

# Abortion's Link to Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in American women, second only to skin cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2021, 281,550 American women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and 43,600 American women will lose their lives to the disease. In spite of these statistics, many women are being kept in the dark about a preventable risk factor of breast cancer: abortion. Due to the politics surrounding abortion, many organizations are afraid to speak out about the link between abortion and breast cancer.

## Is Abortion a Risk Factor for Breast Cancer?

When a woman becomes pregnant her body begins to go through biological changes in order to prepare for childbirth. Increased levels of estrogen during pregnancy cause a woman's breasts to enlarge with cells that will eventually allow for milk production. By the time of a full-term birth these cells have differentiated into milk producing tissue and have stopped multiplying. These cells are resistant to cancer because they have been differentiated into a specific type of cell and the cell multiplication process has been stopped.

If a woman has an abortion before her 3rd trimester of pregnancy, her breasts are left with more undifferentiated cells that are more vulnerable to cancer than if she had never been pregnant.

## What About Miscarriages?

Researchers have found that most miscarriages don't raise the risk of breast cancer because these pregnancies don't cause as much tissue growth nor produce enough estrogen, which is the driving factor behind the proliferation of undifferentiated, cancer-vulnerable cells.

## What Do the Scientific Studies Show?

57 out of 73 worldwide studies dating back to 1957 have shown that abortion increases a woman's risk of getting breast cancer—33 of these studies were statistically significant. 19 of the 23 studies from the United States show that abortion is associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.<sup>1</sup>

One study which appeared in the International Journal of Epidemiology in 1989 and relied on New York state medical records reported that abortion increased a woman's risk of getting breast cancer by 90%.<sup>2</sup>

In 1996, Dr. Joel Brind combined the statistics from 23 different worldwide studies and found a 30% increase of breast cancer risk among women who chose abortion after already giving birth and a 50% increase of breast cancer risk among women who chose abortion before giving birth.<sup>3</sup>

It is also universally recognized by experts that having a first full-term birth at an early age lowers a woman's risk of getting breast cancer. Another study published in the Lancet found that breast feeding is another way women can lower their risk of breast cancer.<sup>4</sup> Women who abort their first pregnancy don't get the protective effects of a first full-term pregnancy and don't receive the protective effects of breast feeding.

## Flawed Study Cited by Pro-abortion Organizations

Pro-abortion organizations often like to quote a study done on Danish women in an attempt to prove that abortion has no link to breast cancer.<sup>5</sup> This study was flawed in a couple of ways. First, it counted thousands of women who had abortions as not having abortions since in Denmark abortion was legalized in 1939,

but the study didn't start recording women who had abortions until 1973 when the abortion records were computerized. Second, the Melbye study started counting cases of breast cancer in 1968 even though it didn't start counting abortions until 1973. They were trying to determine if abortion caused breast cancer but were including cases of women who had breast cancer 5 years before they recognized abortions as occurring. It is also noteworthy that in the Melbye study the average age of women procuring an abortion was over the age of 25 while in the United States the average age of women getting abortions is around 25. Other studies that claim that there is no link are often skewed because they combine statistics from spontaneous abortions (miscarriages) with induced abortions, but it's already been established that miscarriages don't carry the same risk. Another major flaw is a lack of long-term follow-up as breast cancer can take 8-10 years to develop.<sup>6</sup> Not taking these into consideration will skew the findings in a way dangerous to women.

### **Women Should Be Told**

Even if pro-abortion groups can't accept that abortion takes the life of an innocent human being they should at least warn women of the possible risks relating to breast cancer that having an abortion can cause. Women should have the right to know that many worldwide studies show that abortion can increase a woman's risk of getting breast cancer later in life.

#### **References:**

- <sup>1</sup> "Epidemiologic Studies: Induced Abortion and Breast Cancer Risk," Breast Cancer Prevention Institute, 2014, [https://www.aaplog.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BCPI-FactSheet-Epidemiol-studies\\_2014-2.pdf](https://www.aaplog.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BCPI-FactSheet-Epidemiol-studies_2014-2.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Holly L. Howe et al., "Early Abortion and Breast Cancer Risk among Women under Age 40," *International Journal of Epidemiology* 18, no. 2 (1989): 300-304.
- <sup>3</sup> J. Brind et al., "Induced abortion as an independent risk factor for breast cancer: a comprehensive review and meta-analysis," *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 50 (1996): 481-496.
- <sup>4</sup> Valerie Beral et al., "Breast cancer and breastfeeding," *The Lancet* 360 (2002): 187-195.
- <sup>5</sup> Mads Melbye et al., "Induced Abortion and the Risk of Breast Cancer," *New England Journal of Medicine* 336, no. 2 (1997): 81-85.
- <sup>6</sup> "Abortion and the Risk of Breast Cancer: Information for the Adolescent Woman and Her Parents," American College of Pediatricians, 2013, <https://www.acped.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/health-issues/abortion-and-the-risk-of-breast-cancer-information-for-the-adolescent-woman-and-her-parents>