Acknowledgements

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As a woman over the age of 40…

• It’s time to start thinking about getting a mammogram to screen for breast cancer.

Weigh the importance

“This scale represents how we weigh the importance of a mammogram with other things in life that make us busy.”

—Karen
Before you make your decision take some
time to sit and think…

• We want to make sure that you understand what
  breast cancer is and what a mammogram is.

• The next slides can help to answer some questions
  you may have about breast cancer and mammograms.

What is breast cancer?

• Cancer is a disease in which cells become abnormal
  and form more cells in an uncontrolled way.

• With breast cancer, the cancer begins in the tissues
  that make up the breasts.

• The cancer cells may form a mass called a tumor.
  (Note: Not all tumors are cancer.)
What is breast cancer?

What are risk factors for breast cancer?

- **Age**: The strongest risk factor is age. Risk goes up as a woman gets older.
- **Personal history**: Women who have had breast cancer in one breast are more likely to get it in the other.
- **Family history**: Having a mother, sister, or daughter who has had breast cancer increases a woman's risk. The risk is higher if her family member got breast cancer before age 40. A woman's risk also is increased if more than one family member on either her mother's or father's side of the family has had breast cancer.
- **Drinking alcohol**: The more alcohol a woman drinks, the greater her risk of breast cancer.
- **Physical inactivity**: Women who are not physically active may have an increased risk of breast cancer.
What are risk factors for breast cancer?

• Body Weight
  – The chance of getting breast cancer after menopause is higher in women who are overweight or obese.

Other risk factors

• Starting your period early or having a late menopause
• Not having any children or having your first child after age 30
• Not breastfeeding
• Race
  In the United States, white women have the highest breast cancer rates. Yet women of all races get breast cancer. African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than white women. One reason is that cancer is often found in African-American women at a later, more advanced stage, when it may be harder to treat.
Other risk factors

• Certain breast changes that are not cancer
• Taking the hormones estrogen and progestin
• Taking the hormone Diethylstilbesterol (DES)
• Breast tissue that is dense on a mammogram
  – This does not mean having large breast, this means having less fat in your breasts so the mammogram is harder for the doctor to read

There are some rare but very important risk factors that can put you at very high risk. If you have one of these risk factors let your doctor know.

• Inheriting certain harmful gene mutations
• History of radiation therapy to the chest
What is a mammogram?

• A mammogram is an x ray (picture) of the inside of a woman’s breasts.

Why do women get mammograms?

• A mammogram can catch cancer early by finding a cancer that is too small to feel.
• A mammogram can also be used if a woman thinks there is a problem in her breast.
When do you get a mammogram?

• National organizations agree that a mammogram is the best test to screen for breast cancer.
• They also agree that you should start thinking about a mammogram at age 40.
• Different organizations have different opinions on how often you should get a mammogram.

For information about breast cancer screening recommendations for women at higher risk click here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Cancer Society</th>
<th>National Cancer Institute</th>
<th>National Comprehensive Cancer Network</th>
<th>U.S. Preventive Services Task Force</th>
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<td>Every year starting at age 49</td>
<td>Every 1-2 years starting at age 40</td>
<td>Every year starting at age 40</td>
<td>Informed decision-making with a health care provider ages 40–49 Every 2 years ages 50–74</td>
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When do you get a mammogram?

• The American Cancer Society recommends that women get a mammogram **once a year** starting at **age 40**.

One important thing to remember is that if you get a mammogram, you are less likely to die from breast cancer.
How do you get a mammogram?

• A doctor or nurse needs to order you a mammogram.

• They will give you a referral (piece of paper) to bring with you to your appointment.

How do you get a mammogram?

• You need to call and make an appointment to schedule your mammogram. Your doctors office or a case manager may help you to schedule your appointment.

• You need to go to a mammogram facility.
Does my insurance cover mammograms?

• All insurance companies cover mammograms.
• If you are unsure if you have insurance ask your case manager or the front desk person at your doctors office.
• You can get a mammogram even if you do not have insurance. Your case manager has information on how to do this through the PA Healthy Women’s Program.

What happens during a mammogram?
What happens during a mammogram?

• You will be asked to take off your shirt and bra so that the x-ray machine can take a picture of your breasts.

• The x-ray staff will put one of your breasts onto the x-ray machine.

• The machine will press down on your breast to take an x-ray (picture), it can feel like squeezing.

What happens during a mammogram?

• You may feel uncomfortable about your experience.

• It is normal for it to hurt a little but it does not last very long.

• You can bring a trusted friend or family member into the waiting room for support.
This is a picture of the mammogram machine for examination to make sure your girls are OK…

“…If anything is wrong they pull you aside right away the same day. This is a safe haven for me to make sure I stand properly and wait patiently for my letter saying everything is normal. I will keep examining and tell my doctor if I feel anything unusual. This picture can let you know its not a scary machine, it a friendly machine. It doesn’t hurt.”

– Esterlina

How do I get ready for a mammogram?

• Make sure you know where you are going for your appointment. If you don’t know, ask for help.
• Make sure you have a way to get there.
• Wear a shirt with pants, shorts, or a skirt, that way you just have to take off your top. You may want to wear a shirt with buttons that is easy to take on and off.
How do I get ready for a mammogram?

• Don’t wear any deodorant, perfumes, or lotions the day of the mammogram. These things can make shadows show up on the mammogram.

• If you had a mammogram done somewhere else, try to get these x rays (pictures) and bring them with you.

Are there any problems with mammograms?

• A mammogram may show something that looks like a tumor or a cancer when it’s really not, this can lead to worry and more tests.

• A mammogram may miss some cancers.
What if my mammogram shows a problem?

- You may have a lump that is not cancerous, or you may have a lump that is cancerous.
- You may need to get another mammogram or more tests to see if anything is wrong.
- You may need to get a biopsy where the doctor takes a little sample of tissue from the breast to check the cells.
- Even though this can be very stressful, try and stay calm, there are people who will help you.

What happens if I find out I have breast cancer?

- You will get help and support
- Your doctor can explain treatment options
- Do not be afraid to ask questions
- Finding cancer early is the best chance for cure
Tick tock

“The clock is downtown. It reminds me that it only takes one day out of a year to get a mammogram. It only takes one test to find out results that could make a difference in your whole life.... We have to make time for that.”

~Karen

References