

# Breastfeeding Reduces the Risk of Breast Cancer



## Your patients may not know this.

A recent study found less than 17% of mothers received information from healthcare providers about breastfeeding reducing their risk of breast cancer.<sup>1</sup>

## What you say makes a difference.

From this same study, women who knew breastfeeding reduced their risk of breast cancer **breastfed longer** than those without this knowledge (13.2 versus 9.3 months). And 36% of mothers said this knowledge affected their decision to breastfeed. Of those who did not breastfeed, 59% said that **awareness of risk reduction would have influenced their decision to breastfeed.**

<sup>1</sup>“Learning, Life, and Lactation: Knowledge of Breastfeeding’s Impact on Breast Cancer Risk Reduction and Its Influence on Breastfeeding Practices.” Akaansha Ganju, Anupama Suresh, Julie Stephens, Marilly Palettas, Diana Burke, Laura Miles, K Lehman, R Rudesill, Maryam Lustberg, Seuli Bose-Brill, and Bhuvanawari Ramaswamy. *Breastfeeding Medicine* 2018 13:10, 651-656

## ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING REDUCING THE RISK OF BREAST CANCER:

1. **Tell patients** that breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast cancer—even if the woman is not of childbearing age. She is probably a friend or family member to women who are having children. She will pass this information along.
2. **Add lactation history to patient health history form**—this will raise awareness about the woman’s breastfeeding history and its impact on her lifelong health.
3. **Provide patients with the accompanying “Patient” handout**—this information may be personally useful and/or may be shared with others in their lives.

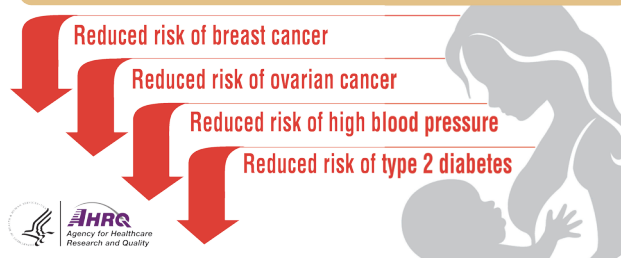
## BREASTFEEDING IS ONE OF THE FEW THINGS YOUR PATIENTS CAN DO THAT IS KNOWN TO REDUCE THEIR RISK OF BREAST CANCER:

- Breastfeeding causes changes in hormones that can delay menstrual periods returning after giving birth.
- Fewer periods means less lifetime exposure to hormones like estrogen, which can cause breast cancer cells to grow.
- The more breastfeeding, the lower the risk –
  - ❖ For every 12 months of breastfeeding, the risk of breast cancer goes down by 4.3%.<sup>2</sup>
  - ❖ The 12-month time period could be with one child or the total time breastfeeding several children.
- Black women are more likely to get breast cancer and less likely to breastfeed than other groups -
  - ❖ Death rates from breast cancer are 39% higher for black women compared with white women across the nation<sup>3</sup>
  - ❖ Breastfeeding rates are 17% lower for Black women compared to white women in the U.S.<sup>4</sup>
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk for ovarian cancer, Type 2 Diabetes, stroke and high blood pressure

## DO YOUR PATIENTS NEED HELP WITH BREASTFEEDING?

It’s as simple as entering their zip code in the Local Resource Directory from the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition at <http://ksbreastfeeding.org/local-resources/>. Breastfeeding support resources are populated on a map and they can choose the right support for them.

### Benefits Associated with Moms Who Breastfeed



<sup>2</sup> Breast cancer and breastfeeding: collaborative reanalysis of individual data from 47 epidemiological studies in 30 countries, including 50 302 women with breast cancer and 96 973 women without the disease. *The Lancet*, Volume 360, Issue 9328, 187 - 195

<sup>3</sup> American Cancer Society. *Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2017-2018*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, Inc. 2017

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/nis\\_data/rates-any-exclusive-bf-socio-dem-2015.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/nis_data/rates-any-exclusive-bf-socio-dem-2015.htm) Accessed July 1, 2019

Breastfeeding Programs and Policies, Breastfeeding Uptake, and Maternal Health Outcomes in Developed Countries. Comparative Effectiveness Review No. 210. AHRQ Publication No. 18-EHC014-EF. July 2018



Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.

[ksbreastfeeding.org](http://ksbreastfeeding.org)