



The Many Faces of Breast Cancer

Christine

For 28 year-old "Christine,*" finding a breast lump one day was terrifying. She had heard about breast cancer and was afraid. Christine had decided that she needed to find out for sure about the lump, but with no insurance and little income, how could she afford the costs of the medical appointment and the tests?

Fortunately, Christine lives in Berrien County and was able to go to the Berrien County Health Department where a Nurse Practitioner examined her at no charge, thanks to the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Feeling the lump too, the Nurse arranged for Christine to have an ultrasound of the lump to tell if it is solid or liquid and if it was cancer or not. As is the case of 85% of lumps found in the breasts of women of all ages, this lump was NOT cancer! Christine was also able to have a follow-up appointment with a surgeon who reassured her that the lump was not cancer.

Rochelle

42 year old "Rochelle" had not had a mammogram (special x-ray of the breast) since she lost her insurance a number of years ago. As October is "Breast Cancer Awareness Month," Rochelle was reminded of the importance of having a mammogram every year starting at age 40. She heard about the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) offered through the Berrien County Health Department.

Rochelle made an appointment with the program, which included a breast exam and pap smear by a Nurse Practitioner. The Nurse taught her how to do Self Breast Exam every month and ordered a screening Mammogram at a participating local hospital. Rochelle learned that both tests were normal (no indication of cancer). She was also told to return on a yearly basis and not let the care of her health go so long, especially when we have such programs as the BCCCP for those who need it.

Karen

49 year old "Karen" was not so fortunate. She knew that she had felt a lump in her breast for several years but was afraid to go to the doctor and didn't have any insurance. Her daughter told her about BCCCP with the Berrien County Health Department and convinced her to make an appointment. When Karen received the devastating news that she had cancer, she also found out that the program helped her get Medicaid to help with the costs of treatment. Later she told one of the program nurses, "If I had only known sooner that I could have gotten help, I would have come sooner."

*all names have been changed



The common message: **Berrien County Health Department has breast care programs for any woman, regardless of age or whether she has insurance.** The Susan G. Komen Fund covers expenses for screening for women under the age of 40 with a breast lump. For women 40-64, the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program is available for Mammograms and follow-up.

Breast Health Facts

- Women 20 and up should perform breast self exams monthly
- Women should have yearly mammograms starting at age 40.
- Clinical breast exams should be done yearly by a specifically trained health care provider
- About 100 women a year in Berrien County are diagnosed with breast cancer, and about 25 a year will die from it.
- To decrease your risk, exercise, eat fruits and vegetables, get adequate rest, avoid stress and do not smoke
- All women are at risk for breast cancer, but some women have a higher risk: older women (especially around and after menopause), those with a family history of breast cancer, (especially before menopause), and those who never gave birth.

If you find a lump in your breast, don't wait! Call your health care provider or the health department!!!

- **Early detection is the key to survival!** The five-year survival rate among women whose breast cancer has not spread beyond the breast at the time of diagnosis is 97%. However, that rate drops to below 50% if the cancer has already spread. There are many types of treatments available depending on how soon the cancer is discovered, so the important thing to remember is that the sooner the cancer is detected, the better the outcome.

Special thanks to Barb Knoll, RN, CNM, Nurse Practitioner at BCHD for her input to this article.

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor		Niles		Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	M-139 Office	School Based	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	2106 S. M-139	870 Colfax Ave	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121	927-5623	925-4500		

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohlthdept.org

Berrien County Health Department:

Preventing Disease, Prolonging Life and Protecting the Health of the



October: Focus on Cancer Prevention and Control

October is Cancer Prevention and Control Month. Cancer is devastating, and the Berrien County Health Department wants you to be informed about what you can do to prevent it, and the resources available to detect and treat it early. This month we will have articles focusing on Breast Cancer and Cervical Cancer, and then will talk about Lead Poisoning, and Infant Mortality Reduction. For more information about any of these topics, **please call the Berrien County Health Dept. at 926-7121.**



You may be eligible for the BCCCP-Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program if:

- You are a woman age 40 and over
- You do not have Medicare, HMO or PPO insurance (you may have other types of insurance), and
- You have a yearly Family income less than:

Family Size	Yearly Income
1	\$25,525
2	\$34,225
3	\$42,925
4	\$51,625
5	\$60,325
6	\$69,025

(Income guidelines as of February 07)



For more information about any breast health programs, call the Berrien County Health Department:

927-5670

This page is sponsored by the Berrien County Health Department

