

Leader Lesson
Family and Consumer Education (FCE) Breast & Cervical Cancer
“Teaming Up and Taking Control!”

Goal

Protect the health and well-being of FCE members by teaching cancer prevention techniques

Objectives

As a result of this program, FCE members will:

- Increase understanding of Breast and Cervical Cancer
- Learn which cancer screenings are necessary for themselves and their family members and how to access these screenings
- Understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle in preventing cancer

Materials and Preparation

- American Cancer Society- “Screening Saves Lives” handout
- UT Extension Publication SP526-E “Ways to Lower your Risk of Breast Cancer”
- Truth and Excuse Cards
- Promise Cards

Lesson

Introduction

FCE is about leadership. We should be leading not only our families and communities but we should be leading each other in the right direction, especially when it comes to our health. Unfortunately, many women do not fully understand the risks of breast and cervical cancer. Through this lesson we will learn the facts about these diseases, how to prevent them, and how to support and lead each other to a healthier, cancer fighting lifestyle.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in women, except for skin cancer. One out of eight women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime. The American Cancer Society estimates that 40,480 women in the United States will die of breast cancer in 2008.

How many know someone personally that has been affected by breast or cervical cancer?

What is cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which abnormal cells grow out of control. The cells form growths called tumors. Tumors can be benign which means non-cancerous and others are malignant which means cancerous.

What Causes Cancer?

The causes of cancer are not completely understood and that is why research is constantly being done. However, we do know that cancer is caused by external factors like tobacco and chemicals as well as internal factors like heredity and hormones.

Assess Your Risk

Unfortunately, if it is not caught in time, breast and cervical cancer can spread to other parts of the body and even cause death. Please take a moment to complete the “*Know Your Risk*” checklist found in the extension publication “*Ways to Lower Your Risk of Breast Cancer*”.

Know the Warning Signs of Breast, Cervical and Other Types of Cancer

It is important to know the symptoms of cancer and discuss them with your doctor if you notice any or a combination of the following:

- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- Sore that does not heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge from the vagina
- Thickening lump or hard knot in the breast or elsewhere
- Indigestion or difficulty swallowing
- Obvious change in wart or mole
- Nagging cough or hoarseness
- Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast
- Change in size or shape of breasts
- Itchy, scaly sore or rash of the nipple
- Dimpling or puckering of skin on the breast
- Pulling in of the nipple or other parts
- Nipple discharge that starts suddenly
- New pain in one area of the breast that doesn’t go away

If you have any of these symptoms contact your doctor right away.

How can I prevent it?

You can lower your risk of cancer by leading a healthier lifestyle. This includes:

- Exercising at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week if you are able
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Eating 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day
- Eating less fat and more grains
- Drinking less than one alcoholic drink daily
- Checking your breasts (Ask a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional to teach you the proper way)
- **GETTING SCREENED!** The earlier cancer is found the easier it is to cure!

Screenings

There are a few different types of cancer screenings. You can refer to the handout “Screening Saves Lives” or speak to your doctor about which ones are necessary for you. The following screenings test for breast and cervical cancer:

- **Pap Test-** finds abnormal cells before they become cancerous and finds cervical cancer early. This is a simple and usually painless test that is typically done during a pelvic exam.

- Clinical Breast Exam- a doctor or nurse will feel and look at the breasts and under arms to monitor changes.
- Mammogram- X-ray of the breast that takes only a few minutes. It can find breast cancer when it is very small or too small to feel with a self breast exam.

References

- Screening Saves Lives: American Cancer Society Screening Guidelines for Men and Women
- American Cancer Society Cancer Facts & Figures 2008
- Get a Pap Test (SP647)
- Get a Mammogram (SP648)
- Ways to Lower Your Risk of Breast Cancer (SP526-E)
- Do You Know How to Lower Your Risk for Cancer? (SP526-A)
- Breast Health: Learn the Facts- The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

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Activity 1- Excuses and Truths about Cancer Screening

Talking about cancer can often be confusing, overwhelming or just uncomfortable. Women often have excuses for not getting screened or may not have the right information. Since we have the responsibility of leading each other, we will take a moment to set the record straight and lead each other in the right direction.

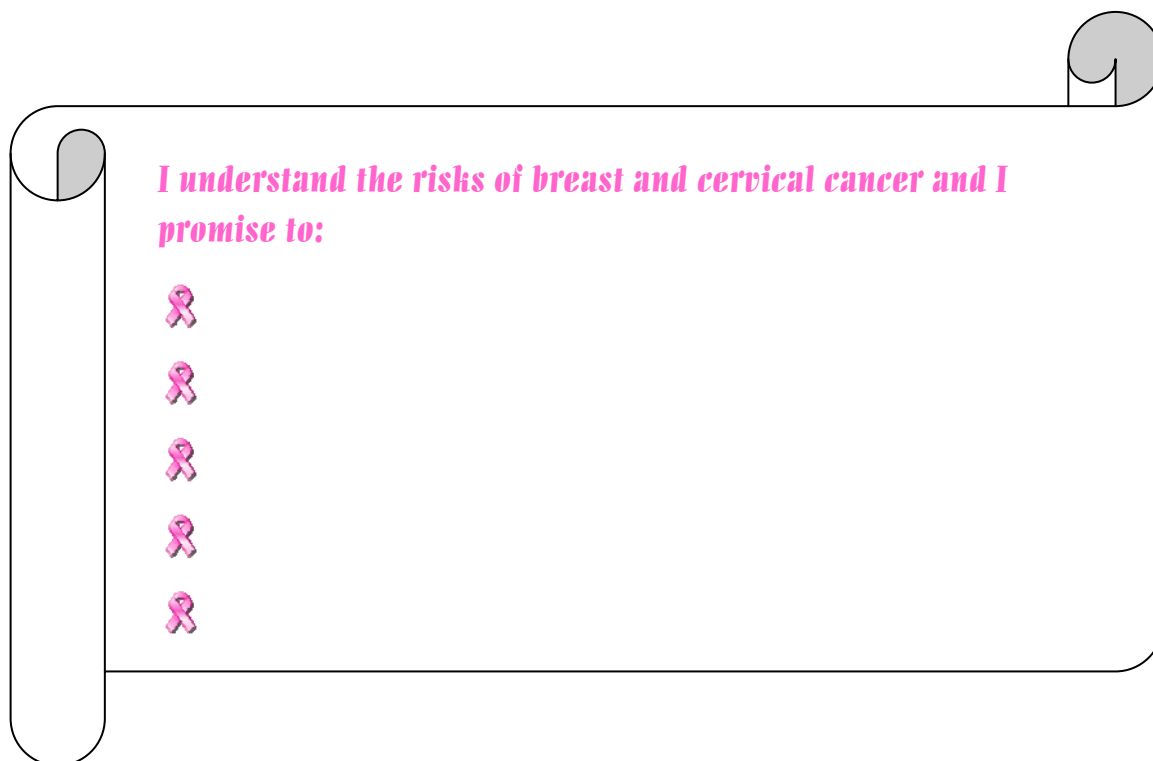
5 of you should have “excuse” cards with reasons not to get screenings. 5 of you should have “truth” cards with reasons why you should. Each excuse card has a matching truth card. One person will read their excuse and whoever has the corresponding card should tell that person the truth.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Excuse</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“But I feel fine there’s no way I have cancer.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Truth</p> <p>You can have cancer and not know it. When cancer is in its earliest stages you may feel normal. That is why you need regular screenings.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Excuse</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I thought it was just hereditary. Nobody in my family has had cancer. I won’t get it either.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Truth</p> <p>Cancer is influenced by heredity so if you have a family history you may be at a higher risk. However, a clear family history does not mean you are not at risk. Most women with breast cancer do not have a family member with breast cancer. Your risk level is heavily influenced by your environment and lifestyle. You can lower your risk with a few simple changes!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Excuse</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I can’t afford an expensive test”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Truth</p> <p>If you do not have insurance that covers these screenings you still have options. Please call your local health department and ask about the Tennessee Breast & Cervical Screening Program.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Excuse</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I do a self breast exam, I don’t need a mammogram”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Truth</p> <p>YES YOU DO! A mammogram can detect tumors that are too small to feel. Catching breast cancer early can prevent it from spreading and save your life!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Excuse</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I’ve already gone through menopause I don’t need a pap test”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Truth</p> <p>YES YOU DO! Even postmenopausal women need a pap test at least once every 3 years. Talk to your doctor about how often YOU need one.</p>





Activity 2- Promises We Can Keep!

We are busy people and sometimes it is easy to put important information to the back of our minds. Living a healthy lifestyle and getting regular cancer screenings are things we do not want to forget about. If you would like to make a commitment to change part of your lifestyle, you can make yourself a promise. Take a promise card, fill it out, and keep it where you will see it often.

You may want to promise to start doing self breast exams, eating healthier, or telling the women in your life how to prevent breast and cervical cancer. You may even want to trade promise cards with a friend or club member so you can hold each other accountable.



I understand the risks of breast and cervical cancer and I promise to:

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