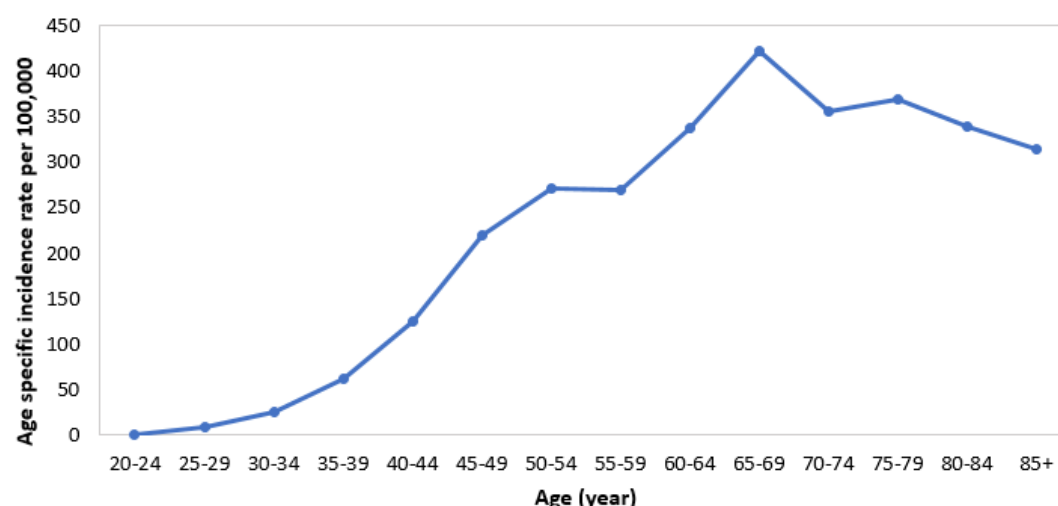


Risk of breast cancer for Australian women

Breast cancer is the most common cancer for Australian women. In Queensland, one in every 10 women will develop breast cancer by the age of 75 years. Increasing age is one of the strongest risk factors. Most breast cancers are diagnosed after the menopause, with about 79% of new cases occurring in women over the age of 50, and the average age of first diagnosis in women 61 years. Table 1 shows the approximate frequency of being diagnosed with breast cancer for women at different ages.

All women are at risk for breast cancer although some women are at higher risk than others. It is important to remember that some women at increased risk never develop breast cancer, while other women at low risk may develop the disease. Men are also at risk of breast cancer, although it is not as common in men as in women, with 1 in 675 men being diagnosed with breast cancer by age 85.

Table 1. Estimated age specific incidence for female breast cancer, Australia, 2018



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. <https://breast-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/statistics>

Factors other than ageing can also increase the risk of breast cancer. These include family history of breast cancer, breast diseases such as ductal carcinoma *in situ* (DCIS) and lobular carcinoma *in situ* (LCIS), long-term hormonal replacement therapy, high body mass, and lifestyle factors such as physical inactivity, alcohol consumption, smoking, and exposure to ionising radiation. While many risk factors such as age, family history of breast cancer and genetic status are not modified, the behavioural risk factors are largely modifiable.

Most people survive breast cancer, with a five-year relative survival rate of 90.8% for people diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011-2015.

Information sources

- Understanding breast cancer, Breast Cancer Network Australia, <https://www.bcna.org.au/understanding-breast-cancer/>
- Current breast cancer statistics in Australia, Breast Cancer Network Australia, 2019, <https://www.bcna.org.au/media/7111/bcna-2019-current-breast-cancer-statistics-in-australia-11jan2019.pdf>



- General breast cancer information - Cancer Council, <https://www.cancer.org.au/about-cancer/types-of-cancer/breast-cancer/>
- For general breast cancer enquiries, contact BreastScreen Australia, ph: 13 20 50.
- The Australian Burden of Disease Study 2011. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/d4df9251-c4b6-452f-a877-8370b6124219/19663.pdf.aspx?inline=true>
- To estimate your risk of breast cancer, complete the *Know Your Risk* questionnaire at <https://pinkhope.org.au/know-your-risk/> - Pink Hope & Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Victoria Australia, 2017