

## Paper Clip – Breast Cancer Screening

**Description:** Breast cancer is the development of abnormal cells in the breast. These cells grow and replace normal healthy tissue. It is the second most common cancer in women. This cancer affects 1 in 8 women in the United States and can also affect men, though less common. Breast cancer screening means checking a woman's breast for cancer before there are signs or symptoms of the disease. Although breast cancer screening can't prevent breast cancer, it can help find breast cancer early, which increases the likelihood that it can be treated.

**Possible Cause:** It is not known what exactly causes breast cancer, but there are certain risk factors that seem to increase a person's risk of getting the disease. These are:

- Being female
- Age—increases with age
- Being a carrier of an altered form of the breast cancer gene, BRCA1 & BRCA2
- Family history of breast cancer
- Race and ethnicity (White, non-Hispanic, and African-American women)
- Factors such as: obesity, long-term use of hormone replacement therapy, never having a child or first child after age 35, physical inactivity, smoking, and excessive use of alcohol

**Diagnostic Tests:** Women 50 to 74, who are at average risk for breast cancer, should have a mammogram at least every two years. Women who are 40 to 49 years old should talk to their doctor or other health care professional about when to start, and how often to get a mammogram. Women should weigh the benefits and risks of screening tests when deciding whether to begin getting mammograms before age 50. If a woman is at high risk for breast cancer a mammogram and/or MRI should be completed annually.

### **Conversation with Member:**

#### **1. Case Manager/Care Coordinator**

- **General opening:** "According to the information I have, it looks like you are due for breast cancer screening and we encourage you to get screened. Can we spend a few minutes discussing this with you?"
- **Offer Information:** "Breast cancer affects 1 in 8 women and is treatable, especially if detected early. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death from cancer in women in the United States so it is important to get screened."
- **Get more specific:** "It is recommended that you have a clinical breast exam every 2-3 years between the ages of 20 and 39. Yearly exams should begin at age of 40, and mammograms should start at the age of 50 every two years."
- **Lifestyle impacts & Medical Treatment options:**
  - Women become a higher risk for breast cancer:
    - As they age, especially after the age of 40
    - If there is a history of breast cancer in your family, especially your mother or sister
  - Risk factors that are modifiable include:
    - Being overweight
    - Using hormone replacement therapy
    - Physical inactivity
    - Tobacco use or excessive use of alcohol
  - If you have any of these risk factors, please talk with your provider and make a plan to reduce their impact.
- **Review the member's plan of action:** "Based on this information, can we make a plan for you to work with your provider to have a screening or to change any life style factors?"

## 2. Customer Service

- **General opening:** “According to the information I have, it looks like you are due for breast cancer screening. We encourage you to contact your health care provider to discuss getting you updated with your screening. Would you like to know a little more about this?”
- **Offer Information:** “Not sure if you knew this, but breast cancer is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common cancer among women in the US. Treatment is far more successful if detected early.”
- **Get more specific:** “Breast exams are recommended every 2-3 years between the ages of 20 and 39. Yearly exams should begin at age of 40, and mammograms should start at the age of 50 every two years.”
- **Lifestyle impacts & Medical Treatment options:** There are different risk factors that you can control and some you can’t control.
  - Risk Factors you can’t control:
    - Getting older
    - Personal or family history of breast cancer
    - Genetic makeup
  - Risk Factors you can control:
    - Amount of physical activity you get every day
    - Weight
    - Tobacco use and alcohol consumption
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about any risks you may have and ways to reduce them.
- **Review the member’s plan of action:** “We recommend you contact your health care provider to discuss your risk factors and when to have breast cancer screening completed.”

## References:

- PDQ® Screening and Prevention Editorial Board. PDQ Breast Cancer Prevention. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute. Available at: <https://www.cancer.gov/types/breast/patient/breast-prevention-pdq>. Accessed 2/23/2023. [PMID: 26389410]
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Breast Cancer Basic Information [https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic\\_info/screening.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/screening.htm) Accessed 2/23/2023