

# HARC'S GUIDE ON Breast Cancer Awareness Month



In the United States, 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Thus, October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual campaign to increase attention, awareness and support for early detection and treatment for this disease. In this infographic, HARC aims to provide Coachella Valley data and information about breast cancer, such as known risks factors, myths, and a local resource.

## Breast Cancer in the Coachella Valley

Cancer is the **second leading cause of death** in the Coachella Valley, in California, and in the United States.

12.5%

In the Coachella Valley, **12.5% of local adults** have been diagnosed with cancer. Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer, followed by breast cancer.<sup>2</sup>

19.4%

**1 in 5 of local cancer survivors** have been diagnosed with breast cancer. This equals to about 8,273 local adults.<sup>2</sup>

6.3%

The majority of women (93.7%) over 40 years old have had a mammogram screening for breast cancer. However, **6.3% or 7,426 women in the valley**, may be in need of a mammogram.<sup>2</sup>

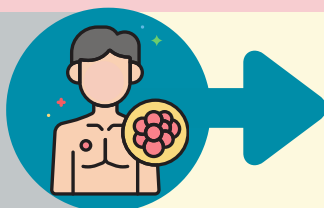


## Myths

vs.

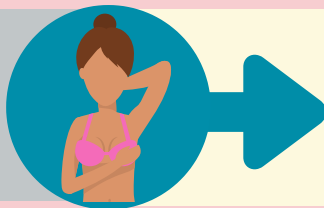
## Facts

Men do not get breast cancer. Breast cancer only affects women.



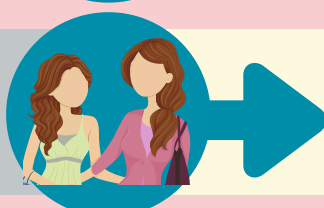
Although the percentage of men with breast cancer is small, men actually have a higher mortality rate than women.<sup>3</sup> This may be due to the lack of awareness among men.

Finding a lump in your breast means you have breast cancer.



Only a small percentage of breast lumps turn out to be cancer.<sup>3</sup> Either way, lumps or changes in breast tissue should not be ignored.

Breast cancer only affects those with a family history.



Only 10% of people diagnosed with breast cancer have a family history.<sup>3</sup> Breast cancer could affect anyone.

# Known Risk Factors



- **Gender.** Women are more likely to get breast cancer than men.<sup>4</sup>
- **Age.** The risk for breast cancer increases with age. Most breast cancers are diagnosed after 50.<sup>4</sup>
- **Personal or Family History.** Women who have had breast cancer are likely to have it again.<sup>4</sup>
- **Breast Density.** Having dense breasts can sometimes make it hard to see tumors on a mammogram.<sup>4</sup>

# Desert Cancer Foundation

Desert Cancer Foundation assists residents who lack health insurance or funds to pay for medical care.

If you or someone you know is in need of cancer screening, diagnostic services or cancer treatment, and needs help paying for care, visit:

<https://www.desertcancerfoundation.org>

## Personal Story from HARC's Founding CEO

### Eileen Packer



I was diagnosed with Stage 3+ breast cancer on March 1, 2001, my husband's birthday. What a birthday present! This was just 9 months after moving to the Desert from Los Angeles to a new life that was filled with optimism and new challenges.

With the move to the Desert, I had delayed getting a mammogram, and would not have had one, if not for winning one at a Saks Fifth Avenue event raising money for cancer causes in the Desert. My cancer was aggressive so any further the delay could have cost me my life.

It was a long and winding road, with many twists and turns. Surgery, chemo and radiation and then a second surgery, engulfed the next year and a half of my life, and that of my husband, Howard. Howard's smile, caring and positive words kept me going, along with family and friends. If you have a family member or friend who has been diagnosed with breast cancer, keep in touch, and visit often to fill the many lonely recuperation hours.

We are fortunate to have both the Eisenhower Luci Curci Cancer Center and the DRMC Comprehensive Cancer here in the Desert with highly competent oncologists and support groups when in need.

If you hear those words, "You have breast cancer", just keep the belief that you will survive, no matter how dire the circumstances.

### Sources:

1. <https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-facts>
2. Coachella Valley Community Health Survey. (2019). HARC. Available online at: <https://harcddata.org/coachella-valley-community-health-survey/executive-report/>
3. <https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-myths/>
4. [https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic\\_info/risk\\_factors.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/risk_factors.htm)

For more resources,  
please visit:

[HARCdata.org](https://harcddata.org)

