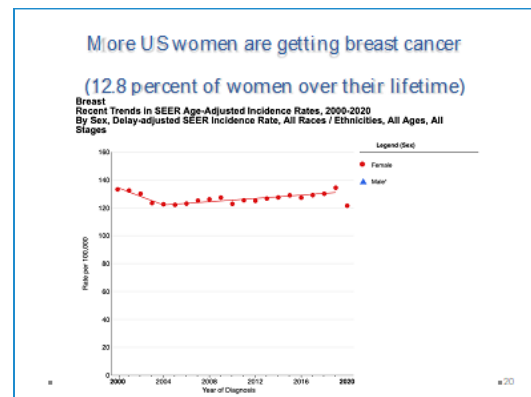


Fact Sheet #1: Breast Cancer Deaths Are Down but Percentage of New Cases Is Going Up



Investments in research on the different types of breast cancer and the development of innovative new ways to treat the different types have transformed what it means to get a breast cancer diagnosis.

Almost 91% of the US women diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago are still alive. That's the good news. The bad news is while we've done a lot to help women diagnosed with breast cancer live longer, the incidence of breast cancer in the United States keeps going up. More needs to be done to PREVENT breast cancer from occurring in the first place.



What Can Unions Do to Address Breast Cancer Incidence?

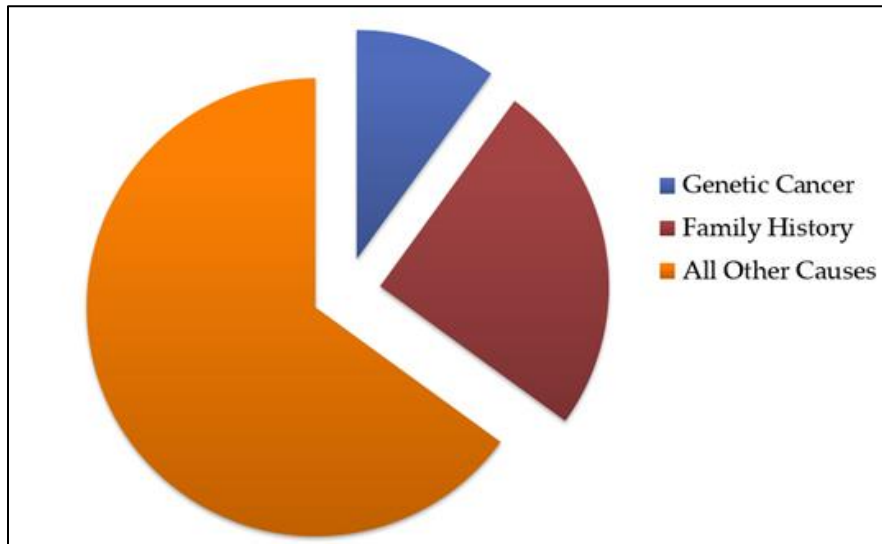
The average lifetime risk for a woman to develop breast cancer is nearly 13% (more than double that of lung cancer, the second most common). In the United States, breast cancer is the most diagnosed invasive cancer which means it has the potential to spread to other parts of the breast and, sometimes, other parts of the body. Exposure to chemicals, along with other environmental factors can increase the risk of breast cancer.

Putting Breast Cancer Out of Work is a campaign that aims to bring down the new cases of breast cancer among USW members by working with employers to decrease exposures to the chemicals linked to breast cancer.

Fact Sheet #2: Risk Factors for Breast Cancer



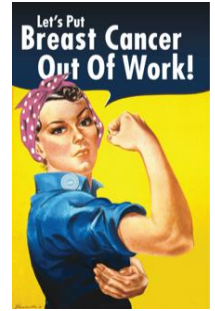
Most breast cancers are caused by **environmental factors**.



Source: Breast Cancer Prevention Partners

- Environmental factors include:
 - Diet
 - Exercise / Physical activity
 - Alcohol & tobacco use
 - Stress
 - Social/support networks
 - Shift work
 - Exposure to chemicals (especially those considered cancer-causing for breast tissue i.e. mammary carcinogens)
- The **Putting Breast Cancer Out of Work** campaign addresses this by educating and equipping workers and their employers to prevent the harmful chemical exposures that lead to disease. One past example for another disease is when the rubber industry switched from benzene-based solvents to water-based solvents, the incidence of kidney and bladder cancer in rubber workers drastically declined.

Fact Sheet #3: Breast Cancer Incidence is Going Up Faster for Younger Women, Especially Younger Black Women



Breast cancer is not only the most common cancer diagnosis for younger women, but also the leading cause of cancer death among women aged 20 to 49 in the US. Younger women are about half as likely to get breast cancer as older women but more likely to develop more aggressive forms of breast cancer.

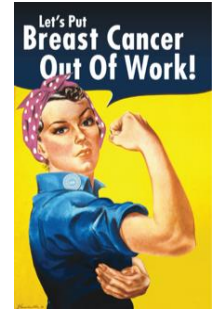
A 2024 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that while white non-Hispanic women are more likely to get breast cancer in their lifetime, Black women have the highest rates of breast cancer among 20 to 49 year olds and are more likely to die from more aggressive forms of the disease.



A 2017 study looking at women between the ages of 18 to 64 who were diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer found that four key factors accounted for 76.3 percent of the total excess mortality risk in Black patients: 1) a lack of private health insurance; 2) tumor characteristics, 3) other health problems like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease; and 4) treatment differences (when it started or stopped, what was given).

That's why we need to lower the exposure, especially for young black women because the risk is greater.

Fact Sheet #4: Fourteen Industrial Chemicals that are Linked to Breast Cancer



14 of the 920 Silent Spring Mammary Carcinogens

- 1,2-dichloroethane
- 1,2-propylene oxide
- 3,3'-dimethylbenzidine
- Acrylonitrile
- Benzene
- C.I. Direct Black 38
- Carbon tetrachloride
- Ethylene oxide
- Methylene Chloride
- Nitromethane
- ortho-toluidine hydrochloride
- Styrene
- Urethane
- Vinyl chloride

Approximately 5,000 women in the U.S. are exposed to the industrial chemicals listed here. In addition to these fourteen chemicals there is a database from the Silent Spring Institute that includes all 920 chemicals that induce tumors in the breasts of lab rats and the chemicals that signal the body to produce more of the hormones linked to breast cancer.

Note: Methylene Chloride is expected to be banned by EPA.

Identifying chemicals that cause breast cancer in the products USW women use at work so we can replace them with safer alternatives is the goal of this project.

To learn more about the 14 industrial chemicals listed above you can use www.chemhat.org.

ChemHAT.org
Chemical Hazard and Alternatives Toolbox

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Stronger effect / evidence: 4 diamonds (red, orange, yellow, green)
Weaker effect / evidence: 1 diamond (red)

Ethylene oxide

CAS: 75-21-8

How can this chemical affect my health?

Acute (Short Term) Effects Data sources

- Toxic to Humans & Animals** – Can be fatal on contact, ingestion or inhalation for humans and other mammals.
- Irritates the Skin** – Can cause irritation or serious damage to the skin.
- Irritates the Eyes** – Can cause irritation or serious damage to the eye.

Chronic (Long Term) Effects Data sources

- Asthma Trigger** – Can result in high sensitivity so that small quantities trigger asthma, nose or sinus inflammation or other allergic reactions in the respiratory system.
- Brain/Nervous System Harm** – Can cause damage to the nervous system including the brain.
- Cancer** – Can cause or increase the risk of cancer.
- Birth Defects** – Can cause harm to the developing child including birth defects, low birth weight and biological or behavioral problems that appear as the child grows.
- Reproductive Harm** – Can disrupt the male or female reproductive systems, changing sexual development, behavior or functions, decreasing fertility, or resulting in loss of the fetus during pregnancy.
- Other Health Effects** – Can cause serious damage on contact or ingestion.

Fact Sheet #5: Why OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard Is Not Enough to Protect Workers



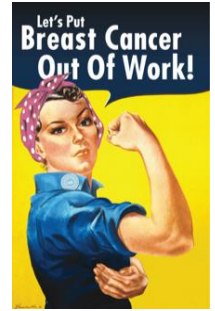
In 2012, the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration (US OSHA) updated the Hazard Communication (HazComm) standard. Updates include:

- Renaming the form that every chemical manufacturer, importer and distributor must provide for every chemical product used by workers.
 - MSDS --> SDS
 - **What used to be called a MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) is now a SDS (Safety Data Sheet).** The other changes include standardizing where the information is on the SDS and the definitions for and the images of new pictograms.
- OSHA also updated their Hazard Communication Standard to require employers to ensure that SDSs are “readily accessible to employees.” This includes:
 - Section Two: Required to identify the hazards of the chemical presented including:
 - The hazard classification of the chemical (e.g. flammable liquid)
 - Signal word
 - Hazard statement
 - Pictograms
 - Precautionary statement
 - Any hazards not otherwise classified
 - For a mixture with an ingredient with unknown toxicity, a statement with the % of the mixture consists of ingredients with unknown toxicity
 - Section 11: Toxicological Information, the routes of exposure, the short- and long-term effects of the exposure, the symptoms and whether the chemical is a carcinogen.

OSHA's updating of the HazComm Standard came at the same time that the agency acknowledged its inability to really protect workers from chemicals. OSHA's best estimate is that ten times more (50,000) U.S. workers die prematurely each year from exposure to toxic substances than die from accidents and injuries on the job. But OSHA which is chronically underfunded has been prevented from effectively protecting workers by regulating chemicals through permissible exposure limits (PELs). OSHA admits their failure on their website:

- ***OSHA recognizes that many of its permissible exposure limits (PELs) are outdated and inadequate for ensuring protection of worker health.*** Of the 40,000+ unique chemicals in commerce, OSHA has only issued PELs for 16 chemicals since 1970. For those small number of PELs that do exist, they are insufficient: ***Industrial experience, new developments in technology, and scientific data clearly indicate that in many instances these adopted limits are not sufficiently protective of worker health.***

Fact Sheet #6: How to Identify Cancer-Causing Chemicals in Workplace Products



SDS Analysis: In December 2022, the BlueGreen Alliance (BGA) and Clearya released a new report on the health hazard information on Safety Data Sheets (SDS) called *Obstructing the Right to Know*. To analyze the accuracy of Safety Data Sheets that are supposed to give workers the right to know, Clearya designed a software program that could quickly read a SDS and figure

out if health warnings were accurate and complete.

For example, if a product contained benzene, did the warnings on the SDS include *Carcinogen* and *Reproductive Toxicity*.

Results: BGA and Clearya reviewed 650 SDS and found:

- 30% SDS had inaccurate health warnings
- 15% SDS were for products that contained cancer causing chemicals but didn't warn of carcinogenicity
- 21% of the products contained a chemical that could harm reproduction, but the SDS for that product did not contain any warning about the potential for fertility or fetal developmental problems.

SDS analysis for USW Products: The tool that Clearya developed for BGA's 2022 SDS project can also be used to find **breast cancer chemicals** in the products that USW members use at work. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the United States National Toxicology Program Report on Carcinogens along with the Silent Spring list of mammary carcinogens (MC) will be used to evaluate the chemicals on the Safety Data Sheets provided by USW members. Then these chemicals can be targets for the *Putting Breast Cancer Out of Work* campaign.

Planning worksheet: Are you in for this campaign? What are the next steps and what order would you put them in?



Discussion:

1. Have you talked with other members about this topic?
2. How many are involved in other committees?
 - a. WOS
 - b. RR
 - c. Civil Rights
3. What chemicals are you exposed to in the workplace?
4. What are your end-use products?
5. Could you describe briefly the process to make those products?
6. Have you ever looked at or read an SDS sheet?
7. Do you know where they are kept?
8. Do you have access to them?

If your local includes many workplaces, figure out how you are going to engage the women from different worksites. Should you do this through the Women of Steel meetings? How often does that committee meet and how many women come?

Decide what okays and involvement you need and in what order you need them:

- The Local President?
- The E Board?
- The health and safety reps?
- The union only safety and health committee?
- The staff reps?
- The companies?

Raise awareness in your workplace and **ask your safety and health rep to collect SDS for this campaign.**

Collect cancer and other serious health stories from the workplaces in your local

Other steps?

Next Steps: More on Getting Safety Data Sheets from Your Workplace



1. You have the legal right to the information on Safety Data Sheets.

[1910.1200\(g\)\(8\)](#) of US OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard states:

The employer shall maintain in the workplace copies of the required safety data sheets for each hazardous chemical and shall ensure that they are readily accessible during each work shift to employees when they are in their work area(s). (Electronic access and other alternatives to maintaining paper copies of the safety data sheets are permitted as long as no barriers to immediate employee access in each workplace are created by such options.)

2. There may be 1000s of SDSs in the files. It's best if your S&H rep can download 20-50 SDS PDF files for products that you know are being used. But if it's easier to just include every SDS, they can do that too.
3. Ask your S&H rep to email the SDS in PDF format to sds@bluegreenalliance.org and make sure they include the name of your workplace and the department or the use of these SDS if known.
4. BGA/Clearya will send you back an analysis of the breast cancer chemicals --- and the other hazardous chemicals in the products being used in your workplace so you can start the effort to find safer substitutes.

For questions, email:

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