



Wellness News

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Protecting Your Breast Health

Know your risk factors and get screened

It is well known that breast cancer affects a significant number of women. In fact, it is the second most common form of cancer in women, with 1 in 8 developing the disease at some point in their life. This is why regular screenings are important. They help find the cancer early when it is still localized, before it has a chance to spread, and it is more easily treated.

The Basics on Breast Cancer Screenings

The most recent screening recommendation is that women who are at average risk for breast cancer should get a mammogram every two years between the ages of 40 and 74. Learn about the different types of screenings available and what to expect.

- **Mammogram** — This is the most common screening. It involves a low-dose X-ray of your breast tissue producing images your care team can review for any issues.
- **Breast ultrasound** — This screening can be helpful for women with dense breasts, meaning they have more connective breast tissue that makes tumors harder to detect on a regular mammogram.
- **Breast MRI** — This screening is typically recommended in addition to an annual mammogram only for women with a high risk of breast cancer.

It's important to have an open and honest conversation about your breast cancer risk factors and screening options with your doctor. Together, you can develop a screening plan you both feel comfortable with.

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

Unfortunately, there are several risk factors for breast cancer that are beyond your control. These risk factors include:

- **Age** — The majority of breast cancer cases happen in women over 50. So, it's important to keep up with preventive screenings through aging.
- **Genetic mutations** — Having certain gene mutations like BRCA1 and BRCA2 can increase the risk of developing breast cancer. Depending on your family medical history, your doctor may recommend testing for these mutations with a blood test.
- **Reproductive history** — Getting your period before 12 or starting menopause after 55 can raise your risk of breast cancer due to the longer exposure to hormones.
- **Personal and family medical history** — If a blood relative has a history of breast or ovarian cancer, you may be at increased risk as well.



Prioritize your breast health

While there are factors you can't control, there are parts of your health you can take more control of that can also have an impact on your overall breast cancer risk.

- **Physical activity.** Research has shown that the risk for breast cancer is 25% lower for women who are physically active on a regular basis.
- **Nutritious eating.** Whole grains, omega-3 fatty acids, and colorful fruits and vegetables all provide nutrients. It also helps to avoid foods with added sugars and too many saturated fats.
- **Weight management.** Obesity has been shown to increase the risk of cancer after menopause, as well as the risk of it spreading or returning after initial treatment.
- **Reducing unhealthy behaviors.** It can help your risk to quit or avoid smoking and limit your alcohol intake.

If you or someone close to you has been diagnosed with breast cancer, visit reach.cancer.org to find support through treatment and recovery.

Mammogram Basics:

A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast commonly used to look for early signs of breast cancer. Regular mammograms can find breast cancer early, sometimes up to 3 years before it can be felt.



How is a mammogram done? What can I expect during my appointment?

You will stand in front of a special x-ray machine. A technologist will place your breast on a plate. Another plate will firmly press your breast from above. The plates will flatten the breast, holding it still while the x-ray is being taken. You will feel some pressure. The steps are repeated to make a side view of the breast. The other breast will be x-rayed in the same way.

You will then wait while the technologist checks the x-rays to make sure the pictures do not need to be redone. Keep in mind that the technologist cannot tell you the results of your mammogram. A doctor with special training, called a radiologist, will look at the x-ray for early signs of breast cancer or other problems.

Who should have a mammogram?

Talk with your doctor. Ask when to start having mammograms and how often you should have them based on your health history. The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends women with normal risk for breast cancer to receive a mammogram every other year, starting at age 40 to age 74.

Tips for a mammogram appointment:

- Try not to have your mammogram the week prior to or during your period. Your breasts may be tender or swollen then.
- On the day of your mammogram, don't wear deodorant, perfume, or powder. These products can show up as white spots on the X-ray.
- Some women prefer to wear a top with a skirt or pants, instead of a dress. You will need to undress from your waist up for the mammogram.

What happens if my mammogram is normal?

Continue to get mammograms according to recommended time intervals. Mammograms work best when they can be compared with previous ones. This allows the radiologist to compare them to look for changes in your breasts.

What happens if my mammogram is abnormal?

An abnormal mammogram does not always mean that there is cancer. But you may need to have additional mammograms, tests, or exams before the doctor can tell for sure. You may also be referred to a breast specialist or a surgeon. It does not necessarily mean you have cancer or need surgery. These doctors are experts in diagnosing breast problems. Doctors will do follow-up tests to diagnose breast cancer or to find that there is no cancer.



To find a doctor or healthcare provider in your plan's network, use the Find Care Tool on the [SydneySM Health app](#) or at [Anthem.com](#).

Sources:

anthem.com/blog/breast-health.html

cdc.gov/breast-cancer/about/mammograms.html





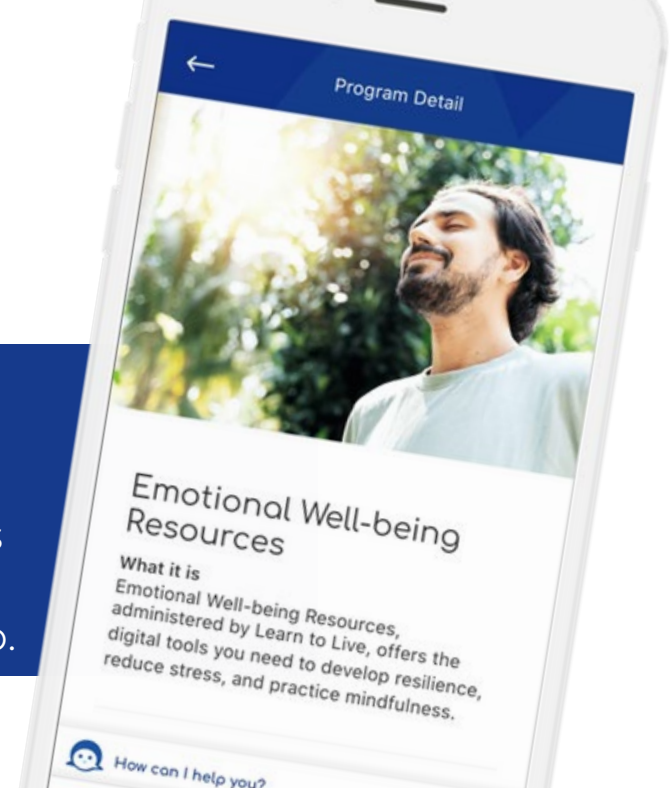
World Mental Health Day:

October 10th



Anthem Members:

Log into the Sydney app tap MENU, ACCESS CARE, MyHealth Dashboard, Programs to find Behavioral Health resources and tools, such as *Emotional Wellbeing Resources*. You can create access for your covered teens, 13 and up.



World Mental Health Day is a great opportunity for us to come together to talk about mental health and its importance.

Talking is good for your mental health. And talking about mental health is important. But starting a conversation isn't always easy. Whether you'd like to talk to someone about how you're feeling, or check-in with someone you care about, here are some tips that can help.

Talking about *your* mental health

Choose someone you trust to talk to

This might be a friend, family member or a colleague. Or you might be more comfortable talking to someone you don't know, for example, through a support helpline.

Think about the best place to talk

It's important to choose a place where you feel comfortable enough to open-up. You might want to choose somewhere private where you're less likely to be disturbed. You also might want to talk while you do an activity, like walking together.

Prepare yourself for their reaction

Hopefully, you will have a good experience when you open-up to someone. But there's a chance that they may not react in the way you hope. This may be for different reasons, like they may be worried or not fully understand at first. If that's the case, try to give them time to process what you've told them. It might help to give them information to read to help them understand. And don't forget to be kind to yourself and practice self-care.

Talking to someone about *their* mental health

Find a good space to talk without distractions

If you're worried about someone, find a place where you know you can have a conversation without being distracted. Make sure to give them your full attention. It might help to switch off your phone.

Listen and ask questions

Listening can be one of the most valuable ways to be there for someone. Show them that you're actively listening by facing them, making eye contact, and not interrupting. Questions can help you clarify what they mean and show that you're actively listening. But make sure the questions are relevant to what they're saying and not changing the subject.

Ask how you can help

Ask how you can help or make suggestions, rather than telling them what to do next. They might want support with making a GP appointment, help around the house, or just for you to keep things normal and chat about what's going on in your life.

Slow-Cooker Buffalo Chicken Chili



“If you like Buffalo wings, you'll love the flavors in this warm, hearty chili that comes together easily in the slow cooker.”

Active Time: 15 minutes *Total Time:* 4 hours 15 minutes *Servings:* 6

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 (15 oz.) can no-salt-added black beans, rinsed
- 1 (15 oz.) can no-salt-added chickpeas, rinsed
- 1 (15 oz.) can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1 (15 oz.) can unsalted tomato sauce
- ½ medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 cp. unsalted chicken broth
- ⅓ cp. Buffalo sauce (cut back based on preference)
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ cp. crumbled blue cheese
- ¼ cp. plain yogurt or sour cream (optional)

Directions:

Step 1

Combine chicken, beans, chickpeas, tomatoes, tomato sauce, onion, broth, Buffalo sauce, oil, oregano and garlic powder in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on high for 4 hours.

Step 2

Remove the chicken and place on a cutting board. Let cool slightly; roughly shred with two forks and return to the slow cooker. Stir in blue cheese and yogurt or sour cream, if using.