



She's Not Too Young: A CAKES body x BCRF Fund for Younger Women with Breast Cancer

A Heartfelt Commitment to Awareness, Prevention, & Empowerment

October 2025

Breast Cancer is on the Rise Among Younger Women

Breast cancer incidence is on the rise-most alarmingly in younger women.

Women ages 20-39 saw **double** the rate of increased incidence compared to women 50+ over the past decade.

Yet despite medical advances, women diagnosed under 40 are more likely to have worse outcomes due to later detection and more aggressive tumor biology.

These women are not just patients. They're **new moms. College students. Brides. Entrepreneurs. Sisters. Daughters. Friends.**

What We Know: Younger Women Are Among the Most Vulnerable

Yet too many are told: “You’re too young for breast cancer.”

Thanks to research, we know:

- **Younger patients face unique challenges**, including fertility concerns, early menopause, and lack of long-term emotional, physical, and social support.
- **Age-based screening misses high-risk young women**, leading to later diagnoses and worse outcomes. As younger women aren’t routinely screened, detection may be delayed despite presenting symptoms.
- **Younger women often have more aggressive and more unique tumor biology that lack targeted treatments**, particularly for under-studied categories like postpartum breast cancer and pregnancy-associated breast cancer.
- **Younger women are more likely to have dense breasts**, which can obscure signs of cancer in a mammogram.
- **Younger breast cancer patients face disparities**. Black women are most likely to be diagnosed at younger ages and have double the mortality rate of younger white women.



What We're Doing: Closing the Gaps in Research

BCRF is seeking to improve care for younger patients and reverse this trend.

BCRF researchers are focused on understanding breast cancer risk and developing new treatments that will benefit younger women by:

- **Investigating the unique challenges young patients face:** BCRF is funding research to help young women with breast cancer live fuller, healthier lives—exploring more fertility options, mental health support, nutrition, and more.
- **Moving towards risk-based screening:** To catch breast cancer early in young women, we need to better identify risk factors and genetic markers. By sharpening our ability to stratify risk and then develop personalized recommendations, young women can be properly screened.
- **Improving screening technology:** To help younger women benefit from early detection, we are working to improve screening accuracy—especially for those with dense breast tissue.
- **Ending black women's disparities:** BCRF directs 25 percent of its research funding to triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), a more aggressive form that disproportionately affects this group, fueling breakthroughs in treatment, immunology, and prevention.

What We've Done: Making Progress and Changing the Future

BCRF research has already had tremendous impact—improving outcomes and offering hope.

Research has revealed key breakthroughs:

- The BCRF-funded POSITIVE study reported that some patients could safely pause hormone therapy to attempt pregnancy and not increase risk of short-term breast cancer recurrence.
- The BCRF-funded CARRIERS study has unveiled genetic mutations that collectively increase risk for women with no family history of the disease—a critical breakthrough since upwards of 80% of breast cancers have no family history of the disease and 90% have no known genetic mutations that elevate cancer risk.
- A simple blood test could now help detect breast cancer earlier and more accurately—thanks to a new liquid biopsy technology developed by BCRF investigators.
- Targeting a natural protein called ER beta may help slow the growth and spread of triple-negative breast cancer, according to new research led by BCRF investigators.
- The Suppression of Ovarian Function Trial (SOFT), which analyzes tumor samples in premenopausal women with breast cancer, has demonstrated the benefit of ovarian function suppression with chemotherapy and endocrine therapy after surgery in women under 40.
- With support from BCRF, Clarity Breast is the first FDA-approved AI tool to predict a woman's 5-year breast cancer risk using just a routine mammogram.

We've made strides, but there is more work to be done.

A Love Letter to Women Everywhere

Every woman deserves to feel confident in her body—at every age, and in every moment.

But for thousands of women under 40, that journey is interrupted by the unimaginable: a breast cancer diagnosis.

CAKES body believes in rewriting that story—by investing in their health, their futures, and the science that can save them.



What You Can Do: The CAKES body Fund for Younger Women’s Breast Cancer

This fund is more than a name—it’s a promise. The A CAKES body Fund for Younger Women with Breast Cancer in partnership with the Breast Cancer Research Foundation will fuel lifesaving work that supports:



CAKES body proudly stands with BCRF, and with every woman facing breast cancer. The CAKES body Fund will be a lasting legacy of care for all women.

**We’re changing the story—
for this generation, and the next.**

The Research We'll Power Together

The **CAKES** body Fund will support the full spectrum of BCRF's research portfolio as it relates to breast cancer in younger women, including prevention and risk assessment, heredity, ethnicity and genetics, treatment, and survivorship projects like:



GRAHAM COLDITZ, DRPH, MD, MPH

His work helps us to understand how early life behaviors influence future breast cancer risk and refining risk assessment methods. He has developed an accessible, online questionnaire to help ascertain an individual's risk for cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.



SHERENE LOI, MMBS (HONS), FRACP, PHD, FAHMS

Her research is analyzing tumor samples in premenopausal women with breast cancer from the Suppression of Ovarian Function Trial (SOFT) which has demonstrated the benefit of the addition of ovarian function suppression to chemotherapy and endocrine therapy after surgery in women under 40.



OLUWADAMILOLA (LOLA) FAYANJU, MD

Her research focuses on identifying and addressing factors that contribute to racial disparities in breast cancer outcomes, including treatment delays or treatment non-adherence.



VIRGINIA BORGES, MD

Her work is improving outcomes for women with postpartum breast cancer (PPBC) by investigating biological events that occur after pregnancy which are thought to promote aggressive breast cancer.

GROUNDBREAKING SCIENCE. PROFOUND IMPACT.

Together we will end breast cancer

ABOUT THE BREAST CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION (BCRF)

Breast cancer is a complex disease with no simple solution. Research is the key to stopping it in its tracks. Founded in 1993 by Evelyn H. Lauder, BCRF is the largest private funder of breast cancer research in the world. By investing in the best minds in science to examine every aspect of the disease from prevention to metastasis—and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration—BCRF is accelerating the entire field and moves us closer to the answers we urgently need to be the end of breast cancer.

Learn more and get involved at [BCRF.org](https://www.bcrf.org).

