Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Learning Objectives
After your discussion, the listeners or audience should be able to:
• Name the two most common risk factors for breast cancer,
• Name at least two differences in how breast cancer affects Black and African American women as compared to white women,
• State at least one personal action they plan to continue or start that may reduce their risk, and
• Take a personal action to share the information they have learned with a friend or family member.

Primary Talking Points for This Key Message
1. All women are at risk of breast cancer.
2. There are risk factors for breast cancer that cannot be controlled. The two most common risk factors for the general population are being a woman and getting older. However, there are some things that can be controlled.
3. Making healthy lifestyle choices may help to lower risk of breast cancer.
4. Triple negative breast cancers are more often aggressive and have a poorer prognosis (outcome) than some other types of breast cancer. See Facts for Life: Triple Negative Breast Cancer for more information.

Special Talking Points for the Black and African American Community
1. Black and African American women are more likely than white women to be diagnosed with breast cancer under the age of 40.
2. The median age for breast cancer diagnosis in Black and African American women is 59 years compared to 63 years in white women.
3. Black and African American women are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to develop triple negative breast cancers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talking Points for Men</th>
<th>Talking Points for Younger Women</th>
<th>Talking Points for Older Women</th>
<th>Talking Points for Breast Cancer Survivors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Breast cancer impacts men as well as women. Men often have women in their lives — mothers, aunts, sisters or partners. Men can play an important role in supporting women in their lives to know their risk, get screened, know what is normal for them and make healthy lifestyle choices. *</td>
<td>* Black and African American women are more likely than white women to develop breast cancer under the age of 40. *</td>
<td>* Older women should continue to practice healthy lifestyle choices. Healthy habits can help to reduce the risk of breast cancer and can increase chances of survival at any age. *</td>
<td>* You are at risk of developing breast cancer again in the future. While you cannot guarantee that you may not develop cancer again, maintaining a healthy lifestyle may help lower your risk and increase your chances of survival if you develop cancer again. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Breast cancer in men is rare, but it can happen. *</td>
<td>* Breastfeeding may help you to lower your risk of developing premenopausal breast cancer. *</td>
<td></td>
<td>* You can share your experience with breast cancer with loved ones and encourage them to live a healthier lifestyle. *</td>
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</tbody>
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• Breastfeeding may help you to lower your risk of developing premenopausal breast cancer.  
• Breast cancer in women under the age of 40 is rare, but it can happen.  
• It is important for you to develop healthy habits now that can help you reduce your risk of breast cancer as you grow older.
<table>
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<th>Actions Listeners/Audience Can Take Related to the Breast Self-Awareness Key Message</th>
<th>Additional Talking Points for Each Action</th>
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| Maintain a healthy weight. | • Research has shown that gaining weight as an adult increases the risk of postmenopausal breast cancer. One thing you can do to try to reduce the risk is maintain a healthy weight over your lifetime.  
• What do you do to maintain a healthy weight? I exercise and make sure that I have a variety of fruits and vegetables on my plate for every meal. |
| Add exercise to your routine. | • Research has also shown that being physically active can reduce the risk of breast cancer both before and after menopause.  
• I know that you are going to tell me that you don’t have money or time for the gym. Me neither! But you can walk to the park and play with your children/grandchildren, walk around the block or dance. I climb the stairs in my house, from the basement to the second floor and use cans of food as weights. There are many things we can do at home that are free and don’t take much time. What do you think you can do to add exercise to your routine? |
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<td>Limit alcohol intake.</td>
<td>• A drink socially from time to time may be okay. Studies show that drinking alcohol (just one drink of alcohol per day) increases breast cancer risk. Limiting your alcohol use may reduce risk.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Limit menopausal hormones. | • Some women have symptoms of menopause-like hot flashes or other discomforts. Sometimes a doctor prescribes medication to help with the symptoms, but it is important to know that going through menopause does not mean that you are sick. Those symptoms are normal. Talk to your doctor about new medications before taking them. Most doctors prescribe these hormones at as low a dose as possible and for as short a time as possible.  
• It is important to discuss the risks and benefits of taking menopausal hormones with your health care provider.  
**For younger women:**  
• This may not affect you now, but keep it in mind for the future.  
• It is important for women to discuss the risks and benefits of taking menopausal hormones with your doctor. |
| Breastfeed, if you can. | • Breastfeeding is associated with a lower risk of breast cancer, including triple negative breast cancers.  
• White women are twice as likely to breastfeed for longer than one year than African American women.  
• Breastfeeding is good for babies, but it is also good for moms. It may also help us to reduce risk of breast cancer.  
**For older women:**  
• You can encourage mothers of babies and young children that you know to breastfeed if they can, too.  

*See the educator resource “5 Lifestyle Practices for Better Breast Health.”* |
A Personal Story
Gabrielle, a young woman in her 20s, lives with her mother, Maxine, who is in her 50s. Maxine has always lived a very sedentary life, eats a lot of processed, fried and fatty foods and drinks alcohol on a regular basis. Recently, Maxine had an abnormal finding during her annual mammogram. She had to wait a week before she could get a diagnostic mammogram appointment. During that week, Maxine and Gabrielle went through a whirlwind of emotions. Gabrielle began reading anything she could about breast cancer. She wanted to know how she could help her mother to live a long and healthy life. She learned that certain lifestyle behaviors can increase your risk of developing breast cancer, so she decided to encourage her mother to change some of her ways. Gabrielle started asking Maxine to go for walks with her, started cooking a healthy dinner and asked Maxine if she would be willing to cut back on her alcohol intake. Maxine was very stressed about her upcoming diagnostic mammogram, but incredibly touched that Gabrielle was trying to help her. She agreed to everything that Gabrielle asked. By the end of the week, Maxine felt better than she had in a while and credited the changes Gabrielle helped her make. Maxine’s diagnostic mammogram found no abnormalities and she was sent home with a clean bill of health. Maxine was so elated that she decided to keep up with the changes Gabrielle had encouraged, knowing that they could help lower her risk of developing breast cancer in the future.

Together, Maxine and Gabrielle exercise almost every day. They discovered a new love for cooking healthy food, and drink alcohol only on special occasions. They dance, they walk to the river and feed the ducks and they go to the farmers market together to pick out new fruits and vegetables to try. Maxine has told many of her friends about the information Gabrielle gave her that could lower her risk through her lifestyle behaviors. And then she invites them over for a walk and a healthy meal to celebrate their health.
Educational Materials You Can Use

• 5 Lifestyle Practices for Better Breast Health*
• 5 Things to Know about Breast Cancer Screening*
• 7 Tips For Being Your Own Best Advocate*
• Breast Health: Learn the Facts
• Breast Self-Awareness Messages for African Americans
• Everything You Need to Know If You Need a Follow-up Test*
• Facts for Life: Mammography
• Facts for Life: Racial & Ethnic Differences
• Facts for Life: Triple Negative Breast Cancer
• How To Get Good Health Care That's Affordable (And Good)*
• How To Take Charge of your Breast Health*
• Know Your Normal*
• Know Your Risk Factors postcard**
• Know Your Risk of Breast Cancer*
• Mammogram FAQ's: Here's What to Expect*
• Men Can Get Breast Cancer tri-fold brochure
• Poster set for African Americans
• Questions to Ask Your Doctor About Breast Health*
• Start Talking: The Importance of Family Health History*
• Take Care: Young Black and African American Women Talk About Breast Cancer
• What Do Genes Have To Do With Breast Cancer?*

*indicates a material from the Know Your Girls™ marketing campaign aimed at young African American women.

Questions You Can Ask Your Listener/Audience to Evaluate Your Success

1. Did you learn anything about breast health today that you did not know before? Please select only one answer.
   □ Yes
   □ No
   □ Not sure

2. Will you share the breast health information you received today with a family member or friend? Please select only one answer.
   □ Yes
   □ No
   □ Not sure

3. What are the two most common risk factors for breast cancer?
   1. ____________________________
   2. ____________________________
4. Please name at least two differences in how breast cancer affects Black and African American women as compared to white women?

1. 

2. 

3. 

5. What steps do you plan to take in the future that may reduce your risk of breast cancer? Please check all that apply.

☐ Maintain or add exercise into my routine

☐ Achieve or maintain a healthy weight

☐ Avoid or limit alcohol

☐ Avoid or limit menopausal hormonal medications

☐ Breastfeed future babies