

MEMBER TIP SHEET

Breast Cancer Awareness: Early Detection Can Save Lives

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a disease in which cells in the breast grow out of control. It is the second most common type of cancer among American women, after skin cancer. About 1 in every 8 women (about 13%) will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of their lifetime.

What are the symptoms of breast cancer?

- New, painless lump in the breast or underarm (armpit)
- Changes or irritation in the skin of the breast, such as a dimple or skin that looks like an orange peel
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast
- Pulling in of the nipple
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood
- Any change in the size or shape of the breast
- A change in the color or feel of the skin around the nipple
- Pain in the breast

Symptoms are not always due to cancer, but any symptom you notice should be checked by your doctor immediately.



What can I do to find breast cancer early?

Breast cancer screenings, including self-exams, can help detect cancer before there are signs or symptoms of the disease. **Mammograms** are the best screening tests for detecting breast cancer early. A mammogram is an X-ray picture of the breast. It is the only screening test shown to reduce breast cancer deaths in average-risk people. Mammograms can detect cancer early – when most treatable – long before it can be felt. This improves the odds of survival and can help avoid more extensive treatment.

How can I lower my risk of getting breast cancer?

Staying healthy throughout your life will lower your risk of developing breast cancer and improve your chances of surviving cancer if it occurs. Maintaining a healthy weight, engaging in regular physical activity, and limiting alcohol can reduce your risk of breast cancer.

When should I get a mammogram?

Starting at age 40, it's important to talk to your doctor or nurse about when to get a mammogram. It is generally recommended that women get an annual mammogram starting at age 40. One in six breast cancers occurs in women in their 40s. You are a candidate for a mammogram if you have no breast cancer symptoms* and you:

- Are 40 years old or older
- Have not had a mammogram within the past year
- Are not pregnant or breastfeeding

**If you have breast cancer symptoms, your doctor may recommend multiple tests, such as an ultrasound, MRI, or biopsy.*

How can I schedule an appointment?

You do not need a referral from your doctor to get a mammogram.

To schedule your mammogram appointment, call your primary care provider or your OB/GYN. University Health also offers healthyUexpress Mobile Mammography via the healthyUexpress mobile mammography bus available to come to your workplace. To make a mobile mammography appointment:

1. Go to healthyUexpress.com
2. Click "Schedule a Mobile Mammography Appointment."
3. Complete the online form.

University Health's Radiology Appointment will call you within 3-5 business days to verify available appointment times. You can also make an appointment by calling healthyUexpress at (210) 358-7020.

What can I do to prepare for my mammogram?

- Try not to schedule your mammogram the week before or during your period when your breasts may be tender or swollen.
- On the day of your mammogram, do not wear deodorant, perfume, or powder. These products can show up as white spots on the X-ray.
- Avoid wearing a dress. Mammograms require you to undress from the waist up, so it is best to wear a top with separate bottoms.
- Mammogram screenings take about 15-20 minutes.



Does my health insurance plan cover my mammogram?

Annual mammograms are covered for Community First Health Plans Members ages 40 and up. Some women who are considered high risk or have a family history of breast cancer might need to begin getting mammograms before age 40. Most insurance companies will pay for one screening mammogram for women between the age of 35 to 39 if they are in a high-risk category for breast cancer with a doctor's order. Community First also offers financial assistance for women under 40, considered high risk. Call healthyUexpress at (210) 358-7020 for more information and to see if you qualify.

If you have questions about your health care coverage or plan benefits, please call Community First Health Plans at (210) 358-5060 or email healthyhelp@cfhp.com.