The Sister Study is a long-term study of more than 50,000 women whose sisters have had breast cancer. These women are twice as likely to develop the disease compared to women without affected sisters, according to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The study examines how breast cancer risk is related to people’s environment and biology.

The study enrolled participants from 2003 to 2009, and researchers are still gathering information from them today. Here is a snapshot of who these women were when they enrolled in the study.

### Who are the “Sisters”? A snapshot of the participants in a 20-year breast cancer study

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### Age at enrollment
- 35–44: 13%
- 45–54: 34%
- 55–64: 35%
- 65 or older: 17%

### Self-reported race/ethnicity
- White (non-Hispanic): 84%
- Black/African American (non-Hispanic): 9%
- Hispanic/Latina: 5%
- Other: 3%

### Age at first menstrual period (years)
- 11 or younger: 20%
- 12–13: 56%
- 14 or older: 23%

### Ever used hormonal birth control
- Yes: 85%
- No: 15%

### Number of live births
- 4 or more: 10%
- 3: 20%
- 2: 15%
- 1: 37%
- 0: 18%

### History of breastfeeding
- Yes: 57%
- Never: 43%
  (includes women with no children)

### Menopausal status
- Natural menopause: 40%
- Surgical menopause: 24%
- Premenopause: 36%

### Ever used hormone replacement therapy
- Yes: 45%
- No: 55%

### Education
- Graduate degree or higher: 24%
- Bachelor’s degree: 27%
- Associate/technical degree: 14%
- Some college, no degree: 20%
- High school or less: 15%

### Annual household income
- Less than $20,000: 5%
- $20,000–$49,999: 31%
- $50,000–$99,999: 26%
- $100,000–$200,000: 21%
- More than $200,000: 4%

### Smoking history
- Never: 56%
- Yes: Past: 36%
- Yes: Current: 8%

### Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Underweight (less than 18.5): 1%
- Healthy weight (18.5–24.9): 37%
- Overweight (25–29.9): 32%
- Obese (30 or more): 30%

### Alcohol intake
- Never consumed alcohol: 4%
- Yes: Current: 15%
- Current: 1 drink per day: 67%
- Current: 1 drink per week: 2%
- Current: More than 1 drink per day: 11%

### Enrollment by Location
- Participants were enrolled from all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

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1 Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding and missing data for some participants.
2 Having your first period (called menarche) at a younger age is associated with greater risk of breast cancer.
3 Natural menopause begins when someone doesn’t have a menstrual cycle for 12 consecutive months. Menopause can also be triggered by the surgical removal of the ovaries.
4 12 months prior to enrollment.