

# Breast Cancer Screening Navigation Script for Hispanic Women

This document supports your conversations with breast cancer screening candidates. Development of the navigation script is based on field research, conducted with a diverse set of Hispanic women, to identify common barriers to being screened for breast cancer. This navigation script is intended to help you convey the importance of breast cancer screening and address those barriers.

The goal of a conversation is **to help ensure that eligible candidates will complete their breast cancer screening according to the recommendations set forth by your organization.**

Please note that this resource is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Please refer to your organization's guidelines when discussing breast cancer screening with patients and advise them to consult their healthcare providers for all medical advice or questions.

Please keep in mind that women may have various concerns ranging from simple educational needs to complex emotional fears. In addition, screening candidates will have varying levels of education and understanding about breast cancer and mammograms.

You may find the following framework useful when answering questions:

## 1 Clarify

Ask questions to learn the nature of her concern/question to ensure that you are addressing her true concerns.

## 2 Empathize

Acknowledge that her question/concern is valid and express empathy (if applicable).

## 3 Respond

Respond to her question/concern with transparency and specificity. Consider relaying a personal story about the importance of breast cancer screening to help connect with the screening candidate.

## 4 Schedule

After all her questions and concerns have been addressed, check if she has a mammogram appointment scheduled. If not, ask if you can assist her by scheduling a mammogram appointment for her at this time. If she still has concerns, a follow-up may be required at a later time.

Please note that the scripts provided here are not a comprehensive and final list of responses, but rather are intended to act as guideposts that can spur additional responses, depending on the specific scenario and screening candidate's concern.

## Here is an example of how the framework may be used.\*

CONVERSATION FLOW	EXAMPLE SCRIPT
<b>Introduce yourself</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Hello. My name is _____. Our records show you’re due for your mammogram. Did you receive some information about this in the mail?”</li> </ul>
<b>Screening candidate states</b> , “Yes, I did receive a brochure in the mail stating that I need a mammogram, but I don’t think I need one.”	
<b>Ask clarifying questions</b> to better understand the woman’s concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Can you help me understand why you don’t think you need a mammogram?”</li> </ul>
<b>Screening candidate states</b> , “I haven’t felt a lump and I don’t have any family history of breast cancer.”	
<b>Empathize</b> to convey that you understand her concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I hear you. You’re not alone. Many women think they don’t need screening.</li> <li>• Even if you don’t feel a lump, screening is important.”<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Respond directly</b> to address the screening candidate’s concerns. Help address any barriers to screening with these sample statements.  Note: Sharing personal stories may help women open up and connect with you. If the opportunity presents itself, convey a personal story of your own about breast cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You are still at risk for breast cancer, even if you do not feel a lump or have a family history of breast cancer.”<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• In about 85% of breast cancer cases, there is no family history of the disease.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> <p>[Consider sharing a personal story about the importance of breast cancer screening to help connect with the woman. For example, maybe you have a friend, neighbor, or family member who had no symptoms of the disease but still got breast cancer.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the American Cancer Society, screening tests like mammograms can help find breast cancer before you experience symptoms or feel a lump.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Mammograms can help detect breast cancer early.”<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Schedule:</b> If the screening candidate is comfortable, ensure that she is scheduled for a mammogram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Can I help you make an appointment to get a mammogram?”</li> </ul>
If the screening candidate states she is not ready to make an appointment, offer to follow up at a later date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It’s okay if you aren’t ready to make an appointment today.</li> <li>• Would it be okay if I check in with you in a couple of months?”</li> </ul> <p>[Flag for follow-up conversation.]</p>

\*This script is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always use your best professional judgment in your conversations.

# Addressing Screening Barriers

Healthcare providers should always use their professional medical judgment.

Women may have various reasons why they have not been screened for breast cancer. Below, you will find some common barriers and examples of possible responses.

Keep in mind that one of the most important things you can do is to connect with the woman you're speaking with. Consider sharing a personal story to increase the woman's receptivity to your message.

## Barrier 1

*I haven't ever felt a lump.*

## Barrier 2

*I'm not at risk for breast cancer.  
I don't have a family history.*

## Barrier 3

*I don't trust mammograms  
to tell me if I have breast cancer.*

## Barrier 4

*I don't know how often I  
need to be screened.*

## Barrier 5

*I don't think I need to get a mammogram  
because I check my breasts at home.*

## Barrier 6

*I don't have time to schedule  
my mammogram.*

## Barrier 7

*It's expensive to have a  
mammogram.*

## Barrier 8

*I don't want a mammogram  
because it uses radiation.*

## Barrier 9

*I don't want to know if  
I have breast cancer.*

BARRIER/CONCERN	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<b>Barrier 1:</b> <i>I haven't ever felt a lump.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It's important to get screened. You can have breast cancer and not feel it at all.</li> <li>• Mammograms can help detect breast cancer early."<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Barrier 2:</b> <i>I'm not at risk for breast cancer. I don't have a family history.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "There are some common myths, but all women are at risk for breast cancer."<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• In about 85% of breast cancer cases, there is no family history of the disease."<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Barrier 3:</b> <i>I don't trust mammograms to tell me if I have breast cancer.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "A mammogram is the best screening test we have to find breast cancer."<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• According to the American Cancer Society, mammography will find about 85% of breast cancers.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Many years of research show that women who get regularly screened for breast cancer are more likely to detect breast cancer early and, therefore, may be more likely to avoid extensive types of treatments."<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Barrier 4:</b> <i>I don't know how often I need to be screened.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It's important to get screened. You can have breast cancer and not feel it at all.</li> <li>• There is a lot of different advice about when to get your breast cancer screening.</li> <li>• The American Cancer Society recommends women aged 45 and older should have regular mammograms.<sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— They also recommend women aged 40 to 44 should have an option to start annual mammograms. Women with a higher risk of breast cancer may need to begin screenings earlier. Recommendations from other health organizations vary.</li> <li>— Talk with your doctor about what is right for you."</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Please note that the scripts provided here are not a comprehensive and final list of responses, but rather are intended to act as guideposts that can spur additional responses, depending on the specific scenario and screening candidate's concern.

## Addressing Barriers (continued)

BARRIER/CONCERN	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<b>Barrier 5:</b> <i>I don't think I need to get a mammogram because I check my breasts at home.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Checking for breast cancer at home is important. Mammograms can help find breast cancer even if you can't feel a lump.”<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• The American Cancer Society recommends women aged 45 and older should have regular mammograms.<sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— They also recommend women aged 40 to 44 should have an option to start annual mammograms. Women with a higher risk of breast cancer may need to begin screenings earlier. Recommendations from other health organizations vary.</li> <li>— Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• According to the American Cancer Society, regular screening is the most reliable way to catch breast cancer early.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• 99% of women who get diagnosed with localized breast cancer at an early stage (when cancer is only in the breast) are alive 5 years after their diagnosis.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• If you have concerns about getting a mammogram, you should talk with your doctor.”</li> </ul>
<b>Barrier 6:</b> <i>I don't have time to schedule my mammogram.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I understand you're busy. Let's talk about how it would work for you to schedule a mammogram. If you have a calendar handy, I can stay on the line and help you schedule it.”</li> </ul> <p>[Help screening candidates schedule their mammograms when possible.]</p>
<b>Barrier 7:</b> <i>It's expensive to have a mammogram.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Getting a mammogram may not cost a lot.</li> <li>• Many insurance plans cover screening costs. We suggest calling your insurance plan to check your coverage.”<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Barrier 8:</b> <i>I don't want a mammogram because it uses radiation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I understand your concerns. According to the American Cancer Society, most people in the U.S. are normally exposed to a little radiation in their everyday life. Radiation comes from natural sources, like the sun, water, food, and air.”<sup>8,9</sup></li> <li>• According to the American Cancer Society, the amount of radiation used during a mammogram is about the same as you would get in about 7 weeks of your everyday life.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• The American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute say the benefits of a mammogram are greater than any harm from the radiation exposure. Of course, if you have specific concerns, you should talk to your doctor.<sup>8,10</sup></li> <li>• Just like any other medical procedure, it's wise to understand any risks you could incur.”</li> </ul>
<b>Barrier 9:</b> <i>I don't want to know if I have breast cancer.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I understand. It's common to be scared about breast cancer. But, it's important to get screened.</li> <li>• Many years of research show that women who get regularly screened for breast cancer are more likely to detect breast cancer early and, therefore, may be more likely to avoid extensive types of treatments.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• 99% of women who get diagnosed with localized breast cancer at an early stage (when cancer is only in the breast) are alive 5 years after their diagnosis.”<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

There are many other scenarios in which a screening candidate may need clarifying information about breast cancer screening. Always use your best professional judgment in answering questions/concerns.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Breast Cancer/Screening Information

**Question 1:** *What is breast cancer? (See page 6)*

**Question 2:** *How serious is breast cancer? (See page 6)*

**Question 3:** *Why should I be screened for breast cancer? (See page 6)*

**Question 4:** *How do you screen for breast cancer? (See page 7)*

### About the Mammogram

**Question 5:** *What is a mammogram? (See page 8)*

**Question 6:** *Who performs a mammogram? (See page 8)*

**Question 7:** *How long does a mammogram take? (See page 8)*

**Question 8:** *Is a mammogram safe? (See page 8)*

**Question 9:** *Is a mammogram painful? (See page 8)*

**Question 10:** *Can I get a mammogram if I have breast implants? (See page 9)*

**Question 11:** *What are other options for breast cancer screening besides mammograms? (See page 9)*

### Cost/Logistics

**Question 12:** *How much does a mammogram cost? (See page 10)*

**Question 13:** *Do I have to pay for office visits when I see my doctor for breast cancer screening? (See page 10)*

**Question 14:** *Do you have transportation available to help me go get my mammogram? (See page 10)*

**Question 15:** *Can I bring a family member with me? (See page 10)*

Please note that the scripts provided here are not a comprehensive and final list of responses, but rather are intended to act as guideposts that can spur additional responses, depending on the specific scenario and screening candidate's concern.

## Frequently Asked Questions (Breast Cancer/Screening Information)

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<p><b>Question 1:</b> What is breast cancer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Breast cancer is a disease in which some cells in the breast grow out of control."<sup>11</sup></i></li> <li>• <i>Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women after skin cancer.<sup>12</sup></i></li> <li>• <i>Breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death among women.<sup>13</sup></i></li> <li>• <i>Regular mammograms can help detect breast cancer early."<sup>1</sup></i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 2:</b> How serious is breast cancer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Breast cancer is a very serious cancer for women.</i></li> <li>• <i>Breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death among women.<sup>13</sup></i></li> <li>• <i>On average, every 2 minutes a woman in the U.S. is diagnosed with breast cancer.<sup>14</sup></i></li> <li>• <i>One in 8 women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.<sup>3</sup></i></li> <li>• <i>On average, one woman dies from breast cancer every 13 minutes in the U.S.<sup>14</sup></i></li> <li>• <i>According to the American Cancer Society, regular screening is the most reliable way to catch breast cancer early."<sup>1</sup></i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 3:</b> Why should I be screened for breast cancer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"A mammogram can help you take care of yourself and your family. Think about starting a new tradition for your daughter, granddaughters, and nieces and get a regular mammogram when appropriate."</i></li> <li>• <i>Even if you haven't felt a lump, screening is important."<sup>1</sup></i></li> </ul> <p>Clarify: "Have you had a mammogram this calendar year?"</p> <p>[If yes, report the results to her doctor to determine if she needs to be reassessed and follow up with her.]</p> <p>[If no, continue below.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"The American Cancer Society recommends women aged 45 and older should have regular mammograms.<sup>1</sup></i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— <i>They also recommend women aged 40 to 44 should have an option to start annual mammograms. Women with a higher risk of breast cancer may need to begin screenings earlier. Recommendations from other health organizations vary.</i></li> <li>— <i>Talk with your doctor about what is right for you."</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Frequently Asked Questions (Breast Cancer/Screening Information, continued)

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<b>Question 4:</b> <i>How do you screen for breast cancer?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>“Breast cancer screening can be done using a mammogram, a test that looks for the disease when a person doesn’t have symptoms.”<sup>8</sup></i></li><li>• <i>A mammogram uses X-rays to create images of the breast. A doctor will then look at the X-ray images to see if there are signs of cancer.”<sup>8</sup></i></li><li>• <i>You can have breast cancer and not feel it at all.”</i></li></ul>

## Frequently Asked Questions (About the Mammogram)

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<b>Question 5:</b> What is a mammogram?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast.<sup>8</sup> During a mammogram, the breast is pressed between 2 plates of glass while X-rays are used to take pictures of the breast.</li> <li>• This test may find tumors that are too small to feel.”<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Question 6:</b> Who performs a mammogram?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “An X-ray technician performs the mammogram.</li> <li>• The mammogram is performed in a private room and the technician will try to make you feel as comfortable as possible. The technician may need to position your breasts in the machine in order to get the screening done appropriately, but the technician will do so respectfully.</li> <li>• If you prefer a female technician, you can let the office know when you arrive.”</li> </ul>
<b>Question 7:</b> How long does a mammogram take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It usually takes around 30 minutes to complete a mammogram of both breasts. Of course, there may be added time spent in the waiting room. Your provider should be able to give you a better estimate of total time.”<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Question 8:</b> Is a mammogram safe?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “According to the American Cancer Society, most people in the U.S. are normally exposed to a little radiation in their everyday life. Radiation comes from natural sources, like the sun, water, food, and air.”<sup>8,9</sup></li> <li>• According to the American Cancer Society, the amount of radiation used during a mammogram is about the same as you would get in about 7 weeks of your everyday life.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• The American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute agree that the benefits of a mammogram are greater than any harm from the radiation exposure.<sup>8,10</sup></li> <li>• However, if you might be pregnant, let your healthcare provider and X-ray technologist know. Screening mammograms aren’t routinely done in pregnant women.”<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Question 9:</b> Is a mammogram painful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You may experience a little discomfort during the mammogram. If you do feel any pain, let the technician know so they can try to make it more comfortable for you.</li> <li>• A mammogram is done pretty quickly (about 30 minutes), so it will be over fairly soon.”<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>



## Frequently Asked Questions (About the Mammogram, continued)

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<p><b>Question 10:</b> Can I get a mammogram if I have breast implants?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Yes, you should still get a mammogram even if you have breast implants.”<sup>15</sup></li> <li>• When you make an appointment for your mammogram, and when you go for your regular screening, be sure to let the doctor and staff know you have implants.<sup>15</sup></li> <li>• There are ways the doctor can make adjustments to allow for a better image.<sup>15</sup></li> <li>• Doctors may take extra pictures to see more of your breast around the implants.”<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 11:</b> What are other options for breast cancer screening besides mammograms?</p>	

## Frequently Asked Questions (Cost/Logistics)

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<b>Question 12:</b> <i>How much does a mammogram cost?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Many insurance plans cover the cost of screening."</i><sup>7</sup></li> </ul> <p>[Add specific insurance coverage information here, if available.]</p> <p>If insurance coverage is unknown:</p> <p><i>"We suggest calling your insurance plan to check your coverage."</i></p>
<b>Question 13:</b> <i>Do I have to pay for office visits when I see my doctor for breast cancer screening?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"There may be a co-pay for the office visit."</i><sup>7</sup></li> <li>• <i>We suggest calling your insurance plan to check your coverage."</i></li> </ul>
<b>Question 14:</b> <i>Do you have transportation available to help me go get my mammogram?</i>	
<b>Question 15:</b> <i>Can I bring a family member with me?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Yes, you can bring a family member to your appointment."</i></li> </ul>

**References:** 1. American Cancer Society. American Cancer Society recommendations for the early detection of breast cancer. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/american-cancer-society-recommendations-for-the-early-detection-of-breast-cancer.html>. Last revised April 22, 2021. Accessed September 13, 2021. 2. Breast cancer statistics. Susan G. Komen website. <https://www.komen.org/breast-cancer/facts-statistics/breast-cancer-statistics>. Updated August 19, 2021. Accessed September 13, 2021. 3. U.S. breast cancer statistics. Breastcancer.org. [http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/understand\\_bc/statistics](http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/understand_bc/statistics). Last modified February 4, 2021. Accessed September 13, 2021. 4. Limitations of mammograms. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/mammograms/limitations-of-mammograms.html>. Last revised October 3, 2019. Accessed September 13, 2021. 5. Frequently asked questions about the American Cancer Society's breast cancer screening guideline. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-american-cancer-society-new-breast-cancer-screening-guideline.html>. Last revised January 24, 2019. Accessed September 13, 2021. 6. SEER Cancer Stat Facts: Female Breast Cancer. National Cancer Institute website. Bethesda, MD. <https://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/breast.html>. Accessed June 23, 2021. 7. Learn about mammograms. SisterPact website. <http://www.sisterpact.com/learn/#>. Accessed June 23, 2021. 8. Mammogram basics. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/mammograms/mammogram-basics.html>. Last revised March 5, 2020. Accessed September 13, 2021. 9. Radiation is a part of our world. American Nuclear Society website. [http://www.nuclearconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Radiation-Dose-Chart\\_web.pdf](http://www.nuclearconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Radiation-Dose-Chart_web.pdf). Published October 2015. Accessed September 13, 2021. 10. Mammograms. National Cancer Institute website. <https://www.cancer.gov/types/breast/mammograms-fact-sheet>. Accessed September 13, 2021. 11. What is breast cancer? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. [https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic\\_info/what-is-breast-cancer.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/what-is-breast-cancer.htm). Last revised: September 14, 2020. Accessed September 13, 2021. 12. Breast cancer--patient version. National Cancer Institute website. <https://www.cancer.gov/types/breast>. Accessed September 13, 2021. 13. American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2021*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2021. <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2021/cancer-facts-and-figures-2021.pdf>. Accessed September 13, 2021. 14. Breast cancer facts. Susan G. Komen website. <https://www5.komen.org/uploadedfiles/content/aboutus/mediacenter-2/bc%20facts%2-%20082712.pdf>. Revised August 2012. Accessed September 13, 2021. 15. Mammograms for women with breast implants. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/screening-tests-and-early-detection/mammograms/mammograms-for-women-with-breast-implants.html>. Last revised October 3, 2019. Accessed September 13, 2021.