

OCTOBER

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH



KOMPASSION



What are the BC and Canada stats for Breast Cancer?

In 2024, it is estimated that **30,500 women** in Canada will be diagnosed with breast cancer, accounting for 25% of all new cancer cases among women. Additionally, **5,500 women** are expected to die from breast cancer, making up 13% of cancer-related deaths in women. On average, **84 women are diagnosed** and **15 die** from breast cancer each day in Canada. Though rare, **290 men** will be diagnosed with breast cancer, with **60 deaths** projected.

Breast cancer has a **5-year survival rate** of approximately **89% for women** and **76% for men**. The lifetime probability of a Canadian woman developing breast cancer is about **1 in 8**, and the likelihood of dying from it is **1 in 36**.

In British Columbia, breast cancer follows similar trends, being one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers among women ([Canadian Cancer Society](#))([Canadian Cancer Society](#)).

For more detailed data, you can refer to the [Canadian Cancer Society's Statistics page](#).

What are the statistics for First Nation women?

First Nations women in Canada face notable disparities in breast cancer statistics compared to the general population. While the overall incidence of breast cancer in First Nations women is similar to that of non-Indigenous women, First Nations people tend to *experience lower survival rates after diagnosis*. This is due in part to barriers like later-stage diagnoses, lower participation in screening programs, and systemic inequities in healthcare access.

In Ontario, breast cancer is one of the top three cancer-related deaths for First Nations women, alongside lung and colorectal cancers. Cultural and logistical barriers to accessing timely breast cancer screenings have been identified as key challenges, with efforts ongoing to increase awareness and improve access to culturally safe screening initiatives([Cancer Care Ontario](#))([Canadian Partnership Against Cancer](#))([Cancer Care Ontario](#)).

To address these disparities, several provinces, including **British Columbia**, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, are working with Indigenous communities to provide tailored education, mobile screening units, and culturally relevant health resources. These initiatives aim to bridge the gap in early detection and treatment for First Nations women([Canadian Partnership Against Cancer](#))([Cancer Care Ontario](#)).

What are the statistics for Aboriginal women in BC?

In British Columbia, Aboriginal women face significant challenges in breast cancer care. While the incidence of breast cancer among Indigenous women is similar to that of non-Indigenous women, they are more likely to be diagnosed at later stages. This leads to higher mortality rates. Barriers such as lack of access to culturally safe healthcare and limited screening uptake contribute to these disparities. BC has initiatives like the "Doctor of the Day" program to improve access to screening and cancer care for Indigenous communities([SpringerLink](#)).

What age demographics are breast cancers for indigenous and non-indigenous?

Breast cancer demographics in Indigenous and non-Indigenous women vary significantly across Canada. Among Indigenous women, breast cancer tends to be diagnosed at a younger age compared to non-Indigenous populations. Studies suggest that First Nations women often face higher risks of more aggressive cancer forms and may present at later stages of the disease, partly due to systemic barriers such as reduced access to screening and treatment. However, there is limited specific data broken down by age across all Indigenous

groups in BC. Generally, Indigenous women are more likely to be diagnosed under the age of 50 compared to non-Indigenous women, who typically see higher rates of diagnosis in their 50s and 60s.

In the broader Canadian population, breast cancer is most commonly diagnosed in women aged 50 to 69. Efforts are being made to increase early detection and access to care in Indigenous communities, which historically have faced inequities in healthcare access([Cancer Care Ontario](#))([SpringerLink](#)).

These trends underscore the importance of culturally sensitive cancer prevention and screening programs tailored to the unique challenges faced by Indigenous women.

How to obtain screening in Powell River BC?

To obtain breast cancer screening in Powell River, BC, you can book a mammogram at the qathet General Hospital. The Screening Mammography Program of BC offers free mammograms for women aged 40 and over. You can schedule your appointment by calling the BC Cancer Screening Programs Client Services Centre at 1-800-663-9203 or 604-877-6187, or by sending an email. No referral is required for most women aged 40 and above, but those under 40 who are at high risk will need a physician's referral.

The hospital is located at 5000 Joyce Avenue, Powell River, and mammography appointments are available during business hours from Monday to Friday. If you have any specific language needs or additional questions, the screening program also offers support([VCH](#))([VCH](#))([FETCH BC](#)).

FETCH BC (For Everything That's Community Health) is an online directory designed to provide residents of British Columbia with access to local health services and resources. It's particularly helpful for communities like Powell River, where access to a comprehensive list of healthcare options can be more challenging due to geographical limitations.

Key features of FETCH BC include:

- **Directory of Services:** Lists local health resources, including primary care, mental health, home support, rehabilitation, and specialized health services.
- **Accessible Information:** Provides contact details, locations, and descriptions of services so users can easily find the healthcare support they need.
- **Community-Specific:** FETCH is organized by health service areas, allowing it to offer targeted information for specific regions. For example, Powell River is part of the **qathet Health Region**.

FETCH BC is operated by Divisions of Family Practice, an initiative that works closely with local doctors and healthcare providers to ensure that people can find the health services they need within their community. This is particularly valuable for people seeking specialized services like mammograms, mental health support, or rehabilitation within more rural areas of BC([VCH](#))([FETCH BC](#)).

What is the importance of screening?

Breast cancer screening is crucial because it helps detect the disease early, often before symptoms appear, which significantly improves the chances of successful treatment. Here's why screening is important:

1. **Early Detection:** Screening, particularly through mammograms, can identify cancerous changes in breast tissue before they can be felt. Detecting cancer early makes it easier to treat and often requires less aggressive treatments([VCH](#)).

2. **Improved Survival Rates:** Early-stage breast cancers found through screening tend to have better outcomes. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, women whose breast cancer is caught early have a higher five-year survival rate than those diagnosed at later stages([FETCH BC](#)).
3. **Reduction in Mortality:** Mammograms have been shown to reduce breast cancer mortality by identifying cancers at a stage when they are most treatable. The benefits are particularly evident for women aged 50 to 69([FETCH BC](#)).
4. **Peace of Mind:** Regular screening can provide reassurance for women with no symptoms, as it helps monitor their breast health over time.

Overall, breast cancer screening is an essential preventive tool that improves outcomes and saves lives through timely detection and intervention.

What Support Services are available in our area?

There are cancer survivor support services in the **qathet Regional District and Powell River area**. A few options include:

Canadian Cancer Society Services – They offer a variety of support resources, including peer support through their Cancer Connection program, where survivors can connect with someone who has been through a similar experience. The Canadian Cancer Society also provides assistance with wigs, prosthetics, and other post-treatment needs. You can access these services by contacting them or through their website([FETCH BC](#)).

Kompassion for Kups – A local service in the qathet Regional District that offers personal support for women who have undergone breast cancer surgeries, including post-surgical bras and prosthetics. This can be an important part of recovery for survivors([FETCH BC](#)).

Vancouver Coastal Health’s Adult Community Support Services – Based at qathet General Hospital, they offer a range of services for people dealing with long-term health issues, including mental health and emotional support for cancer survivors([VCH](#)).

These services can help provide emotional, practical, and physical support for cancer survivors in the area.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month, celebrated every October in Canada, aims to raise awareness about breast cancer prevention, early detection, and support for individuals affected by the disease. In British Columbia, including the qathet Regional District and Powell River, local organizations and healthcare services play a crucial role in promoting awareness and providing resources.

Key Local Initiatives and Resources:

1. **Canadian Cancer Society (CCS):**
 - The CCS provides a range of services, including information on breast cancer risks, symptoms, and screening. They also organize community events during October to raise funds and awareness, including the **CIBC Run for the Cure**, which takes place in various locations across Canada([World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#))([UICC](#)).
 - In the qathet region, the CCS offers peer support programs that connect breast cancer survivors with those currently undergoing treatment, fostering a community of support([UICC](#)).
2. **Breast Cancer Screening Programs:**
 - Women aged 40 and older in Powell River can access free mammograms through the **BC Cancer Screening Program**. Local facilities, such as the qathet General Hospital, provide these essential screening services to detect breast cancer early([UICC](#)).
3. **Local Support Groups:**

- Businesses like **Kompassion for Kups** in Powell River provide personalized support and resources for women undergoing breast cancer treatment. They offer post-surgical bras and prosthetics tailored to individual needs, helping women feel comfortable and supported during recovery([UICC](#))([World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)).


4. **Educational Events:**

- Throughout October, various local organizations may host educational events, workshops, and discussions to inform the public about breast cancer risk factors, prevention strategies, and the importance of regular screenings. These events often aim to promote healthy lifestyle choices, such as maintaining a balanced diet, staying active, and reducing alcohol consumption([UICC](#)).

By participating in local events and accessing available resources, residents of the qathet Regional District can contribute to Breast Cancer Awareness Month and help support those affected by breast cancer in their community. For more information, you can visit the Canadian Cancer Society and [BC Cancer Screening Program](#) websites.

KOMPASSION

FOR KUPS



AT THE CROSSING

Do you know someone who has had breast surgery, breast cancer, mastectomy or lumpectomy?

Kompassion for Kups provides women with personal support and products to enhance healing, and maintain comfort and body image, while undergoing cancer treatments and onward through survivorship.

♥

Early detection saves lives!
Get screening done!
Medical Bras and Prosthetics

Nanette Kapitan

KOMPASSION FOR KUPS
AT THE CROSSING
mastectomy & surgical bras • breast forms
kompassion4kups@telus.net
KOMPASSION4KUPS.CA
236.845.2024

Kompassion for Kups, owner/fitter Nanette Kapitan

<https://www.kompassion4kups.ca/>

Kompassion for Kups is a specialized service in Powell River, BC, dedicated to supporting women undergoing breast cancer treatments, especially those who have had surgeries like lumpectomies and mastectomies. Founded by Nanette Kapitan, a breast cancer survivor herself, the initiative focuses on providing personal support and high-quality post-surgical products, including medical bras and breast prosthetics, to enhance comfort and help women maintain their body image during recovery.

Nanette's goal is to ensure that women do not have to compromise on their breast care needs. Kompassion for Kups offers private fittings by appointment, and many women can access these products through extended health benefits or Pharmacare. The service is tailored to each individual's journey, with an emphasis on both physical and emotional healing. Kapitan runs the service from her home in Lund, and appointments are typically available during evenings and weekends either in Lund or at the comfort of the customers home.

For more information or to book an appointment, you can visit the Kompassion for Kups website or contact Nanette directly([Powell River Chamber](#))([FETCH BC](#))([Cortes Currents](#)).

Kompassion for Kups sells Anita Care products for women that have undergone surgeries related to breast cancer and other breast surgeries. What are the benefits?

Anita Care products offer several benefits for women who have undergone breast cancer surgery or other breast-related surgeries:

1. **Comfort and Support:** Designed to provide gentle, post-operative support with soft materials and seamless design for comfort and skin protection.
2. **Custom Fit:** Specialized bras and prostheses ensure a comfortable and natural fit.
3. **Confidence Boost:** The natural shape and aesthetic quality of the products help women regain confidence.
4. **Health-Focused:** They are made to promote proper healing and reduce irritation on sensitive, post-surgery skin.

These products focus on both physical comfort and emotional well-being.

Tell me specifically about the 1199 compression garment and the Lisa bra (recommended daily wearer after surgery)?

These items are noted as salable items on the Kompassion for Kups website. Local garments provider recognized by BC Pharmacare.

Anita Care 1199 Compression Garment:

- **Purpose:** The 1199 compression vest is designed for post-surgical use, especially after breast reduction or augmentation, to reduce swelling and promote healing.
- **Features:** It offers firm, consistent compression with adjustable straps and a seamless design for comfort and skin protection.
- **Measuring for Pre-Surgery:** It's best to measure chest circumference and ensure the fit accommodates expected post-operative swelling. Guidelines typically involve measuring under the bust.

Anita Care Lisa Bra:

- **Purpose:** This seamless, soft cup bra offers comfort and support, especially for women after mastectomy or other breast surgeries.
- **Fit:** It's known for providing a smooth shape with firm support and prosthesis pockets.

Regarding sizing, Anita bras being a *European* brand often run one cup size larger compared to North American standards, so adjustments may be necessary when ordering. Therefore, it is recommended in having a fitting from a professional. **Anita** providers are required to take annual fitting courses.

European cup sizes often run larger than North American sizes. In Europe, the cup size difference between each step (A, B, C, etc.) tends to be larger compared to North American sizing. This can result in a woman who wears a certain cup size in North America needing a smaller cup size when switching to a European brand, like Anita. It's important to compare sizing charts and measure accurately to find the correct fit, especially when switching between regions.

How can customers access funding such as Pharmacare?

Your customers can access funding through programs like Pharmacare by following these steps:

1. Provincial Drug Coverage (e.g., BC Pharmacare)

- **Eligibility:** BC Pharmacare provides financial assistance for prescription drugs and medical supplies to residents enrolled in the Medical Services Plan (MSP).
- **Coverage:** It covers approved medications, prostheses (like post-mastectomy bras), and other medical devices. Income levels influence the deductible amount and copayment.
- **How to Apply:** They must register for Fair PharmaCare based on their household income. This can be done online through the Fair PharmaCare Registration site.

2. Indigenous-Specific Funding or First Nation Health benefits

- **Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB):** First Nations and Inuit women can access NIHB, which covers prescription medications, medical devices, and prostheses.
- **How to Apply:** Individuals can apply through their community health centre or online via the NIHB website.

3. Private Insurance

- Customers with private health insurance may be able to get reimbursements for products like compression garments and post-surgery bras. Each policy differs, so they should contact their insurer for details.

4. Charitable Programs

- Some non-profit organizations, like the Canadian Cancer Society, offer financial assistance for those needing support for cancer-related expenses, including post-surgical garments.

Encouraging customers to apply early and explore multiple options will help them access the support they need.

Post surgical bras are covered under Pharmacare? How much?

Post-surgical bras, such as those used after mastectomy or breast reduction, may be covered under certain health programs, but the coverage can vary by province and specific plan.

In BC Pharmacare:

- **General Coverage:** While BC PharmaCare doesn't directly cover post-surgical bras, it may cover related medical devices or prostheses. Coverage for bras may be more likely through **Fair PharmaCare**, but it usually applies to custom-fitted items like breast prostheses rather than general post-surgical bras.
- **Fair PharmaCare** covers approved medical devices based on income, meaning that those in lower-income brackets may receive more assistance.

Private Insurance:

- Many private insurance plans (extended benefits) cover post-surgical bras as part of their health benefits. Coverage can range from a portion of the cost to full reimbursement, depending on the plan.

Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB):

- For First Nations and Inuit women, the NIHB program offers coverage for medical supplies, which may include post-surgical bras if prescribed as part of post-mastectomy care.

It's recommended to check with specific health providers or insurance plans to determine exact coverage. Post-surgical bras might be listed under medical devices or supplies in extended health plans.

How does the Fair PharmaCare program work to cover post-surgical bras?

The **Fair PharmaCare** program in British Columbia helps residents with the cost of eligible prescription medications, medical devices, and certain medical supplies. However, **post-surgical bras** may not be directly covered under the standard list of eligible items, though prosthetic devices like breast forms for post-mastectomy patients are often included.

How Fair PharmaCare works:

1. **Income-Based Deductible:** Fair PharmaCare is an income-based program, meaning coverage is determined by household income. The lower the income, the more financial support you receive.
2. **Eligible Items:** Post-surgical bras are often considered **medical devices**, but their coverage depends on whether they are classified as **prosthetic** garments or medically necessary items by the prescriber.
3. **Prosthesis Coverage:** If post-surgical bras are prescribed as part of breast prosthesis treatment (e.g., after a mastectomy), they may qualify under the medical supply and equipment coverage. Prostheses (such as breast forms) are generally covered, but bras are less frequently included unless specifically justified as part of the medical treatment.

How to Access Coverage:

- **Prescription:** To qualify for coverage of post-surgical bras, they typically need to be prescribed by a physician or medical specialist.
- **Submit Receipts:** After purchasing the prescribed item, submit the receipt to Fair PharmaCare or your private insurance for reimbursement if applicable.

What to Do:

- Contact Fair PharmaCare to confirm whether post-surgical bras prescribed by a healthcare professional would be eligible for coverage under their specific circumstances.
- Many extended health benefit plans or programs like the **Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)** for Indigenous individuals might offer better direct coverage for these items.

For more details on the Fair PharmaCare program, visit their official website.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare>