



Vital Signs

Health-Related Social Needs Can Keep Women from Getting Lifesaving Mammograms

Challenges include social isolation and cost to access health care

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1 in 4

About 1 in 4 women ages 50 to 74 years had not received a mammogram in the past 2 years in 2022.

3 in 10

About 3 in 10 women ages 50 to 74 years with 3 or more health-related social needs had not received a mammogram.

2x

Women who reported cost as a barrier to access health care had about two times the odds of not getting a mammogram.

Screening mammograms can save lives

Breast cancer causes more than 40,000 deaths in women each year in the United States. Deaths due to breast cancer have decreased over time, yet some groups experience more deaths than others. For example, Black women, women who are uninsured, and women with low incomes are more likely to die from breast cancer. Screening mammograms have been shown to reduce breast cancer death by 22%.

Women face challenges to getting mammograms

The more health-related social needs a woman has in her life, the less likely she is to be up to date with mammograms that screen for breast cancer. Health-related social needs are adverse social conditions that can be barriers to a person's health or health care. Examples include social isolation, job loss, lack of reliable transportation, insecurity around food or housing, and cost to access health care. Cost to access health care is one of the biggest challenges.

Regular mammograms can find breast cancer early

Getting screening mammograms regularly can help find breast cancer early when it is easier to treat. Women ages 50 to 74 years should get a screening mammogram every 2 years, as currently recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. The task force is a group of doctors and disease experts who look at research on the best way to prevent diseases. This group makes recommendations on how doctors can help patients avoid diseases or find them early. Women ages 40 to 49 years should talk to their health care providers about when to start and how often to get a mammogram.

Read the full *MMWR*

Challenges

Only about 3 in 4 women ages 50 to 74 years were up to date with their mammograms in 2022. More women need to get screening mammograms that can save lives.

- Health-related social needs can have an impact on a woman's chance of being up to date with her mammogram. For example, women are less likely to get a mammogram if they feel socially isolated, have lost a job, or don't have reliable transportation. The more health-related social needs a woman has, the less likely she is to have a mammogram. Only about 7 in 10 women ages 50 to 74 years with three or more health-related social needs were up to date with mammograms, compared to about 8 in 10 of those with no health-related social needs.
- The cost of accessing health care was the greatest challenge for women who did not receive a mammogram in the past 2 years.
- Women without health insurance, who had low incomes, and who did not have a usual source of health care were less likely to get mammograms.




Health-related social needs can lower a woman's chance of being up to date with her mammogram

Women are more likely to get lifesaving mammograms when their health-related social needs are met.

More health-related social needs, fewer mammograms

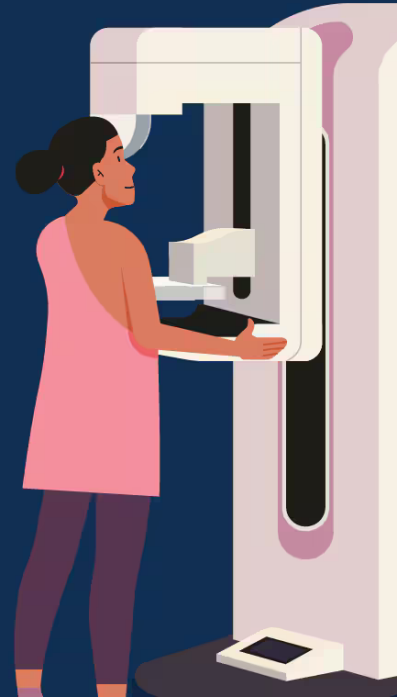
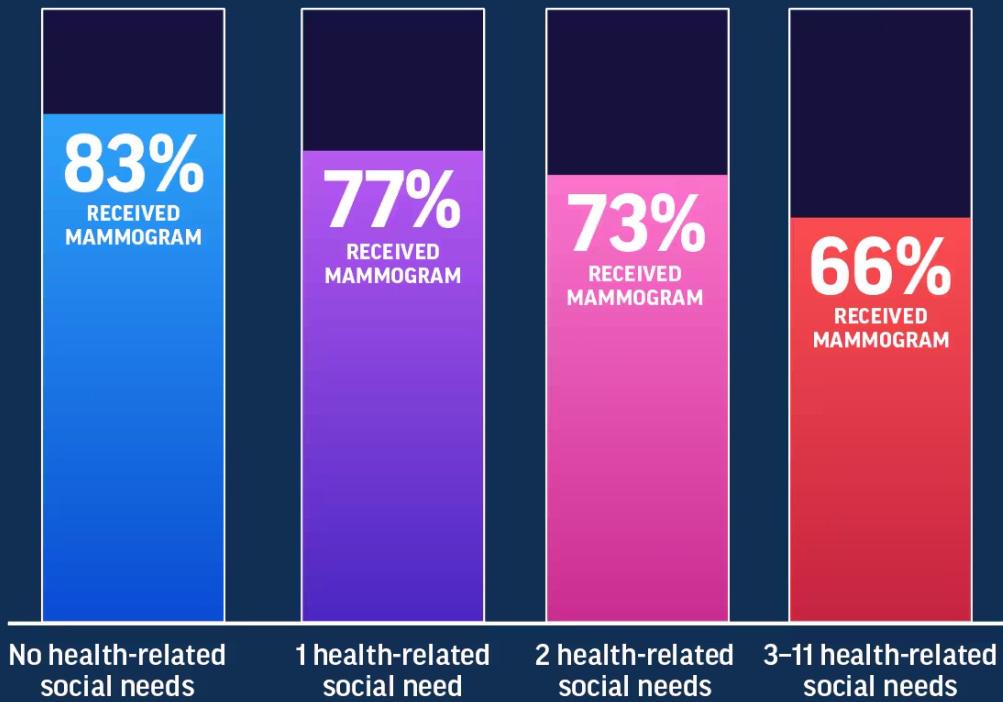


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Women who were not experiencing health-related social needs were more likely to receive a mammogram

The more health-related social needs a woman experiences, the less likely she is to receive a mammogram.

Percent of women aged 50-74 who received a mammogram in the last 2 years



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What Can Be Done

To Address Health-Related Social Needs

Identify specific health-related social needs that individual women experience, and coordinate efforts between health care, social services, community organizations, and public health to provide services that reduce the impact of these needs. For example, improving access to care and providing reliable transportation by coordinating referrals between health care, social services, community organizations, and public health helps ensure women are able to get recommended mammograms.

Access to free or low-cost breast and cervical cancer screening services is available for women who have low incomes and are uninsured through state, tribe, and territory health departments funded by CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Mammograms are available at no cost through most private health insurance plans and Medicare.

Programs also help women overcome barriers to health care. For example, Nevada's Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program hired community health workers to find out what would help women with low incomes get screening and connect women to needed services. Tennessee's Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program provided free rides to appointments.



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Health care providers can

- Do a risk assessment for health-related social needs a woman has that may reduce access to preventive health care.
 - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will now reimburse for a risk assessment.
 - Health-related social needs can be documented using appropriate ICD-10 codes.
- Refer patients to effective local social services to receive needed help.
- Refer women to the local Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program for free or low-cost mammograms.



Community planners can

- Work together to support and expand community organizations that provide services to address health-related social needs such as transportation, food assistance, social integration, and mental health services.
- Support funding of community organizations that focus on specific needs of people.
- Build awareness of the role of health-related social needs to help women get their recommended mammograms.



Health departments can

- Work with government and community programs that fill health-related social needs such as transportation and housing assistance to make it easier for women to get mammograms.

To Find Breast Cancer Early














Women ages 50 to 74 years who are at average risk for breast cancer should get a screening mammogram every 2 years.


This will help find breast cancer early when treatment works best. Average risk refers to women without a strong family history of breast cancer, without changes in certain breast cancer genes, and who have not had chest radiation.

Women who are 40 to 49 years old should talk to their doctor about when to start and how often to get a mammogram.



Related Pages and Resources

- *Vital Signs*: Media Statement – Cost and Access Are Not the Only Barriers Women Face in Getting Lifesaving Mammograms [English]
- *Vital Signs*: Comunicado de Prensa – El costo y el acceso no son las únicas barreras que las mujeres enfrentan para hacerse las mamografías que salvan vidas [Spanish]
- *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR): Vital Signs*: Mammography Use and Association with Social Determinants of Health and Health-Related Social Needs Among Women — United States, 2022
- The White House Social Determinants of Health Playbook  [858 KB, 53 pages] 
- CMS 2024 Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule 
- Improving the collection of Social Determinants of Health Data with ICD-10-CM Z Codes  [263 KB, 2 pages] 
- Addressing Social Determinants of Health: Examples of Successful Evidence-Based Strategies and Current Federal Efforts  [298 KB, 30 pages] 
- 211.org 
- American Cancer Society 
- Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative 
- CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program
- Preventive care benefits for women | HealthCare.gov 
- Medicare Preventive Services | CMS 
- U.S. Cancer Statistics Breast Cancer Stat Bite
- Effectiveness of Breast Cancer Screening: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis to Update the 2009 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation 

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VITAL SIGNS RESOURCES

Digital Media Tools

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