

THE PATIENT PRESCRIPTION

Your Health Begins Here



Quality Spotlight - Women's Health

HopeHealth's quality focus for October is women's health. This clinical focus includes measures such as screening for breast and cervical cancer, chlamydia screening, and osteoporosis management in women.

Keep reading to learn about breast health. [Click here](#) for more information about HopeHealth's women's health services.

Let's Talk About Breast Health

Brinda Chokshi, MD

In the United States, breast cancer is the most common cancer for women, impacting approximately one in eight. It is with thorough patient awareness and a willingness to team with providers that breast cancer can be detected early and treated, reducing the risk of death. Partnering with your provider and regular self-exams can save lives.

I often discuss breast health with my patients. Here are the most common questions I hear, and my recommendations:



What can I do to maintain good breast health?

I cannot emphasize this enough: develop a partnership with your provider! We rely on you to work with us and provide the bigger picture of your health rather than just the snapshot we see during the office visit. This means doing things like self-breast exams for new or unusual lumps and getting annual mammograms.

When should I start and how often should I do self-breast exams?

I recommend women begin getting familiar with their breasts at the onset of menstruation during puberty. Make a habit of checking yourself on the day of your birthday; for example, if you were born on January 20, then check your breasts for any changes on the 20th of each month. Self-exams improve the likelihood of early detection of issues like cancer, but it is also important to note that not all lumps can be felt. This is why it benefits you to see your provider annually and do annual mammograms when age-appropriate.

Cancer can appear suddenly, sometimes within six months of a mammogram with no findings, so regular self-exams and annual doctor visits go a long way toward early detection and treatment when needed.

Should men do self-exams?

Yes! Men, or anyone with breast tissue, should make a habit of examining their chests. Sometimes during puberty, estrogen, the hormone responsible for breast growth in women, can produce breast tissue in males, which allows for the possibility of breast cancer later in life. I always recommend all my patients get familiar with their breasts/chest and let me know if there are any changes.

What is a mammogram, and when should I have one?

Mammograms are special X-rays performed on the breasts to aid in identifying any changes to the tissue, such as the appearance of a mass. Mammograms have been shown to identify masses in patients as early as three years before a lump could be felt. Evidence shows that regular mammogram screenings are associated with a reduction in deaths from breast cancer.

I recommend that women have their first mammogram between 35 and 40 years of age and have them annually after that. At ages 70 to 75, I leave it up to the patient to decide whether to continue annual mammograms. By age 80, if there is no history of breast cancer, it is okay to stop.

I am in menopause and am on hormone replacement therapy. Should I do anything differently?

Certain hormone replacement therapies have been shown to increase the risk of developing breast cancer, so I recommend being vigilant with self-breast exams, regular mammograms, and discussing any additional steps you can take with your provider to identify cancer early, should it occur.

What should I do if I detect a lump?

See your provider as soon as possible for a more thorough exam and any necessary testing to rule out a serious condition like breast cancer.

Like your overall health, eating well, maintaining a healthy weight, and regular exercise can contribute to better breast health. If you have a family history of breast cancer, be sure to discuss it with your provider and develop a preventive care plan.

Remember, if you ever have any questions, always reach out to your provider.

Program Spotlight - Veterans Services

HopeHealth Veterans Program Featured in NACHC Compendium



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS®



HopeHealth
Florence, South Carolina

SERVING VETERANS IN HEALTH CENTERS: A COMPENDIUM OF SUCCESS STORIES

AUGUST 2026

HopeHealth was highlighted by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) in their 2026 feature entitled, "Serving Veterans in Health Centers: A Compendium of Success Stories." The document of nine case studies captures best practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned in identifying and caring for Veteran patients.

NACHC shared, "Going beyond health care, it shows how health centers can become employers, providers, and partners of choice for Veterans by improving how Veterans are identified, hiring them for care and benefits navigation, closing service gaps, and strengthening partnerships with the VA." The HopeHealth Medical Plaza was also chosen as the cover image!

[Click here](#) to download and read the report.

Annual Patient Survey



Please take a few minutes to complete the annual patient survey. You have received the link to complete it via text, email, and the patient portal. This long-form survey allows us to gather important information about your experience, helping us continuously improve our service to better serve you!

2026 HopeHealth Town Hall Series



TOWN HALL MEETING

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOPEHEALTH
WITH CARL HUMPHRIES, CEO



HopeHealth CEO Carl Humphries continues to host quarterly town hall meetings for patients and community members, designed to build awareness and deepen understanding of HopeHealth's mission, services, and unique role as a community health center.

The final Town Hall of the year will be held at HopeHealth in Orangeburg on Monday, October 26, at 4:30pm.

For more information and to register, visit our [Facebook page](#) or the [website](#)!

Recipe Spotlight

Banana Blueberry Oatmeal Cookies

Have ripe bananas you don't know what to do with? Mash them and make this easy and delicious dessert! This recipe makes 12 cookies.

Ingredients:

- 3 ripe bananas
- 1 ½ cup old-fashioned oats
- ¼ cup dried blueberries (or 1 cup fresh)
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Mash bananas in a mixing bowl. Add oats, blueberries, and vanilla extract, and mix together.
- Form into round 2–3-inch cookies, place on a baking sheet lined with parchment for easy removal. Bake for 30 minutes and let cool.

Tips:

- Switch out for blueberries for raisins, craisins, or other dried fruit, or chocolate chips
- Change up the flavors by adding ¼- ½ teaspoon of cinnamon, nutmeg, apple pie spice, etc.
- If the cookies taste dry, try adding ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce for additional moisture. You can also bake for less time for a moister cookie.



Visit hope-health.org/events to learn about and sign up for free community classes offered by HopeHealth! Topics range from healthy cooking to diabetes management, prioritizing movement, carbohydrate counting, and more.

How satisfied were you with the content of this email?

5 - Very Satisfied

4 - Satisfied

3 - Neutral

2 - Dissatisfied

1 - Very Dissatisfied

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