

BRANCATI CENTER BULLETIN



DEAR NEIGHBORS,

We are dedicating this month's bulletin to all things prevention. We discuss breast cancer screening guidelines in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in this issue of the bulletin. We also review the updated respiratory virus guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control, and we spotlight lead exposure in response to requests from our readers.

-The Brancati Center Team

HOT TOPICS

Respiratory Virus Guidance Update

The Centers for Disease Control has updated its guidance for prevention of common respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, flu and RSV.

In the latest guidelines, it is recommended that if you develop a viral respiratory illness, you do the following:

1. Stay at home and away from others until your symptoms improve and you are fever-free off medications for 24 hours.
2. Wear a mask and practice social distancing (especially around individuals who are immune compromised) for the next 5 days.

For general prevention, it is still recommended to get updated vaccinations each year, practice good hand hygiene, and promote clean air by bringing in fresh outside air, purifying indoor air, and gathering outdoors when possible.



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we wanted to draw attention to screening recommendations to help us stay on top of prevention and early treatment of breast cancer.

The Who, What and When of Breast Cancer Screening:

Most major professional organizations recommend that women at average risk start breast cancer screening at age 40.

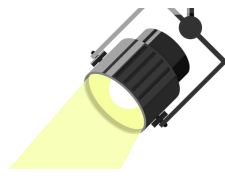
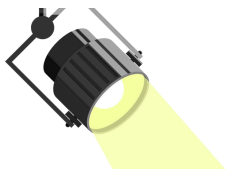
- "Average risk" refers to individuals with no significant family history of breast cancer, no personal history of the disease, no genetic mutations known to increase breast cancer risk (like the BRCA gene), and no history of chest radiation therapy before age 30.
- For women at average risk, screening typically involves a yearly mammogram, which is a specialized x-ray test that provides detailed images of the breast tissue.
- Screening should continue through at least age 75, or longer if the woman is in good health.

For women at higher risk, breast cancer screening is recommended to begin at age 30, with an annual mammogram and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). "Higher risk" includes women with:

- A personal history of breast cancer
- Family history of breast or ovarian cancer, particularly immediate relatives
- Genetic mutations associated with increased breast cancer risk
- Exposure to chest radiation before age 30

Speak with your healthcare provider to determine your specific risk level and appropriate screening recommendation. For more information on breast cancer screening, visit the [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov).





Spotlight: Lead Exposure

What is Lead?

Lead is a poisonous metal previously used in manufacturing, including home construction and household paints (prior to 1978) and still found in several household items, including jewelry, toys, batteries, ceramics and cosmetics. Lead may also be found in the soil and water from lead pipes.

Who is at most risk for lead poisoning?

Young children (1-6 years of age) and pregnant women and their unborn fetuses.

What does lead poisoning cause?

Lead poisoning can affect a child's developing brain and lead to learning disabilities, hyperactivity as well as stunted growth. It can also cause memory loss, hearing impairment, high blood pressure and kidney damage. Higher levels of lead toxicity can even contribute to severe brain damage, seizures and death.

What are symptoms of lead poisoning?

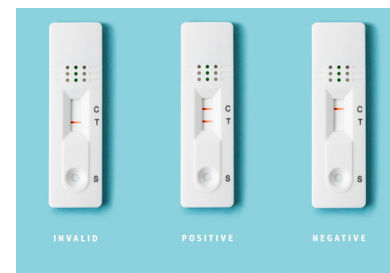
Fatigue, weight loss or loss of appetite, abdominal cramps, muscle weakness and headaches.

How do we prevent lead poisoning?

Before buying or renting a home, find out when the property was built. If built before 1978, look for chipping or peeling paint, deteriorating pain or doors/windows that can create lead "dust" as they break down. Landlords are responsible for fixing lead hazards. Ask for a risk reduction certificate which is required for properties built before 1950 to reduce lead exposure. You can find out if your apartment has a lead certificate by calling the Maryland Department of the Environment at 410-527-4199.

All children between 12 and 24 months old are required to have lead testing. If you think your child may have been exposed to lead, ask your healthcare provider to perform a lead test. You can also call the Baltimore Health Care Access hotline at 410-649-0500 for access to lead testing resources.

For more information on lead exposure, visit the [CDC's website](#).



Free COVID-19 Tests

Reminder! U.S. households can now order four free COVID-19 tests from [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov). These tests detect current COVID-19 variants and are usable through the end of the year. Testing helps individuals determine if they have COVID-19, guiding them in seeking treatment to reduce severe illness and in taking steps to prevent spreading the virus to others.

Community Events

October 27th from 12:30-2:30pm: Health screening and vaccine event, Liberty Grace Church of God

November 14th from 9:00-1:00pm: World Diabetes Day Screening and Education Event, Johns Hopkins Outpatient Center

Reader Survey

We want to hear from you! Please consider taking this short, 2-question survey so we can learn more about what topics to include in future issues. All responses are anonymous. Thank you!

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to complete the survey.

The Sydney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center Education Sessions

Join the Webinar:

Ask the Expert:
What you need to
know about Lung
Cancer

November 19, 2024
6:00 pm

REGISTER
HERE:

