

# Women's Health **UPDATE**

## With Age Comes Wisdom; Be Wise About The Risks Of Breast Cancer As You Age

(NAPSA)—As women age, concerns about their health often increase. Heart disease and debilitating disorders such as Alzheimer's become more prevalent with age.

But many women may be surprised to learn that as they age, their risk of developing breast cancer rises as well. Therefore, becoming knowledgeable about the risk factors for breast cancer, including your own personal history, is essential to have a meaningful discussion with your doctor or health care professional about breast cancer.



**Carroll**

Approximately 200,000 new breast cancer cases are diagnosed in the United States each year, and most of them are in women over age 50. From ages 30 to 39, the risk of developing breast cancer is one out of 229; from ages 40 to 49, the risk is one out of 68; however, from ages 50 to 59, the risk jumps to one out of 37, and from ages 60 to 69, the risk is one out of 26.2

A recent Harris Interactive survey showed that only 37 percent of

women aged 55 or older become more concerned about developing breast cancer as they age, and 75 percent didn't realize that being over age 50 is a significant risk factor.

The national survey was conducted on behalf of the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH) and Eli Lilly and Company to better understand women's knowledge and attitudes about breast cancer risk factors. It is part of *Strength in Knowing: The Facts and Fiction of Breast Cancer Risk* campaign, which was designed to help women separate the facts from myths regarding breast cancer risks. The survey findings validate the need to educate all women, especially older women, about risk factors that can lead to the development of breast cancer.

"I was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 63, and because I had no family history of breast cancer, I didn't know I was at risk because of my age," said TV personality Diahann Carroll. "Now I constantly ask my health care professionals questions about my health, including my breast health, because I've learned that

it is my responsibility to find out what will keep me as healthy as I can be."

Carroll was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1998 and underwent surgery and radiation therapy. Since then, she has worked to increase cancer awareness.

Many women believe that family history and genetic mutations are the only risk factors; however, only 15 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer have a close family member (e.g., mother, sister) with the disease, and a smaller percentage are a result of an inherited genetic mutation.

"As a nurse practitioner, I've seen many cases of breast cancer in older women—some actually denied that they could even have the disease because of their age," said Susan Wysocki, president and CEO of NPWH. "This survey validates the need to educate women about risks that can lead to breast cancer and understand how they can determine their own risk."

For information on breast cancer risk factors and questions to ask a doctor or health care professional about the risk factors for breast cancer, visit [www.strengthinknowing.com](http://www.strengthinknowing.com).