



Confused

about breast cancer
screening guidelines?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Facts of

In November 2009 when the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) revised its guidelines and recommended against routine mammography screening for women from 40 to 49 years of age, the reaction was loud and immediate. Many women became uncertain and wondered, "What does that mean for me?"

The same day that the USPSTF guidelines were published, Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, withheld support for the recommendations. She said that the new guidelines caused a great deal of confusion and worry among women and their families.

What DO the experts say?

The American Cancer Society, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Radiology, and Susan G. Komen for the Cure® continue to agree that breast cancer screening should begin at age 40 – even earlier if a woman is at greater risk for developing breast cancer.

Facts are facts.

Talk to your doctor or contact the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org) for more information.

Life

What you need to know²

- One in eight women living in the U.S. will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.
- Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in U.S. women. It's the leading cause of death in 35- to 65-year-old women.
- Approximately 2.4 million American women with a history of breast cancer are alive today.
- If the cancer is detected before it has spread to lymph nodes or other parts of the body, the chance for a cure is nearly 100 percent.

Early diagnosis is key

There is no disagreement that early and accurate diagnosis of breast cancer is the key to improving clinical outcomes. Mammography – and in particular, digital mammography – is now widely regarded as the gold standard for detecting early breast cancer disease. In most cases, mammography can identify an abnormal breast mass as much as two years before a physical change would be noticed.

Regular mammography screening began in the United States in 1990. Since then, the mortality rate from breast cancer, which had been unchanged for the preceding 50 years, decreased by 30 percent.⁴

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- 1 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services news release, Secretary Sebelius Statement on New Breast Cancer Recommendations, Nov. 18, 2009
- 2 Additional information on screening guidelines is available on the following websites: www.cancer.org; www.ACR.org; www.komen.org.
- 3 American Cancer Society Breast Cancer Facts and Figures 2009
- 4 American College of Radiology, Avon Survey Reveals Potentially Deadly Effects of USPSTF Mammography Recommendations, Feb. 22, 2010

PP-00070A 2010