Sisters Network® Inc. is the only national African American breast cancer survivorship organization in the United States and a leading voice in the fight against breast cancer in the Black community.

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BREAST CANCER & AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

Celebrating 25 Years of Service
Founded in 1994
Breast Cancer is the most fatal health issue for African American Women

- Though Black women get breast cancer at a slightly lower incidence rate than white women, Black women are 42% more likely to die of breast cancer.
- Black women under age 35 get breast cancer at two times the rate of white women and die from breast cancer three times as often as white women.
- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among black women, and an estimated 33,840 new cases are expected to be diagnosed in 2019.
- In 2019, Black women will make up 12.5% of all new breast cancer cases and 15.5% of all breast cancer deaths.
- The overall 5-year relative survival rate for breast cancer diagnosed is 81% for black women versus 91% for white women.
- 54% of breast cancers in black women are diagnosed at a local stage, compared to 64% in white women.

Breast Cancer should not be a death sentence so why are African American women dying?

- Black women FEAR a cancer diagnosis and often avoid screening.
- Black women have less access to health care or health insurance so may have lower frequency of and longer intervals between mammograms.
- Black women diagnosed with breast cancer have more than twice the likelihood of being diagnosed with a sub-type called Triple Negative Breast Cancer. It has no therapies to prevent recurrence and it affects younger women.
- Black women are often at a more advanced stage upon diagnosis.
- Black women may not follow up on abnormal mammogram results because they can’t afford the diagnostic testing.
- Black women have less access to the same prompt high quality treatment that white women have.
- Black women express that they often feel disrespected by physicians and staff.
- While 92% of black women agree breast health is important, only 25% have recently discussed breast health with their family, friends, or colleagues. And, only 17% have taken steps to understand their risk for breast cancer.
- Black women often take care of others at the expense of their own health.

Sisters’ Message to You

- EARLY DETECTION IS CRITICAL!
- Know your History! Talk to your family about breast cancer.
- If you have a family history, ask your doctor for a gene test and set up your screening regimen.
- If you don’t have a family history, you are still at risk! Only 5% of breast cancers are hereditary!
- Know what your “normal” feels like so you can easily recognize when something is abnormal. If you feel something abnormal, get it checked by a doctor immediately.
- African American women have dense breasts. When you get a mammogram, go to a facility that only has 3D mammography.
- If you know that something doesn’t feel right or look right, and you don’t feel like your doctor is giving you the attention you deserve, find another doctor. Trust your gut and advocate for yourself.
- Monthly self breast exams can save your life! Check the breasts you love.

Sources: American Cancer Society - Facts + Figures, Center for Disease Control