



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Get Your Mammogram

Vital Signs: Breast Cancer Screening Among Women Aged 50–74 Years — United States, 2008

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

The very thought of breast cancer strikes fear in the mind of every woman, and rightfully so. It's the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States. Early detection is important for a successful outcome, and mammography is the best way to diagnose the disease early. However, the rates of women receiving an annual mammogram have leveled off in recent years.

Dr. Jackie Miller is the Medical Director for CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of women getting a mammogram. Welcome to the show, Jackie.

[Dr. Miller] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jackie, how many women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year?

[Dr. Miller] Each year, a little over 190,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer and we find that approximately 40,000 women actually die from breast cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is breast cancer more common in any particular group of women?

[Dr. Miller] Yes. We do find breast cancer more often in white women. But we do see that some groups of women are at increased risk for breast cancer. We find that some of the minority women get breast cancer at earlier ages. Women with a family history of breast cancer are also at increased risk.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jackie, why has the rate of mammography leveled off in recent years?

[Dr. Miller] Since 2001, we have noticed that the screening rate has leveled off. We do not find there is one particular reason for this, but we do find that there are multiple factors that seem to be associated with it. These factors would include things such as inability for a woman to afford her co-pay that is required by her insurance, lack of insurance that would cover these screening services, even access to areas such as not having a facility nearby where she can get to have a mammogram. We also see that some women just really don't understand the importance of getting a mammogram. For instance, they would think that because they don't have a family history or because they've had previous mammograms that were normal, that they're not at any risk.

[Dr. Gaynes] At what age should women start receiving a mammogram?

[Dr. Miller] There are multiple national recommendations that determine when a woman should receive a mammogram. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women between the ages of 50 and 74 receive a mammogram every two years. They also recommend that women between the ages of 40 and 49 talk to their healthcare provider about when and if they should be screened. There are many other organizations that recommend that women between the ages 40 and older actually get a mammogram every year.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jackie, is self-examination an effective way to screen for breast cancer?

[Dr. Miller] Self-examination has not been found to decrease a woman's chance of dying from breast cancer, so it is not recommended to be done for screening. But, we do recommend that women are aware of their breasts and notice any changes that occur, and if they see any changes or anything unusual, that they should seek the care of their provider.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about mammography and breast cancer?

[Dr. Miller] Listeners can go to our website at www.cdc.gov/cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Jackie. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Jackie Miller about the importance of women getting a mammogram.

Remember, as they get older, women are at increased risk for developing breast cancer. Women with a family history of breast cancer are also at increased risk for the disease. If you're over 40 or in a risk group and haven't been screened for breast cancer, make an appointment with your healthcare provider today.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.