



BREAST CANCER EDUCATION TOOLKIT
FOR HISPANIC/LATINO COMMUNITIES

SECTION TWO:
What is the Message?

SECTION TWO: WHAT IS THE MESSAGE?

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION

The purpose of this section of the Toolkit is to provide you with the breast health and breast cancer information that you can share when you are conducting outreach and education in Hispanic/Latino communities.

This part of the Toolkit focuses on general information and messages that can be shared with all Hispanic/Latino audiences. This includes:

- Breast cancer and its impact in Hispanic/Latino communities
- Actions people can take related to the Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages

Resources and materials that you can use when conducting outreach and education, and tips for modifying those messages for special audiences like men, women under the age of 40 or older women, are listed throughout this section and in [Section Four: What are the Resources?](#)



[Section Four:
What are the Resources?](#)

Learning Objectives

After reading this section, you should be able to:

- Define breast cancer,
- Describe the impact of breast cancer in the Hispanic/Latino community, and
- State actions women can take related to each Key Message.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THIS TOOLKIT

Throughout this Toolkit, you will find definitions, tips or ideas, and resources that you can use to build your own knowledge and to improve your outreach and education program. Icons/pictures are used to identify each feature. The icons are:

Definition



Tip or Idea



Resources



Each time you see an underlined resource, click on it to go to a page containing links to relevant resources and educational materials.

Completing the Program Planning Square

In order to successfully complete this section of the [Program Planning Square](#), first think about your audience and the amount of time you will have to share information. This will guide you in selecting the most appropriate information and talking points. Below are a few tips and resources to guide you in completing this box of the Program Planning Square:



[Program Planning Square](#)

Audience:

- If you know that you will be speaking with special audiences (men, women under the age of 40 or older women), you can modify the talking points in this section to meet their specific needs.
- If you will be talking with just one person, you can tailor your discussion to that person's specific needs or interests. The education you provide in one-to-one interactions should feel more like a conversation than a presentation.

Time:

- If you will have one hour, you can include most of the information and actions suggested in this section.
- If you have less time, select just a few of the talking points provided in this section. Try to include at least one action that your audience members can take (for example, talking to their provider about their personal risk of breast cancer).

Once you have considered your audience and the amount of time you will have, complete this section of your Program Planning Square. You can complete this section by selecting the information and talking points that you will share with your audience about breast cancer and its impact in the community, and the actions people can take related to the Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages.



The information presented in this section is available in the form of Educator Resources, Educational Materials, and PowerPoint presentations. Use them where appropriate to conduct community outreach and education!

Information and Messages You Can Share with All Audiences

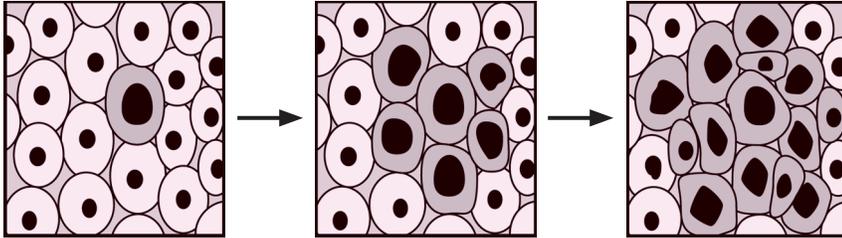
Breast cancer and its impact in Hispanic/Latino communities

Many people do not understand what breast cancer is or that it is a problem in their community. Below are some of the questions that people have about breast cancer and general information about breast cancer and its impact in Hispanic/Latino communities. You can discuss this information with your audience.

What is breast cancer?

Every day, cells in our bodies divide, grow and die. Most of the time, cells divide and grow in an orderly manner. However, sometimes cells grow out of control. Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast divide and grow abnormally and form malignant (cancerous) tumors.

To illustrate what this means, look at the pictures below.



The light circles represent normal breast cells and the dark-shaded circles represent cancerous breast cells. As the cancerous cells grow and multiply, they develop into a malignant (cancerous) tumor within the breast.

What causes breast cancer?

Researchers have found many factors that increase breast cancer risk and a few factors that lower risk. However, we still do not understand what exactly causes breast cancer to develop at a certain time in a certain person. It is likely a combination of risk factors, though it is still unclear why a certain combination of factors might cause cancer in one person but not another.

Although no one has complete control over whether s/he gets breast cancer, people can be empowered to make important breast care decisions by:

- Knowing their risk,
- Getting screened,
- Knowing what is normal for them, and
- Making healthy lifestyle choices.

Is breast cancer a problem in our community?

Yes! Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Hispanic/Latina women in the U.S. just as it is for non-Hispanic white and Black women¹. In 2021 (the most recent data available), about one in nine Hispanic/Latina women in the U.S. are projected to be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime, with an estimated 28,000 cases of breast cancer expected to occur among this population in 2021¹.

Hispanic/Latina women in the U.S. have lower rates of breast cancer and breast cancer death than non-Hispanic white and Black women^{1,2}. However, while Hispanic/Latina women have lower rates of breast cancer and breast cancer death, they are often diagnosed at a later stage¹.

Why are Hispanic/Latina women diagnosed at a later stage?

Mammography screening rates for Hispanic/Latina women are similar to those for non-Hispanic white and Black women^{1,3}. Yet they are often diagnosed with breast cancer at a later stage than non-Hispanic white and Black women¹. This may happen for a number of reasons, including a lower likelihood of getting prompt follow-up care after an abnormal mammogram¹.

Many things may prevent Hispanic/Latina women from obtaining screenings and prompt follow-up care after an abnormal mammogram. These barriers include, but are not limited to the following:

- Lack of awareness of breast cancer risks and screening methods
- Lack of insurance and access to regular health care
- Fear of diagnosis
- Bad experiences with illness or with the health care system in the past
- Cultural and language barriers^{1,4,5,6}

Screening tests can find cancer early, when chances of survival are highest. It is important for all women to get screened, and to follow up with their health care providers if a change in the breast is found.

You or your organization may also be able to offer some information to help people address barriers they face.

- If your organization has access to programs or resources that can help women overcome these barriers, be sure to share them.
- If your organization does not have access to such programs or resources, you can reach out to find out what resources are available in your community. You can also share the Susan G. Komen[®] Breast Care Helpline (1-877 GO KOMEN or 1-877-465-6636), which may be able to provide women with a list of resources in their community.

Actions people can take related to the Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages

Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages

Komen has developed four Key Messages about Breast Self-Awareness that can be shared with all audiences. Each Key Message is listed below, along with its primary talking points and actions that audience members can take. Depending on what your audience already knows and the amount of time you have, you can share talking points and action items for just a few of the Key Messages or all four.



More information about barriers that may prevent people from getting screening or follow-up care is available in the [*Barriers and Responses*](#) educator resource.

Understanding barriers to screening and follow-up care that people face in getting recommended screenings and follow-up care can help you to prepare for outreach and education programming. Although this Toolkit is not intended to assist you with helping women overcome these barriers, you can find information about how to respond to some of these barriers.

The Toolkit contains an overview of each of the four Key Messages. Click on the Key Messages below to be taken to a page containing these overviews.

Each overview provides the following:

- Specific learning objectives for each Key Message
- Primary talking points
- Action items for each Key Message
- Additional talking points for each action item
- Evaluation questions that you can use to assess whether the audience has understood the information you have provided

You can use these overviews to better understand each of the four Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages, how you can talk about them and how you can evaluate the effectiveness of the education you provide. As you learn more about the specific talking points for each action item, the resources available for and evaluation questions, you can feel more comfortable empowering your audience to make important breast care decisions based on the Key Messages.

Key Message: Know Your Risk

Primary Talking Points

- All women are at risk of breast cancer.
- Simply being born female and getting older are the two most common risk factors.
- It is important to know your personal risk of breast cancer and talk with your health care provider about your personal risk.

Actions Audience Members Can Take

- Talk to both sides of your family about your family health history.
- Talk to your doctor about your own personal risk of breast cancer.

Key Message: Get Screened

Primary Talking Points

- Screening can detect a problem early, when the chances of survival are the highest.
- It is important for all women to get the recommended breast cancer screenings.

Actions Audience Members Can Take

- Discuss with your provider which screening tests are right for you.
- If you are at average risk, have a clinical breast exam at least every 3 years starting at age 20, and every year starting at age 40.
- If you are at average risk, have a mammogram every year starting at age 40.
- Sign up for a screening reminder at [komen.org/reminder](https://www.komen.org/reminder).

Key Message: Know What is Normal for You

Primary Talking Points

- The signs of breast cancer are not the same for everyone.
- It is important for everyone to know how their breasts and chest area normally look and feel.

Actions Audience Members Can Take

- Know how your breasts look and feel and report any changes to your health care provider.
- If you notice any of the following changes, take charge of your health and see your health care provider:
 - Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area
 - Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast
 - Change in the size or shape of the breast
 - Dimpling or puckering of the skin
 - Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
 - Pulling in of your nipple or other parts of the breast
 - Nipple discharge that starts suddenly
 - New pain in one spot that doesn't go away

Key Message: Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Primary Talking Points

- There are risk factors for breast cancer that cannot be controlled, like being born female, getting older and family history. However, there are some things that can be controlled.
- Making healthy lifestyle choices can help to lower risk of breast cancer.

Actions Audience Members Can Take

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Add exercise to your routine.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Limit use of menopausal hormones.
- Breastfeed, if you can.

Modifying/Tailoring Talking Points for Special Audiences

In [*Section One: Who is the Audience?*](#), you found basic information about issues that are important to consider when speaking with women under the age of 40 women, older women and men. You can use the Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages resources to help you modify your talking points for these special audiences.

Related Educator Resources

After reading this section, you may have questions about preparing your message or talking with your audience about breast cancer. Below you will find a list of resources to support you in communicating your Key Messages about breast health and breast cancer.



[Educator Resources](#)

Learning Topic/Question	Educator Resources
Where can I find more information about breast cancer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>What Is Breast Cancer?</i></u> • <u><i>Breast Self-Awareness Messages Card</i></u> • <u><i>Breast Cancer Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Information</i></u>
What resources are available to help me prepare for one-to-one conversations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Sample Talking Points for One-To-One Conversations</i></u>
How do I respond to questions about Breast Self-Exam?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Responding to Questions About Breast Self-Exam</i></u>
How do I respond to questions about the barriers to screening and follow-up care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Barriers and Responses</i></u>
Where can I find more information about tailoring my talking points for special populations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Breast Self-Awareness Key Messages</i></u> • <u><i>Know Your Risk</i></u> • <u><i>Get Screened</i></u> • <u><i>Know What is Normal For You</i></u> • <u><i>Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices</i></u>
Where can I find more information about the educational materials available through Komen’s website and how to use them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Komen’s Library of Educational Materials</i></u> • <u><i>Using Your Educational Materials</i></u> • <u><i>Breast-Self Awareness Messages</i></u> • <u><i>Breast Health: Learn the Facts</i></u> • <u><i>Mammography</i></u> • <u><i>Take Care of Yourself</i></u> • <u><i>Men Can Get Breast Cancer</i></u> • <u><i>Breast Self-Awareness for Hispanic/Latino Communities Presentation (Short Version)</i></u> • <u><i>Breast Self-Awareness for Hispanic/Latino Communities Presentation (Long Version)</i></u> • <u><i>Lazos que Perduran PSAs</i></u>

Summary of this Section

This section of the Toolkit should help you to understand the information that you will be sharing with your audience, and consider questions like:

- How do I define breast cancer?
- How can I describe its impact in Hispanic/Latino communities and why it is important for Hispanic/Latina women to learn about breast self-awareness?
- How can I easily communicate information about breast cancer and actions women can take to empower them to make important breast-care decisions?
- How can I modify messages to address special audiences like men, women under age 40 or older women?

IN THE NEXT SECTION

In the next section of this Toolkit, you will find information and resources about venues that would be ideal for breast health and breast cancer outreach and education.

More specifically, you will learn about the following:

- **Potential venues in your community where you can conduct outreach and education about breast cancer**
- **How to prepare for outreach and education once you have identified or selected a venue**

Resources on identifying and preparing venues are also provided.

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- 1 American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures for Hispanic/Latino People, 2021-2023. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, 2021.
 - 2 American Cancer Society. Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2015-2016. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, Inc., 2015.
 - 3 American Cancer Society. Cancer Prevention & Early Detection Facts & Figures, 2015-2016. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, 2015.
 - 4 Harlan LC, Bernstein AB, Kessler LG. Cervical Cancer Screening: Who Is Not Screened and Why? Am J Public Health 1991; 81:885-891.
 - 5 Ramirez AG, McAlister A, Gallion K, Villarreal R. Targeting Hispanic/Latino Populations: Future Research and Prevention Strategies. Environ Health Perspect 1995; 103:287-290.
 - 6 Hubbel FA, Chavez LR, Mishra SI, Magana R, Valdez RB. From Ethnography to Intervention: Developing a Breast Cancer Control Program for Latinas. J Natl Cancer Inst Monogr 1995:109-115.