CT scan, which is repeated annually until it's been 15 years since the patient has smoked.

Teeth Cleaning and Dental Exams

Everyone should aim to get dental cleanings every six months. People who get cavities or gum disease despite having regular cleanings may consider having their teeth cleaned every three months.

Regular dental cleanings prevent gum disease and cavities and help lower the risk of infections and many other health conditions, like heart attacks. "Good oral health really sets you up for good general health," said Amanda Cross, HFA's Dental Program Manager.



Women's Health Screenings

Pap Tests

Pap tests, more commonly referred to as pap smears, help physicians. During a pap smear, cells are scraped from the cervix and sent to a laboratory where the sample is examined. Lab technicians look for two things: traces of the human papillomavirus (HPV) or abnormal changes in the uterine cells that are indicative of cervical cancer. Caught early, cervical cancer is curable, which is why you want to avoid skipping your routine pap smears.

Regular pap exams kick off at age 21 and are done every three years. At age 30, women can be tested for HPV in addition to the pap smear—if those results are normal, they can wait another five years before their next pap smear. This routine examination continues until age 65.

Mammograms

Mammograms, or X-ray screenings of the breasts, look for early signs of breast cancer. Up to 1 in 8 women get breast cancer in their lifetime, so “as common as it is, it’s a really important test for women to be doing,” says Dr. Nancy Dickey, Clinical Director, Health For All.

Most women should start getting mammograms around age 40, repeating the procedure every one to two years. Those considered to be at risk may also need to undergo other types of screenings, like MRI scans or ultrasounds, to rule cancer out.

Bone Density Test

Women are advised to get their first bone density test at age 65. These tests, which essentially take a scan of the hip and backbones to measure the bones’ thickness, help women gauge their risk of future fractures. Women at risk—those who smoke, weigh less than 126 pounds, have lost at least two inches in height, or have gone through menopause—may qualify for a bone density test earlier.



Breast Cancer Risk Tool

The Breast Cancer Risk Assessment is a tool commonly used by physicians to estimate an individual's risk of developing breast cancer, according to Jason Mouabbi, MD, assistant professor of Breast Medical Oncology at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Two widely used models are the Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Tool (BCRAT), also known as the Gail Model, and the Tyrer-Cuzick (IBIS) model. These models assess factors such as age, family history, and menstrual history to calculate risk percentages over five years, ten years, and a lifetime.

Gail Model: <https://bcrisktool.cancer.gov/>

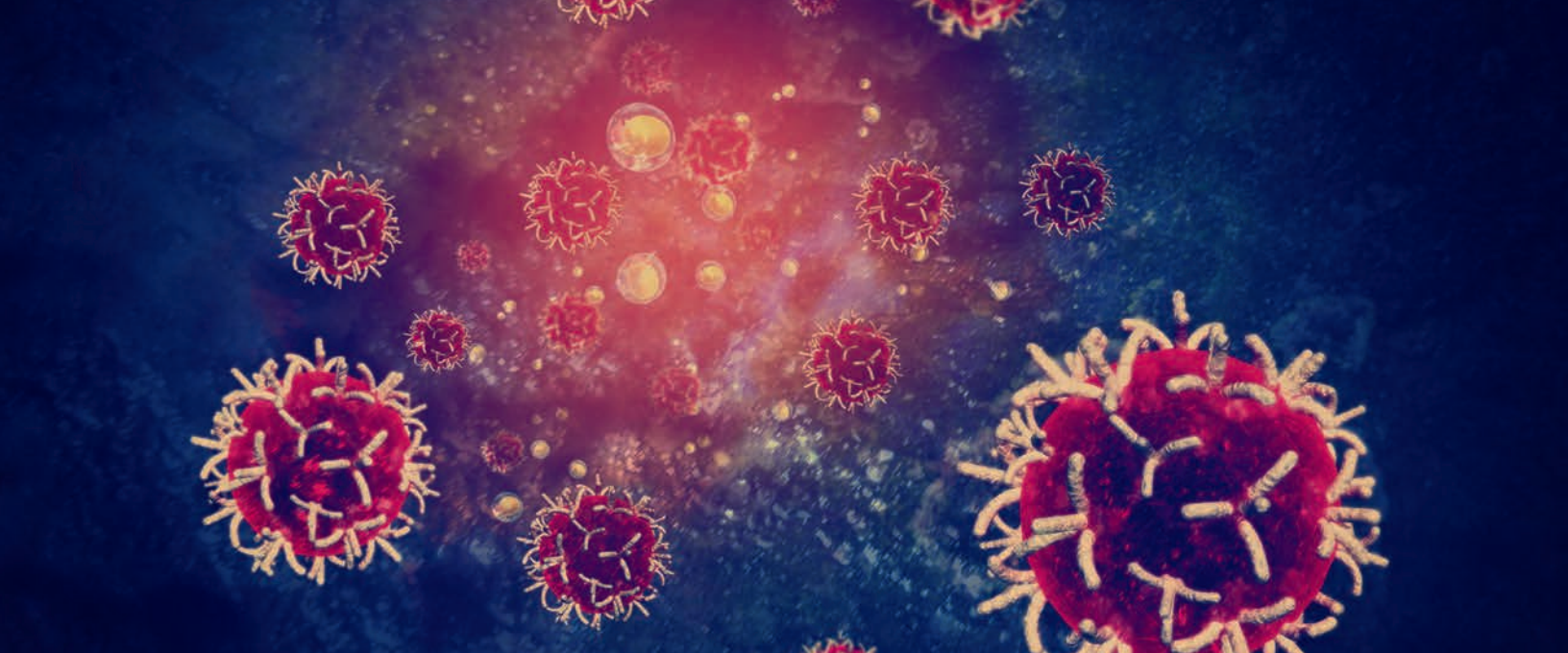
Tyrer-Cuzick Model: <https://ibis-risk-calculator.magview.com/>

While the Gail Model often underestimates risk, the Tyrer-Cuzick model may overestimate it. Therefore, physicians typically consider both models alongside other factors to develop personalized screening strategies, including the possible addition of breast MRIs to annual mammograms. These assessments also help determine if a patient might benefit from preventive therapies like tamoxifen, which can reduce breast cancer risk by about 40%,



While you can calculate your risk score on your own, since the assessment tools are available online, it is recommended to do it with a physician in order to properly answer more nuanced questions, like breast density value.

Oncologists, OB-GYNs, and primary care physicians are all qualified to assist with these risk assessment tools.



How to Interpret your Risk Score

After completing a breast cancer risk assessment, you'll receive a score that presents your risk of developing breast cancer over the next five or ten years, as well as your lifetime risk, in percentage form.

Using the Gail Model, your score indicates whether your risk is at or above average compared to individuals of the same age, race, and ethnicity, and the general population.

For example, if your five-year risk is 3% and the population risk for your age group is 1.5%, your relative risk would be 2. This means your risk of developing breast cancer in the next five years is twice that of the general population.

In the Tyrer-Cuzick (TC) model, a score below 15% is considered average risk. Intermediate risk falls between 15-20%, and a high-risk score is above 20%. Those with a low or intermediate risk should start regular self-exams at age 25 and routine mammograms at 40. High-risk individuals should consider requesting a screening breast MRI from their physician.

It's essential to understand that these scores estimate risk but do not predict with certainty whether you will develop breast cancer.



Cancer Rising in Those Under 50

In the past few decades, however, younger adults face more frequent, and often more aggressive, diagnoses of colorectal cancer, pancreatic cancer, and other cancer types typically not seen until later in life. Those diagnoses may upend their lives during some of the most formative and pivotal years.

Between 1999 and 2019, early-onset cancers—those diagnosed in people younger than 50—increased by nearly 15%. People in their 30s saw the highest annual growth in cancer incidence. Annual percent change in cancer incidence from 2010 to 2019.

The JAMA Network Open study showed the greatest number of diagnoses for cancers in people under 50 were in the breast, thyroid, and colon or rectum.

The fastest-growing cancers among young adults, however, are cancers of the appendix and the intrahepatic bile duct—the thin tubes that connect the liver, gallbladder, and small intestine. Digestive tract cancers like these increased by 15% over the study's 10-year period.

Gastrointestinal cancer rates are growing the fastest

Researchers largely agree that shifts in lifestyle in the U.S. are key drivers of cancer risk. Eating ultra-processed foods and lots of red meat, drinking sugar-sweetened beverages, not getting enough exercise, and sleeping poorly all appear to make people more susceptible to cancer.

The early-onset cancer trends appear to be especially strongly linked to rising rates of obesity. A study published in *Lancet Public Health* in 2019 showed that half of obesity-related cancers have become more common in young adults, compared to one in nine non-obesity-related cancers.

Health providers may find early signs of cancer in young people when giving a medical scan or test for an unrelated symptom or condition. Sometimes, for instance, a routine blood test identifies signs of thyroid or kidney cancer.



Take Control - Prevention

Preventing cancers that affect individuals under 50 involves a combination of lifestyle changes, early detection, and awareness of risk factors. Here are strategies to reduce the risk of developing these cancers:

1. Breast Cancer:

- Lifestyle Choices: Maintain a healthy weight, limit alcohol consumption, and engage in regular physical activity.
- Early Detection: Regular self-exams and screening mammograms starting at age 40 or earlier if there's a family history.
- Genetic Testing: For those with a family history, consider genetic testing for BRCA mutations.

2. Colorectal Cancer:

- Diet: Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and limit red and processed meats.
- Screening: Begin regular screenings at age 45, or earlier if there's a family history.
- Physical Activity: Regular exercise helps reduce risk.

3. Thyroid Cancer:

- Avoid Excessive Radiation Exposure: Particularly during childhood.
- Regular Checkups: If there's a family history, consider regular thyroid exams.

4. Melanoma:

- Sun Protection: Use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, wear protective clothing, and avoid tanning beds.
- Regular Skin Checks: Monitor for changes in moles or new skin growths and consult a dermatologist regularly.

5. Testicular Cancer:

- Self-Exams: Regular self-examinations can help detect changes early.
- Awareness: Be aware of any unusual lumps or pain and seek medical advice promptly.

6. Leukemia:

- Avoiding Toxins: Limit exposure to chemicals such as benzene, a risk factor for leukemia.
- Healthy Lifestyle: Maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine to boost overall immunity.

7. Lymphoma:

- Healthy Immune System: Avoiding known risk factors, such as certain infections (e.g., HIV), can reduce the risk.
- Regular Medical Checkups: If there's a family history, regular checkups can help in early detection.

8. Cervical Cancer:

- HPV Vaccination: The HPV vaccine can significantly reduce the risk of cervical cancer.
- Regular Screenings: Pap smears and HPV tests are crucial for early detection.

9. Pancreatic Cancer:

- Healthy Weight: Maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding smoking can reduce the risk.
- Awareness: Know the symptoms and risk factors, especially if there's a family history.

10. Sarcomas:

- Avoid Radiation Exposure: Minimize exposure to unnecessary radiation.
- Healthy Lifestyle: A balanced diet and regular exercise can help maintain overall health.



Breast Cancer

Support Group

A safe, inviting environment that allows breast cancer patients and survivors to share feelings and concerns, and receive emotional support through small group discussion.

Meetings feature guest speakers on special interest topics for breast cancer patients and provide practical advice, information, and publications.

Meetings are FREE and open to all breast cancer patients and survivors within the Brazos Valley, regardless of where they are receiving or received treatment. No pre-registration is required.

Breast cancer survivors Patricia Gerling and Doris Light serve as program planners and co-facilitators, with support from board members of Pink Alliance.

For more information, please email or call US

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Doris Light [\(979\) 587-1342](tel:979-587-1342)

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