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Breast Cancer Screening and the World Trade Center Health Program

Is breast cancer screening available through the WTC Health Program?

The World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program provides screenings and treatment for health conditions, including breast cancer, related to the September 11th terrorist attacks. Breast cancer screening may be available as a part of the health monitoring exam.

What is breast cancer screening?

Breast cancer screening looks for cancer before you feel symptoms from the disease. A mammogram is a detailed x-ray picture of the breast that may show if cancer is present. Screening allows for earlier treatment, which may slow or even stop the cancer from progressing.

How does the WTC Health Program decide to screen for breast cancer?

The WTC Health Program follows government-screening guidelines¹ set by experts who make recommendations about cancer care and screening.

What breast cancer screening tests can I receive through the WTC Health Program?

If you are between the ages of 50 and 74, you may receive a digital mammogram once every other year.

What is the risk from breast cancer screening?

You will be exposed to a small amount of radiation during a mammogram, but for most women the benefits of

screening outweigh this low risk. Talk to your WTC Health Program provider if you are concerned or have other questions about the procedure.

What happens if there is a finding during my mammogram?

Your WTC Health Program provider will explain what this result may mean for future testing and possible treatment. The Program will cover indicated follow up and/or diagnostic tests if you have an abnormal screening. The WTC Health Program will also cover your treatment if the cancer is determined to be related to the September 11th terrorist attacks.

What happens if I receive a negative result?

Most likely, a negative result means that your doctor will not refer you for more testing and/or treatment. Your doctor will explain what this result may mean in more detail. The WTC Health Program will cover future screening as recommended by the government-screening guidelines.

Can I still be screened through my personal physician who is not a part of the WTC Health Program?

You may choose to have screening mammograms through your private physician. However, the WTC Health Program can only pay for care provided through the Program.

¹ The WTC Health Program follows the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) category A and B recommendations for breast cancer screening for women between the ages of 50 to 74. Available at <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Document/RecommendationStatementFinal/breast-cancer-screening1>



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Cervical Cancer Screening and the World Trade Center Health Program

What is cervical cancer screening?

Cervical cancer screening looks for signs of cervical cancer before you feel symptoms from the disease. It does not screen for ovarian, uterine, vaginal, or vulvar cancers. Two screening tests can help prevent cervical cancer or find it early:

The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for precancers, cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if not appropriately treated.

The HPV test looks for the virus (human papillomavirus) that can lead to cervical cancer.

Screening allows for earlier treatment, which may slow or even stop the cancer from progressing.

What are the potential risks from cervical cancer screening?

Screening with a Pap smear or HPV testing can have some risks. Abnormal test results can lead to more frequent testing and invasive diagnostic procedures, such as colposcopy and cervical biopsy. These diagnostic procedures can cause vaginal bleeding, pain, infection, and failure to diagnose (due to inadequate sampling).

Abnormal screening test results are also associated with mild psychological effects, such as short-term increases in anxiety, distress, and concern about health.

Talk to your doctor if you are concerned or have other questions about any of these screening tests or diagnostic procedures. In most cases, the benefits of cervical cancer screening outweigh the risks involved with screening.

What cervical cancer screening tests can I receive through the WTC Health Program?

Each Clinical Center of Excellence (CCE) and the Nationwide Provider Network (NPN) have established a process for conducting cervical cancer screening for their members. You should contact your CCE or the NPN to discuss your eligibility and options available for cervical cancer screening.

What cervical cancer screening guidelines does the WTC Health Program follow?

The WTC Health Program follows evidence-based screening guidelines¹ recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). USPSTF is an independent group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine.

According to USPSTF guidelines, If you are between the ages of 21–29, you are eligible for a Pap smear every three years. If you are between the ages of 30–65, you are eligible for either a Pap smear every three years, an HPV screening every 5 years, or a combination of the two tests every 5 years.

Can I still be screened through my personal physician who is not a part of the WTC Health Program?

Yes and in many cases that may be preferable for members who have a longstanding relationship with their private physician. However, if you choose to see your private physician you must pay for those services through your own primary insurance or at your own expense. The WTC Health Program can only pay for screening provided through the Program.

¹ The WTC Health Program follows the USPSTF category A and B recommendations for cervical cancer screening. Available at <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Document/RecommendationStatementFinal/cervical-cancer-screening2>

What happens if I receive a negative result?

A normal result means there are no abnormal cells present. However, the Pap smear test is not 100% accurate. You should return for your next screening test as directed by your doctor. Most of the time, cervical cancer develops very slowly, and follow-up Pap smears should find any changes in time for treatment.

What happens if I receive a positive result for cervical cancer?

When a Pap smear shows abnormal changes, further testing or follow-up is needed. The next step depends on the results of the Pap smear, your previous history of Pap smears, and risk factors you may have for cervical cancer. Your doctor will explain what this result may mean for future testing and treatment.

If a Pap smear shows lesions suspicious for cancer or pre-malignant conditions, the WTC Health Program will cover follow-up and related diagnostic testing as recommended by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) through an enrolled approved provider in the WTC Health Program.

If further diagnostic testing shows invasive cervical cancer or other cancer on the List of WTC-related Health Conditions then your condition might qualify as a WTC certifiable cancer and then all medically necessary treatment of that cancer would be covered by the WTC Health Program, through an enrolled approved provider in the WTC Health Program.

If a Pap smear shows benign conditions or conditions not covered by the WTC Health Program that require treatment, your CCE or NPN healthcare provider will refer you to your primary care provider for follow-up as coverage could not be provided under the WTC Health Program, but would in all likelihood be covered by your health insurance.



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Colon Cancer Screening and the World Trade Center Health Program

Is colon cancer screening available through the World Trade Center Health Program?

The World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program provides screenings and treatment for health conditions, including colon cancer, related to the September 11th terrorist attacks. Colon cancer screening may be available as a part of the health monitoring exam assuming certain requirements are met.

What are the benefits of colon cancer screening?

Colon cancer screening looks for cancer before you feel symptoms from the disease. Screening allows for earlier treatment, which may slow or even stop the cancer from progressing.

How does the WTC Health Program decide to screen for colon cancer?

The WTC Health Program follows government-screening guidelines¹ set by experts who make recommendations about cancer screening and care.

What colon cancer screening tests can I receive through the WTC Health Program?

The WTC Health Program offers three types of colon cancer screening. Initial testing might look for small amounts of blood in your stool. A second type of test allows doctors to look inside the rectum and lower colon, while a third type of test examines the entire length of the colon. Your doctor will suggest the best procedure for cancer screening based upon your individual circumstances.

When am I eligible for colon cancer screening?

Colon cancer screening is recommended to begin at the age of 50, and should continue through age 75.

What is the risk from colon cancer screening?

Some procedures used to examine the colon do present minimal risk, but for most people the benefits of screening outweigh the potential risk. For some procedures you will receive medicine to help you relax. Talk to your doctor if you are concerned or have any questions about the procedures.

What happens if I receive a positive result?

Your doctor will explain what the positive result may mean for future testing and possible treatment. The Program will cover additional screenings if you receive a positive result. The Program will also cover your treatment if the cancer is determined to be related to the September 11th terrorist attacks.

What happens if I receive a negative result?

Your doctor will explain what the negative result means in more detail. The Program will cover future screening as recommended by the government-screening guidelines.

Can I still be screened through my personal physician who is not a part of the WTC Health Program?

You may choose to have colon cancer screening through your private physician. However, the WTC Health Program can only pay for care provided through the Program.

¹ The WTC Health Program follows the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) category A and B recommendations for colorectal cancer beginning at age 50 years and continuing until age 75 years. The WTC Health Program policy allows stool testing, sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, and CT colonography, as screening methods which are recommended by USPSTF.

Available at <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/colorectal-cancer-screening>



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Lung Cancer Screening and the World Trade Center Health Program

Is lung cancer screening available through the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program?

Yes. Annual lung cancer screening is now being offered as a medical benefit for eligible WTC Health Program members. Eligibility is based on age and smoking history.

Who is eligible to receive lung cancer screening through the WTC Health Program?

WTC Health Program members who are at high risk for lung cancer are eligible for annual lung cancer screening.

This includes individuals who:

- Are between the ages of 50 and 80 years old; **and**
- Have a smoking history of at least 20 pack-years (A “pack year” is smoking an average of 1 pack of cigarettes per day for 1 year. For example, a person could have a 20 pack-year history by smoking 1 pack a day for 20 years or 2 packs a day for 10 years); **and**
- Are current smokers or former smokers who have quit smoking completely within the last 15 consecutive years.

What is lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer screening looks for signs of lung cancer before you feel symptoms from the disease. Low-dose computed tomography (also called a low-dose CT scan or LDCT) is the test now recommended to screen for lung cancer. A CT machine scans the body and uses low-dose radiation to make a series of detailed pictures of the lungs. Screening allows for earlier diagnosis and treatment, which may slow or even stop the cancer from progressing. Many lung cancer deaths can be prevented by screening high-risk people every year.

When should screening stop?

Once started, LDCT should continue annually until you reach age 80, or you have completely quit smoking for greater than 15 consecutive years, or you develop a health problem that significantly limits your ability or willingness to obtain curative treatment, or you voluntarily withdraw from the Program.

What are the risks and benefits of lung cancer screening?

You should talk to your doctor to determine if the benefits of this test outweigh the risks for your specific medical situation.

One risk associated with LDCT scans is false-positive results. This occurs when an LDCT scan suggests lung cancer when, in fact, no cancer is present. False-positive results cause worry and anxiety, and can lead to follow-up tests and surgeries that are unnecessary and may be risky. Careful healthcare management can reduce these risks.

Another consideration is that individuals receive radiation during LDCT scans. Currently, LDCT is not felt to result in a significant radiation exposure, but there is the potential for harm because radiation from repeated scans can cause cancer in otherwise healthy people.

What if you qualify for LDCT screening, but have already received a chest CT scan?

LDCT screening is a benefit offered in the WTC Health Program. Some members in the WTC Health Program have been receiving chest CT scans for diagnostic and treatment purposes for various conditions since the very beginning of the Program.

If you have already received a chest CT scan and the recommendation was that repeat CT scans were not indicated, that recommendation may have now changed with the acceptance of LDCT as an important lung cancer screening tool for high risk patients. If you already received a CT scan and the recommendation was for a repeat chest CT scan at a future date then you should follow that recommendation.

In either case, inform your WTC Health Program clinical center so that they can integrate your results into a long-term plan that provides you with the optimal testing without duplication. You should not receive chest CT scans more often than recommended by your WTC Health Program clinical center. You also should not be in multiple LDCT screening programs because then the added radiation risk outweighs the benefit.

Are there any other proven methods for lung cancer screening?

No. Only LDCT scans without contrast are recommended for lung cancer screening. Chest-X-rays, chest-X-rays with sputum analysis, body scans, and biomarkers are not recommended for lung cancer screening. The first two testing methods are not accurate enough for early detection and whole-body scans do not provide any additional accuracy for finding lung cancer while exposing the patient to far greater and unnecessary radiation.

What happens if I get a “suspicious” result from an LDCT scan?

A “suspicious” result means that the LDCT scan shows that something is abnormal. This could mean lung cancer. It could also mean some other lung condition. It could also be a false-positive result. You may need to have additional

tests to find out what is wrong. These tests are covered by the WTC Health Program. Your doctor will discuss the findings with you and advise you on what to do next.

What happens if I get a negative result from an LDCT scan?

A negative result means the LDCT scan shows no cancer or other abnormal findings at the time. It does not mean you will never get lung cancer. Your doctor will tell you when you should be screened again. The WTC Health Program offers yearly lung cancer screening to members who are at high risk for lung cancer.

What lung cancer screening guidelines does the WTC Health Program use to ensure appropriate screening is conducted for lung cancer?

The WTC Health Program follows evidence-based screening guidelines set by the United States Preventive Services Task Force¹ (USPSTF). USPSTF is an independent group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine.

Can the WTC Health Program help me quit smoking?

Yes. If you are eligible for the WTC Health Program lung cancer screening benefit, then you are also eligible to participate in a smoking cessation program at no cost to you. The smoking cessation program may include medication, nicotine replacement therapy, and counseling.

The most important way to prevent lung cancer is to not smoke and to avoid exposure to tobacco smoke. If you do smoke, quitting can greatly reduce your risk of developing lung cancer, and your risk will continue to go down over time.

¹ The WTC Health Program follows the USPSTF category A and B recommendations for lung cancer screening. Available at <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/lung-cancer-screening>