



Snapshot is a publication that demonstrates the uses of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data to illustrate various health behaviors among adult Californians. BRFSS is the largest, ongoing, telephone health survey in the world. Established in 1984, the California BRFSS is an annual effort by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Chronic Disease Surveillance and Research Branch, in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to assess the prevalence of and trends in health-related behaviors and to monitor preventable risk factors for chronic diseases and other leading causes of death in the California adult population.

BREAST CANCER SCREENING AMONG CALIFORNIA ADULT WOMEN, 2012—2018

Among women in California, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death. In 2018, 28,183 women in California were diagnosed with breast cancer, and 4,569 deaths from the disease occurred. Risk of breast cancer increases with age and varies across racial groups. White non-Hispanic women are more likely than Black non-Hispanic women to be diagnosed with breast cancer (138.8 versus 126.6, rates per 100,000, respectively), while the opposite is true for deaths from breast cancer. About 71 percent of female breast cancers diagnosed in California in 2018 were found at an early stage.¹ Early diagnosis of breast cancer through screening is associated with improved outcomes and reduced mortality.

Screening for breast cancer offers the ability for secondary prevention by detecting cancer early, before symptoms appear, and when treatment is most successful. Mammography is the most widely used screening modality for the detection of breast cancer. For women with an average risk for breast cancer, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends biennial screening mammography for women aged 50 to 74 years.²

The California BRFSS survey includes the following questions on breast cancer screening every two years.

California BRFSS Questions:

- 1) A mammogram is an x-ray of each breast to look for breast cancer. Have you ever had a mammogram?
[If 'yes' to 1] ...
- 2) How long has it been since you had your last mammogram?

California BRFSS breast cancer screening data pooled from 2012 to 2018 estimate 81.6 percent of California women, aged 50 to 74 years, report having a mammogram within the past two years in contrast to 18.4 percent having had a mammogram two or more years in the past. Studies have shown that some sociodemographic factors affect women's ability to meet breast cancer screening guidelines. Compared to women of other race/ethnic groups, Black, non-Hispanic women, aged 50 to 74 years, reported a higher prevalence of having a mammogram in the past two years (90.9 percent) while Hispanic women, of the same age range, reported the highest prevalence of having had a mammogram two or more years in the past (20.2 percent). Women aged 50 to 74 years with a college or post graduate degree (85.2 percent) were more likely to report having a mammogram within the past two years compared to women with lesser education. Breast cancer screening practices appear to increase with increased household income levels. Women aged 50 to 74 years without health insurance (54.7 percent) were significantly less likely to have received a mammogram within the past two years as compared to women possessing any type of healthcare coverage. These data present the need to sustain programs that provide screening to the uninsured and to enhance efforts to promote screening to women that have access to health care. (See Table 1).

Table 1. Breast Cancer Screening Behaviors among Women Aged 50 to 74 Years by Selected Characteristics, California BRFSS 2012 – 2018

	Had Mammogram within Past Two Years		Had Mammogram Two Years or More in Past	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
California (N=10,731)	81.6	(80.1 - 83.2)	18.4	(16.8 - 19.8)
Age Group				
50 - 59 years	78.7	(76.1 - 81.3)	21.3	(18.7 - 23.9)
60 - 69 years	84.9	(83.1 - 86.6)	15.1	(13.4 - 16.9)
70 - 74 years	84.6	(81.9 - 87.2)	15.4	(12.8 - 18.1)
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian/Pacific Islander	85.6	(80.0 - 91.1)	14.4	(8.9 - 20.0)
Black, non-Hispanic	90.9	(88.1 - 93.7)	9.1	(6.3 - 11.9)
Hispanic	79.8	(76.3 - 83.3)	20.2	(16.7 - 23.7)
White, non-Hispanic	82.3	(80.5 - 84.1)	17.7	(15.9 - 19.5)
Educational Attainment				
Less than High School	75.8	(70.7 - 80.8)	24.2	(19.2 - 29.3)
High School or GED	81.9	(78.8 - 84.9)	18.1	(15.1 - 21.2)
Some College or Tech School	78.9	(75.3 - 82.4)	21.1	(17.6 - 24.7)
College or Post Graduate	85.2	(83.3 - 87.1)	14.8	(12.9 - 16.7)
Annual Household Income				
< \$25,000	73.0	(69.6 - 76.4)	27.0	(23.6 - 30.4)
\$25,000 to < \$50,000	79.3	(75.2 - 83.4)	20.7	(16.6 - 24.8)
\$50,000 to < \$100,000	85.3	(82.9 - 87.8)	14.7	(12.2 - 17.1)
\$100,000+	86.4	(83.1 - 89.7)	13.6	(10.3 - 16.9)
Primary Healthcare Coverage				
Private insurance	84.1	(81.3 - 87.0)	15.9	(13.0 - 18.7)
Medicare	83.7	(81.2 - 86.2)	16.3	(13.8 - 18.8)
Medicaid/MediCal	76.6	(70.5 - 82.7)	23.4	(17.3 - 29.5)
Other insurance	84.8	(78.0 - 91.7)	15.2	(8.3 - 22.0)
No insurance	54.7	(41.1 - 68.4)	45.3	(31.6 - 58.9)
*Prepared by the California Department of Public Health, Chronic Disease Surveillance and Research Branch.				

¹California Cancer Registry, California Department of Public Health, May 2021.

Available from <https://www.ccrca.org/retrieve-data/data-for-the-public/cancer-statistics-and-reports/>

²<https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/breast-cancer-screening>

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[California Department of Public Health](https://www.cdph.ca.gov)

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