

Risk factors for breast cancer are an important tool in providing clues to pathogenesis and identifying patients likely to benefit from surveillance and risk reduction interventions. Although breast cancer can develop in both sexes, women are at greatly increased risk and breast cancer in males is uncommon. Age is a useful risk factor applied everyday in clinical practice; breast cancer is rare in women younger than 30 and very common in women older than 60. Family history is most significant when breast cancer affects young first-degree relatives (mothers, sisters, and daughters) and when cases of ovarian cancer are found within the same side of the family. Histologic risk factors most concerning are ADH (acute ductal hyperplasia), ALH (atypical lobar hyperplasia), and LCIS (Lobar carcinoma in situ).