

October is
Breast Cancer
Awareness Month

Ask the Health Coach

Fresh & Healthy Recipe

October is National
Chiropractic and
Physical Therapy Month

Breast Cancer Awareness Month *What You Should Know About Mammograms*



Breast cancer is a leading cause of cancer death among women in the U.S., second only to lung cancer. It's estimated that one in eight women will develop this disease in her lifetime. While awareness about breast cancer risks and prevention continues to grow, many women still have questions about the importance of routine screenings, particularly mammograms.

What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast that can help doctors detect tumors; often at early stages when the cancer is most treatable and less likely to spread (metastasize) to other parts of the body.

Until recently, most medical organizations recommended that women have mammograms every one to two years starting at age 40. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), an independent panel of experts who review research and make recommendations about medical care, has examined new evidence on the risks and benefits of annual mammography for women at different ages.

Based on that review, the USPSTF now recommends that women aged 50 to 74 who are at average risk of developing breast cancer have a mammogram every two years. If you're younger than 50, the USPSTF recommends you consult with your doctor about your specific risk factors and make the decision to have a mammogram based on this information. That's because mammograms may have more harms than benefits for women who are not at high risk of developing breast cancer.



Mammograms are not perfect.

There are some downsides to having mammograms. It's not uncommon for the tests to give "false positives," meaning that they show something that looks abnormal, but turns out not to be cancer. They sometimes also give "false negatives," meaning that they miss cancer that is there.

Women who have a positive mammogram usually have a biopsy or other screening tests, and sometimes even surgery, to confirm the results. Most women who have a positive mammogram do not have cancer.

If an abnormal mammogram turns out to be a false positive, the additional, sometimes invasive, tests and procedures that follow are unnecessary, causing undue worry and anxiety while waiting for test results. These are examples of how the potential harms caused by a mammogram can outweigh the benefits.

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Age Matters

False positives and false negatives are both more common among younger women than they are among older women. For example, younger women's breasts tend to be



dense, making mammograms more difficult to read. Breast cancer is also less common among younger women, and the risk gradually increases as a woman gets older.

At a certain age, the benefits of regular mammograms begin to balance out their possible negatives. That age can be different for each woman. That's why many organizations recommend that you and your doctor

decide together when to start regular mammograms based on your risk for breast cancer and how you feel about the benefits and harms of the tests.

If you are younger than 50, talk to your doctor about the pros and cons of having regular mammograms. If you have a family history of breast cancer, you may be at increased risk for the disease and you might decide to have regular mammograms sooner rather than later. On the other hand, if you have no risk factors for breast cancer, you may want to wait until you turn 50.

If your doctor recommends a mammogram, learn what the test can and cannot do. Remember, too, that you have a choice about whether to have a mammogram.

[Resource: Health Dialog](#)

Ask the Health Coach

Q I'm trying to lose weight. Is diet soda a good alternative to sugar-sweetened drinks?

A While diet sodas are virtually calorie-free, they are not the healthy alternative we once thought them to be. Two new studies by the University of Texas Health Center at San Antonio found that drinking two or more diet sodas daily increases your waist size and decreases your overall health. Keep in mind that greater abdominal fat increases the risk for heart disease and diabetes. One of the studies also found that mice fed with food sprinkled with aspartame, the sugar substitute used in many diet beverages, had higher blood sugar levels than the mice fed food without it. This could be a potential risk for anyone already at risk for diabetes.

In a separate study by the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, researchers found that people who drink a diet soda each day have a significantly higher risk of heart attack and stroke than those who report not drinking soda. Your best calorie-free option is still water. Spike it with some lemon, lime or orange if you need some flavor.

[Resource: acefitness.org and medscape.com](#)



For more information about healthy eating, browse WebMD's Lifestyle Improvement Program on Nutrition. Log in to MyBlueService from www.bcbsfl.com and look under the **Living Healthy** tab. Select **Lifestyle Improvement Programs from WebMD** then **Nutrition**.

Fresh & Healthy

Recipe of the Month

Crock Pot Chicken Taco Soup

Make this simple, healthy dish on a busy night.



Ingredients

½ onion, chopped
 1 can (16 oz.) chili beans
 1 can (15 oz.) black beans
 1 can (15 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
 1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce
 1 ½ cup chicken broth
 1 can (15 oz.) diced tomatoes with green chilies, undrained
 1 package (1.25 oz.) taco seasoning (look for low-sodium taco seasoning or substitute chili powder, coriander and cumin)
 3 whole skinless, boneless chicken breasts
 Shredded cheddar cheese (optional)
 Sour cream (optional)
 Crushed tortilla chips (optional)

Directions

Place the onion, chili beans, black beans, corn, tomato sauce, chicken broth and diced tomatoes in a slow cooker. Add taco seasoning and stir to blend. Lay chicken breasts on top of the mixture, pressing down slightly until just covered by the other ingredients. Set slow cooker on low heat, cover, and cook for 5 hours.

Remove chicken breasts from the soup and cool long enough to be handled; shred chicken. Stir the shredded chicken back into the soup, and continue cooking for 2 hours. Serve topped with shredded cheddar cheese, a dollop of sour cream, and crushed tortilla chips, if desired. Serves 8.

TIP: Reduce sodium content by choosing no salt added or low sodium canned products, or by rinsing the canned beans and corn with water and draining.

Nutritional analysis:

Calories: 167.4; Total Fat: 1g; Cholesterol: 6.1mg; Sodium: 1,375.2mg; Total Carbs: 33.8g; Dietary Fiber: 8.7g; Protein: 9.6g

Looking for delicious, healthy recipes the whole family can enjoy? Check out our Healthy Recipes from WebMD! Simply log in to MyBlueService from www.bcbsfl.com. Look under the **Living Healthy** tab and click on **Healthy Recipes from WebMD**.

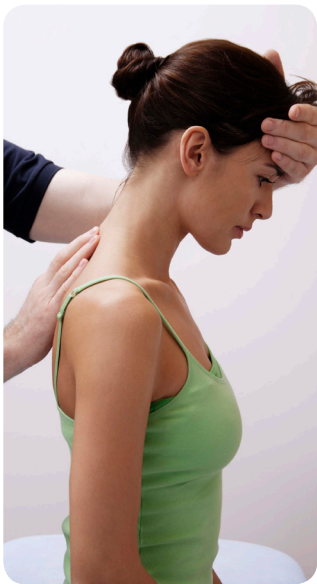
Chiropractic Care for Your Aches and Pains

October is National Chiropractic and Physical Therapy Month, and a great time to learn more about this often misunderstood form of treatment.

Approximately 22 million Americans visit a chiropractor annually, and not all of them go for back pains. Many patients seek relief from headaches and pains in the neck, arms and legs. Despite the growing acceptance of chiropractic care, it's still viewed as an "alternative" treatment and some people question its safety and effectiveness.

Chiropractic Care 101

Chiropractic refers to the health care profession that focuses on disorders of the musculoskeletal system and the nervous system, and the effects these disorders can have on a person's overall health. Chiropractic is primarily used for pain relief for muscles, joints, bones and connective tissue, but it's also useful for restoring function and mobility, as well as preventing future injury.



When you visit a chiropractor, he or she will likely take a medical history, perform a physical examination and may use diagnostic tests to determine if treatment is appropriate for the pain. If you need treatment, the chiropractor may perform one or more manual adjustments by manipulating joints with a controlled, sudden force. Many times, treatment also involves nutritional counseling, exercise and/or rehabilitation.

Does Chiropractic Care Help?

Research indicates that spinal manipulation and chiropractic adjustments are safe, effective treatments for headaches, neck pain and acute low back pain (the type of pain that often results from sudden injury and which lasts no more than six weeks). Osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia may also respond to the moderate pressure often used by chiropractors.

In an effort to relieve chronic pain (the type of pain that often comes on gradually and lasts more than three months), chiropractors sometimes use other types of therapy involving injections to strengthen loosely connected tendons and ligaments. Studies have not yet conclusively confirmed the effectiveness of these types of therapies.

What Are The Risks?

Although chiropractic care is recognized as an effective therapy and has an excellent safety record, no treatment is risk free. The most common adverse affects include mild soreness or aching afterwards, which typically fades within 24 hours. Although extremely rare, there have been reported cases of treatment worsening a back injury or causing a stroke or spinal cord injury. To minimize the risk of adverse affects, you should be very specific with your chiropractor about your symptoms and inform your primary health care provider that you are receiving chiropractic care.

On a precautionary note, you should not undergo spinal manipulation if you have osteoporosis, spinal cord compression or inflammatory arthritis, or are taking blood-thinning medications. Patients with a history of cancer should get medical clearance from their physician before seeking chiropractic treatment.

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