

PrimePartners

for Case Managers

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Stress the Importance of Mammograms—and Schedule One for Yourself, Too!

Sheila Goettle, RN, MSN, PHN, CNE, Women & Children Care Coordinator

Do you know someone who has been diagnosed with breast cancer? Chances are you do, as 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime (ACR). Per the American Cancer Society (ACS), with the exception of skin cancer, it is the most common type of cancer in American women (ACS, September 2019). What you may find surprising is that 75 percent of women who develop breast cancer have no family history of the disease (ACR) and many women have no symptoms (ACS, “Breast Cancer Early Detection”). This is why breast cancer screening is so important.

Guidelines suggest that the best way to detect breast cancer is with a mammogram. According to the ACS, “women who have regular mammograms are more likely to have breast cancer found early, are less likely to need aggressive treatment like surgery to remove the breast (mastectomy) and chemotherapy, and are more likely to be cured” (ACS, March 2020). While women should be familiar with how their breasts normally look and feel and report any changes to their provider, there is little evidence that breast self-exams or clinical breast exams alone are helpful to women at average risk of breast cancer (ACS, “Breast Cancer Early Detection”).

Encourage members with an average risk of breast cancer to schedule regular mammograms, starting at age 40. Let members know that preventive screenings are still important, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stress the importance of mammograms to members and encourage them to talk to their health care providers about getting screened. You can also educate members about lifestyle habits that can help lower the risk of breast cancer, including getting regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and limiting alcohol intake (no more than one drink per day for women) (ACS, “Breast Cancer Risk and Prevention”). Also talk to members about the importance of knowing their family history and risks and getting regular checkups with their health care provider.

And, while you are reminding members about the importance of mammograms, don’t forget to remind friends and family members to schedule theirs—and schedule one for yourself while you’re at it!

Sources:

- ACS, “American Cancer Society Recommendations for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer,” March 5, 2020, www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/american-cancer-society-recommendations-for-the-early-detection-of-breast-cancer.html.
- ACS, “Breast Cancer Early Detection and Diagnosis,” accessed September 23, 2020, www.cancer.org/content/dam/CRC/PDF/Public/8579.00.pdf.
- ACS, “Breast Cancer Risk and Prevention,” accessed September 23, 2020, www.cancer.org/content/dam/CRC/PDF/Public/8578.00.pdf.
- ACS, “What Is Breast Cancer,” September 18, 2019, www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/about/what-is-breast-cancer.html.
- American College of Radiology (ACR), “Mammography Saves Lives,” accessed September 23, 2020, www.acr.org/-/media/ACR/Files/Breast-Imaging-Resources/Mammo-CME-Toolkit/MSL-Flyer-Print-Version.pdf. 

Flu Shots and COVID-19

Elizabeth Warfield, RN, BSN, PHN, SNP Care Coordination Manager

With the flu season upon us and the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, getting a flu shot has never been more important. Please help make sure members have accurate information about the flu and the flu shot and encourage them to get vaccinated.

Who should get a flu shot?

With limited exceptions, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone age 6 months and over get a flu shot.

Why is getting a flu shot especially important this year?

The CDC believes that both the flu virus and the virus that causes COVID-19 will be spreading this fall and winter. While a flu shot does not protect against COVID-19, it does reduce the risk of contracting and spreading the flu. Fewer people with the flu will help conserve health resources that have become scarce during the COVID-19 pandemic. Decreasing the burden on our health care system helps ensure that these resources will be available when they are needed.

How else can the flu be prevented?

Vaccination offers the best protection against the flu. *In addition to getting a flu shot*, the CDC recommends the following:

- Staying home when you are sick
- Covering your nose and your mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Washing your hands frequently
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces
- Keeping your immune system strong by getting plenty of sleep, staying active, managing stress, drinking fluids, and eating nutritious foods

Get a flu shot!

While it is difficult to know exactly how this year's flu season will play out, it is important that we all do our part to protect each other and decrease the burden placed on our health care resources. Encourage members to protect themselves *and* their communities by getting vaccinated.

Source:

- CDC, "Frequently Asked Influenza (Flu) Questions: 2020 – 2021 Season," September 21, 2020, www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2020-2021.htm. 

Coping with the Effects of COVID-19 on Mental Health

Ann Challes, RN, BSN, PHN, CMCN, Behavioral Health Coordinator

Stress. Anxiety. Loneliness. These are all ways the COVID-19 pandemic is taking a toll on mental health. Many people are worried about their own health and the health of loved ones, finances, and countless unknowns. At the same time, necessary safety measures such as social distancing can cause feelings of isolation. While a big focus is on the medical aspect of COVID-19, it's crucial to remember that mental health is just as important as physical health. We hope the information in this article is helpful and we encourage you to share it with members you work with.

Stress can affect all aspects of life. It can worsen medical and mental health conditions, cause changes in sleeping and eating patterns, and cause people to turn to unhealthy practices such as using tobacco, alcohol, and other substances. People with existing mental health conditions, people at high risk for COVID-19, caregivers (both formal and informal), and people who have lost their jobs or who have had their work hours reduced may be particularly affected by stress at this time.

Learning to cope with stress and anxiety and reaching out for help when needed is important. Having the right information can help ease some fears. For example, knowing what to do in case you get sick and where and how to get treatment can help you feel empowered. However, while information is helpful, it can sometimes be overwhelming. Take a break from upsetting content by hitting pause on news and social media every now and then. Make time for yourself, get enough rest, avoid harmful substances, and try to exercise and eat healthy meals.

In addition, maintaining social connections while social distancing is important. There are still ways to connect with people, including phone calls, video chatting, texting, and mail. Talk with people you trust about how you are feeling.

Everyone reacts to stress differently. If you feel differently than your friend or neighbor, that's okay. Do not minimize what you are feeling. If you are having a hard time or feel overwhelmed, reach out to a mental health provider to get treatment and support. Many offices are able to conduct video or phone visits. If you are having a crisis, help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- To talk to a counselor, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**. The call is free.
- If you prefer to text with a counselor, text "**MN**" to **741741** to connect with the Crisis Text Line.
- To get emergency help, call **911**.

Feelings of stress, anxiety, and loneliness are normal during a pandemic. But that doesn't mean you need to suffer. Find coping mechanisms that work for you and look for ways to stay connected with the people who matter to you. If you feel like you need help, don't hesitate to reach out.

Source:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Coping with Stress," July 1, 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html. 

Fall Prevention: Recommendations to Share with Members

Kelly Anderson, RN, Care Coordinator

The risk of falling increases with age, as does the fear of falling. This fear can keep people from being active, which, in turn, can make falls more likely (NIA). It's important to help members you work with overcome this fear by letting them know most falls can be prevented and talking about how to prevent them. We encourage you to share the following recommendations with members.

- **Discuss current health conditions with your health care provider.** Physical health can be directly related to falls.
 - Keep up with preventive exams.
 - Discuss any issues, difficulties, or concerns with a health care provider. This includes any falls, whether or not they resulted in an injury.
- **Get regular hearing and eye exams.** Even small changes in hearing or vision can cause a fall.
 - Wear glasses/contacts and hearing aids as directed.
 - Ensure hearing aids fit properly.
 - Keep eyeglass or contact prescriptions current. Take time to get used to new prescriptions.
- **Take medications correctly and report side effects (prescription and over-the-counter).** Forgetting to take medication or ignoring side effects can be dangerous.
 - Take all medications as directed. Come up with a plan for remembering to take them, such as setting an alarm or using a timed dispenser.
 - Talk about any side effects with your provider. Some medications can cause drowsiness or dizziness, which can increase the risk of falling.
- **Get enough sleep.** Sleepiness increases the risk of falls.

- **Limit alcohol consumption.** Even a small amount of alcohol can affect balance and reflexes.
- **Take time standing up.** Getting up too fast can cause dizziness or unsteadiness.
- **Use assistive devices for walking as needed.**
 - Ensure the size of the device is correct and that any wheels roll smoothly.
- **Take time on wet or icy surfaces.**
- **Wear proper fitting shoes.** The right shoes support the feet and provide traction.
 - Make sure to wear non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes.
- **Create a safe home environment.** Making some simple changes can make falls less likely.
 - Increase lighting, especially around stairs.
 - Make sure stairs have secure stair hand rails, preferably two.
 - Install grab bars by the toilet and/or in the shower.
 - Use a shower chair, if needed.
 - Keep walkways clear and remove throw rugs.
 - Keep a phone nearby.
- **Exercise.** Staying active can help prevent falls by doing the following:
 - Building muscle and improving strength
 - Keeping joints, tendons, and ligaments flexible
 - Slowing down bone loss (osteoporosis) with mild weight-bearing activities

Giving members concrete things they can do to avoid falls not only helps prevent falls, but also the fear of falling. Providing tools and confidence can help keep members safe and on their feet!

Sources:

- National Council on Aging (NCOA), "6 Steps for Preventing Falls among Your Older Loved Ones," accessed September 23, 2020, www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/preventing-falls-tips-for-older-adults-and-caregivers/6-steps-to-protect-your-older-loved-one-from-a-fall.
- National Institute on Aging (NIA), "Prevent Falls and Fractures," March 15, 2017, www.nia.nih.gov/health/prevent-falls-and-fractures. 

Formulary Changes Effective October 1, 2020

Ann Ehlert, PharmD, Pharmacy Manager

The formulary changes below became effective October 1, 2020. Please contact **Ann Ehlert** for more information.

Medical Assistance (Medicaid) and Medicare Formularies

The following changes were made to over-the-counter (OTC) drugs:

- melatonin was added
- phenazopyridine (Azo) was removed

Medical Assistance (Medicaid) Formulary

The following drugs were added as preferred drugs:

- Advair Diskus®
- Ajoy® injection
- diclofenac 1% topical gel
- Epogen®
- fluticasone/salmeterol inhalation (generic Advair®)
- oseltamivir capsule and suspension (generic Tamiflu®)
- Relenza® inhalation
- Retacrit®
- solifenacin succinate tablet (generic VESIcare®)
- ziprasidone mesylate intramuscular vial

The following drugs were added as non-preferred drugs:

- Actemra® pen injector
- Abilify MyCite®
- adapalene topical gel
- budesonide/formoterol inhaler (generic Symbicort® inhaler)
- Caplyta™ capsule
- Fanapt® tablet
- flavoxate tablet
- Kaspargo Sprinkle™ capsule
- Perseris™ syringe kit
- Procrit®
- Rinvoq™ tablet
- Saphris® tablet
- Secuado® patch
- Takhzyro™ capsule
- Tamiflu® capsule and suspension
- VESIcare® tablet
- Xofluza™ tablet 

Take Leap Year into Consideration when Scheduling Annual HRAs

Leah Roell, RN, Care Coordinator

As a friendly reminder, 2020 is a leap year, which means it has 366 days instead of the usual 365. This means you need to pay extra attention when scheduling annual Health Risk Assessment (HRA) visits that occur between now and February 28, 2021. Be sure they are completed within 365 days of the member's previous HRA (rather than within one year), assuming the member is enrolled in the same program consecutively for 12 or more months. 

Important Dates

✓ County supervisor meetings

Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Meetings will take place remotely until further notice. Watch your email for additional information.**

- October 15
- November 19
- December 17

Contact Information

Ann Ehlert, PharmD, Pharmacy Manager

1-320-335-5207 or 1-888-588-4420 ext. 5207 (toll free)

ann.ehlert@primewest.org

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