Breast Cancer Screening

The American Cancer Society and Congregational Health Ministry Team

October Module

To access this module via the Web, visit www.cancer.org and type in congregational health ministry in the search box.
TOPIC: Breast Cancer Screening

OCTOBER CONTENT

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TOPIC: Breast Cancer Screening

OVERVIEW

TALKING POINTS

• Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed non-skin cancer in women.
• Several factors increase the chances of developing breast cancer:
  o Gender. Being a woman is the greatest risk factor for breast cancer.
  o Age. The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age. Approximately 77 percent of women with breast cancer are age 50 or older at the time of diagnosis.
  o Family history. Having a mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer approximately doubles a woman’s risk. However, four out of five women who develop breast cancer have no family history of the disease.
  o Never giving birth or giving birth after age 30.
  o Having a long menstrual history (menstrual periods that started before age 12 and ended after age 55).
  o Use of alcohol, especially two or more drinks daily.
  o Obesity, especially excessive weight gain after menopause.
  o Physical inactivity.
• Breast cancer can be treated successfully. Treatment is most successful when breast cancer is detected early, before it has spread to the lymph nodes.
• Since we don’t yet know what causes breast cancer or how to prevent it, the best protection is to detect it as early as possible and treat it promptly.
• The American Cancer Society recommends the following early detection program:
  o Annual mammograms beginning at age 40.
  o Annual clinical breast exams (CBEs) for women 40 and over, or every three years for women in their 20s and 30s.
  o Optional monthly breast self-exams (BSEs) for women starting in their 20s.

BULLETIN BOX

Every woman is at risk for breast cancer and her risk increases with age. The best protection is to detect it as early as possible and treat it promptly.

For more information, call 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

RESOURCES

American Cancer Society Web site: www.cancer.org
American Cancer Society phone number: 1-800-ACS-2345
American Cancer Society’s Cancer Survivors Network phone number: 1-877-333-HOPE
National Cancer Institute Web site: www.cancer.gov
National Cancer Institute phone number: 1-800-4CANCER

Join us for an informative discussion on breast cancer screening.

Location: Date: Time:

For more information, contact:
Join Us for an Informative Discussion on Breast Cancer Screening

Learn about:
Facts about breast cancer
Who is at risk for developing breast cancer
Benefits of early detection
Breast cancer screening recommendations

Location:

Date:

Time:

For more information, contact:
TOPIC: Breast Cancer Screening

SAMPLE NEWSLETTER:

OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

All women are at risk for breast cancer – even those who don’t have a family history of the disease. That’s why it’s important to remind the women you know – your mother, aunt, grandmother, best friend, daughter – of the facts about breast cancer.

Finding It Early Matters
Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women. In fact, one of every eight women will develop the disease. While we are learning more and more about breast cancer, a woman’s best defense is finding the cancer at its earliest, most treatable stage.

Today, the best method of early detection is a three-pronged approach: annual mammograms for women starting at age 40; clinical breast exams by a health care professional annually for women age 40 or older, every three years for women in their 20s and 30s; breast self-examinations optional for women starting in their 20s. If you are 40 or older, mammograms are extremely important, because they can detect abnormalities in the breast several years before you or your doctor can feel a lump.

There Is Help
If breast cancer has touched your life, you are not alone. The American Cancer Society offers a wide range of information to help patients and their families make decisions about their treatment. The Society also has a number of programs to help patients and family cope with the disease, including a program that matches patients with survivors who have “been there.”

The American Cancer Society recommends women do the following:

- Get annual mammograms starting at age 40.
- Have yearly clinical breast examinations by a health care professional close to the time of your mammogram beginning at age 40, as well as continue your monthly self-examinations.
- Receive clinical breast examinations from a health care professional every three years between the ages of 20 and 39.
- Begin monthly breast self-examinations at age 20 (optional).

If you or someone you know has been touched by breast cancer, or if you’d like to join the fight, contact your American Cancer Society 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org.
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SAMPLE NEWSLETTER:

EARLY DETECTION OF BREAST CANCER SAVES LIVES

Finding breast cancer early can save lives. The American Cancer Society recommends following their breast cancer screening guidelines:

- Women aged 40 and older should have an annual mammogram and an annual clinical breast examination (CBE) by a health care professional. The CBE should be conducted close to and preferably before the scheduled mammogram.
- Women aged 20 to 39, should have a CBE by a health care professional every three years.
- Monthly breast self-examinations (BSEs) are optional for women starting at age 20. BSEs can help a woman become familiar with how her breasts normally feel so, when a difference is noticed, the doctor can be contacted.

The earliest sign of breast cancer is an abnormality that shows up on a mammogram before it can be felt by the woman or her health care provider. When breast cancer grows, physical signs and symptoms may exist. These include a breast lump, thickening, swelling, distortion, or tenderness; skin irritation or dimpling; and nipple pain, scaliness, ulceration, or retraction. Breast pain is commonly due to benign conditions and is not usually the first symptom of breast cancer.

Mammography is especially valuable as an early detection tool because it can identify breast abnormalities that may be cancer at an early stage before physical symptoms develop. Numerous studies have shown that early detection saves lives and increases treatment options. The declines in breast cancer mortality have been attributed, in large part, to the use of regular screening mammography.

For information on breast cancer, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345, or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org.
Mammography is an invaluable tool in the fight against breast cancer because it can identify breast abnormalities that may be cancer at an early stage before physical symptoms develop. In an effort to help women have effective mammograms, the American Cancer Society has developed eight tips for a good mammogram.

1. First, ask to see the FDA certificate that is issued to all facilities meeting high professional standards of safety and quality.

2. Use a facility that either specializes in mammography or performs many mammograms a day.

3. Once satisfied the facility is of high quality, continue to go there on a regular basis so your mammograms can be compared from year to year.

4. If you decide to change facilities, ask for old mammograms to bring with you to the new facility so these may be compared to new mammograms.

5. It’s best to schedule your mammogram at a time of the month when breasts will be least tender.

6. Don’t wear deodorant, powder, or cream under your arms as this may interfere with the quality of the mammogram.

7. Bring a list of the places, dates of mammograms, biopsies, or other breast treatments that have been performed in the past.

8. And, remember, if you do not hear from your physician within 10 days, do not assume your mammogram was normal. Confirm this by calling your physician or the facility.

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FACT SHEET

- Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that develops from cells in the breast.
- The most common sign of breast cancer is a new lump or mass, although most breast lumps are benign (not cancerous).
- Other physical signs include a generalized swelling of part of a breast (even if no distinct lump is felt); skin irritation or dimpling; nipple pain or retraction; redness or scaliness of the nipple or breast skin; or a discharge other than breast milk.
- An estimated 211,300 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to occur among women in the United States during 2003.
- An estimated 39,800 women and 400 men will die of breast cancer in 2003.
- Among American women, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer (excluding skin cancer), accounting for more than 30 percent of all cancers in women.
- Risk factors that increase the chances of developing breast cancer include:
  - Being a woman.
  - Being older than age 40. Approximately 77 percent of women with breast cancer are age 50 or older at the time of diagnosis.
  - Having a mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer approximately doubles a woman’s risk. However, studies also show that only 5 percent of breast cancer cases result from inherited cancer producing genes.
  - Never giving birth, or giving birth after age 30.
  - Having a long menstrual history (starting monthly periods before age 12 and starting menopause after age 55).
  - Use of alcohol, especially two or more drinks daily.
  - Obesity, especially excessive weight gain after menopause.
  - Physical inactivity.
- The earlier breast cancer is found, the better the chances for successful treatment. A mammogram is the best detection method because it can often identify breast abnormalities that may be cancerous before physical symptoms develop. However, some cancers that are not apparent on a mammogram may still be felt by a woman or her health care provider. For this reason, the American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for finding breast cancer early:
  - Women age 40 and over should have a mammogram every year.
  - Between the ages of 20 and 39, women should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) by a health professional every 3 years. After age 40, women should have a CBE every year. The CBE should take place before the mammogram so any detected abnormalities can be evaluated more carefully.
  - It is optional, but recommended, that all women over 20 years of age do breast self-examinations (BSEs) every month.
  - Women who have a family history of breast cancer should talk to their doctor about when to start screening.
- Breast cancer can be treated successfully. Treatment is most successful when breast cancer is detected early, before it has spread to the lymph nodes.

For information on breast cancer, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345, or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org.
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FIVE THINGS TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT BREAST CANCER

1. All women are at risk for breast cancer, even those who have no family history of the disease.

2. The two greatest risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman and growing older.

3. Survival rates are high for women diagnosed with an early stage breast cancer, when the cancer is small and has not spread. Get regular mammograms beginning at age 40, and start clinical breast exams by your doctor at age 20. Although it is optional, monthly breast self-examinations are also recommended.

4. Smart strategies to reduce your risk of breast cancer include regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and limiting alcohol intake.

5. As women are becoming more educated about breast cancer, death rates for the disease are dropping.

Tell your female friends, family members – any woman you care about. You could save a life.

For more information about breast cancer, or to find out how you can help in the fight against cancer, contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org.
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DO YOU KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT BREAST CANCER? QUIZ

Read the following sentences and decide which statements are true and which are false.

True  False
☐  ☐  1. Being a woman and getting older are the two greatest risk factors for breast cancer.

☐  ☐  2. Exercise has nothing to do with your risk for breast cancer.

☐  ☐  3. Abnormalities show up on mammograms only after you or your doctor feel a lump.

☐  ☐  4. Survival rates are high for women diagnosed with early stage breast cancer, when the cancer is small and has not spread.

☐  ☐  5. All women age 40 and older should get a mammogram every year.

☐  ☐  6. All women should begin clinical breast examinations at age 20.

Answers:

1. True
2. False – regular physical activity, as well as maintaining a healthy weight and limiting alcohol intake, are smart strategies for reducing risk.
3. False – abnormalities can show up on mammograms several years before you or your doctor feel a lump.
4. True
5. True
6. True

For more information about breast cancer, contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org.
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WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT BREAST CANCER

An estimated 211,300 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to occur among women in the United States during 2003. An estimated 39,800 women will die of the disease. (Men can also get the disease, but at far lower rates.) In addition to taking care of your own health and having regular early detection tests, there is more you can do to fight this disease.

- Make sure your friends and family know the facts; consider participating in the American Cancer Society’s Tell A Friend event in October.
- If you are a breast cancer survivor, help others cope with the disease by becoming a Reach to Recovery visitor.
- Add your voice to the American Cancer Society’s Action Network and make an impact on many of the laws that govern what options are available to people with cancer.
- Help raise funds for community education, patient services, and lifesaving research – all while having a great time – at a Relay For Life or Making Strides Against Breast Cancer event.

For more information about breast cancer, or to find out how you can help in the fight against cancer, contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit their Web site at www.cancer.org.
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SUGGESTED MATERIAL

Title: ABCs of Breast Health
Description: Outlines the American Cancer Society’s breast health plan: mammography, clinical breast exam, and breast self-exam.
Order #: 3416.01
Cost: $0.044
Quantity: Banded in 25

Title: The Older You Get, the More You Need a Mammogram
Description: Written in question and answer format, this booklet gives an overview of the importance of mammograms.
Order #: 5020.00
Cost: $0.10
Quantity: Banded in 25

Title: 8 Tips for Good Mammograms
Description: This pocket-sized card provides tips for choosing a quality facility and getting a good mammogram.
Order #: 3470.00
Cost: $0.018
Quantity: Banded in 100

To order, call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345.

Other References:
American Cancer Society’s Cancer Survivors Network, 1-877-333-HOPE
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SPEAKER’S NOTES FOR PRESENTATION

Slide 1: Welcome to this presentation on Breast Cancer Screening. My name is __________. I appreciate the opportunity to share this information with you and hope that you will find it useful.

Slide 2: none

Slide 3: Mortality rates are declining, due to earlier detection and improved treatment.

Slide 4: none

Slide 5: Most early cases of breast cancer cause no symptoms. Listed are some signs, although these symptoms may be signs of other conditions, as well.

Slide 6: ~ A genetic risk equals one or more first-degree relatives (mother, sister, daughter) diagnosed with breast cancer at an early age. The risk increases if more than one first-degree relative had breast cancer, or if the relative developed breast cancer at an early age, or in both breasts.

~ Approximately five to 10 percent of breast cancer cases result from inherited mutations. These mutations occur in far less than one percent of the general population.

Slide 7: International studies suggest that dietary fat may also be a risk factor.

Slide 8: The numbers apply to those free of cancer at the beginning of the age interval.

Slide 9: Early detection offers women with breast cancer the greatest opportunity for full recovery.

Slide 10: none

Slide 11: Most women with breast cancer will have some type of surgery.

Slide 12: Surgery is often combined with other treatments such as those listed.

Slide 13: Localized means the cancer is confirmed to the breast. Regional means it has spread to the lymph nodes. Distant means the cancer has metastasized or spread to distant sites such as bone, liver, or the brain.

Slide 14: ~ Reach to Recovery is a volunteer visitation program matching breast cancer survivors with anyone who concerned about breast cancer. Whether the person has been diagnosed, undergone surgery, or found a suspicious lump, a Reach volunteer listens to the person’s concerns, recommends resources, and offers emotional support.

~ tlc (tender loving care) is a unique catalog offering wigs; mastectomy forms and products; hats and head coverings; and other accessories at a reasonable price. It also includes stories of survivors and feature articles.

~ Look Good…Feel Better is a program designed to help female cancer patients cope with the appearance-related side effects of treatment and regain a sense of self-confidence and control over their lives. The program, which is primarily offered in group sessions by trained volunteer cosmetologists, may also be offered through one-on-one sessions.
~ I Can Cope is a series of educational classes that helps people meet the challenges of facing cancer by clarifying facts and myths.
~ Cancer Survivors Network gives those with cancer, their families, and other caregivers an opportunity to communicate with others who have had similar experiences.

Slide 15: Use this opportunity to encourage those present to contact their friends and loved ones and encourage them to schedule their annual exams – early detection is the best protection.

Slide 17: none

Slide 18: none