

YOU FIRST

Screening and support for heart disease, breast and cervical cancer.

Fall 2024 Member Newsletter

Fall, autumn, foliage season, leaf peeping season, sweater weather, pumpkin spice days, or back to school; however you are recognizing the change in seasons, we hope this time of year will bring good things to you.

You First is focused on October's Breast Cancer Awareness month as we step into shorter and cooler days. We also discuss Open Enrollment for health insurance plans.

Take care,
The You First team



Breast Cancer Screening

YOU FIRST

Have breasts?

**You should get
a mammogram
every 1-2 years—
generally starting
after age 40.**



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. It is the time of year to schedule your mammogram, join walks fundraising for cancer research, volunteer with breast cancer

organizations, and check in on loved ones with breast cancer.

It may feel like everyone is aware that breast cancer exists. But there is a lot to know about breast cancer screenings, (how often to get a mammogram, what age to start, and what a mammogram even does). There are many questions around breast cancer prevention and screenings, including how to pay for these services.

How often to get a mammogram and what age to start?

The United States Preventative Service Task Force (USPSTF) recommends starting mammograms at age 40. People who are at average risk of breast cancer can have their first mammogram at age 40, get a mammogram every one to two years, and stop mammograms at age 74.

Many people have a higher risk of breast cancer, due to a personal history of breast cancer, a close relative with breast cancer, and [other factors that increase risk](#) of breast cancer. If you have a higher risk of breast cancer, talk to your health care provider about breast cancer screening. You might start screening at a younger age, get screening tests more often, and use additional tests.

This [risk calculator tool](#) can help you and your health care provider determine if you have a higher risk of breast cancer.

How to pay for a mammogram?

If you are getting this email, you know about You First. You First is a program that can pay for breast cancer screening and diagnostic tests for eligible people in Vermont. Many people avoid medical care if they can not afford it, which is why programs like You First were [created by Congress in 1990](#).

Health insurers are required to pay for screening mammograms, but are not currently required to pay for follow up testing, such as a diagnostic mammogram, breast ultrasound, breast MRI, or breast biopsy. You First can work as secondary coverage and pay the balance left after primary insurance is billed.

What does a mammogram do?

A screening mammogram is a test that looks for early signs of breast cancer before you have any symptoms. Finding breast cancer at an early stage means that treatment can be more successful.

A diagnostic mammogram is a test done when someone has [symptoms](#) or if the doctor wants more pictures after a screening mammogram. A diagnostic mammogram takes more pictures than a screening mammogram.

Do I need a mammogram if I do monthly self exams?

Self exams are when people feel their breasts for any changes. People should be familiar with what is normal for them and tell their health care provider if they find any changes during a self exam. Self exams find breast cancer at a later stage and are not a replacement for a mammogram.

What if I have dense breasts?

[Dense breast tissue](#) is common, with about half of women over 40 having dense breasts. Breast density also changes over your lifetime. Breast density looks at how much breast tissue is glandular and fibrous tissue compared to how much is fatty tissue.

Mammography reports will tell you which category of breast density you have.

Dense breast tissue can increase your risk of breast cancer and can make mammograms less accurate at finding breast cancer hidden in dense tissue. Your health care provider may recommend a breast ultrasound or a breast MRI if you have dense breast tissue.

You First can pay for breast ultrasounds and other tests your doctor orders if you have private insurance or no insurance. Reach out with any questions.

[Watch this video to learn more about breast density.](#)

Have more questions?

Reach out to You First with your questions about breast cancer and various tests to try to find breast cancer early.

This guide, [Understanding Breast Changes](#), explains the various tests, results, and next steps that are a part of breast cancer screening and diagnosis.

Heart Health Program

Fall is a busy and beautiful time in Vermont. Here are some suggestions for this foliage season:

- [Mile a Day Challenges](#): The Fall Fling challenge runs from Oct 1- Oct 30.
- [State Park Passes](#): It's a great time of year to be at the Vermont State Parks. Find a new state park to enjoy the changing landscapes and get a crisp walk! Remember that if you are 62 years or older or a military veteran, you can get a \$2 lifetime pass to the State Parks at your town clerk's office. Ask for the Green Mountain Passport.
- [My Healthy VT](#): Free online and in-person classes are being offered to help manage blood pressure, prevent or manage diabetes, manage chronic pain, and more.
- [802Quits](#): Ready to quit tobacco and earn rewards? Visit 802Quits to learn about gift card rewards for working with a quit coach.
- [VT Foodbank](#): Farm and gardening season is winding down, but there is still fresh produce available at many food shelves. The VT Foodbank also raffles \$100 gift cards for testing out their recipes and completing a survey. Visit the Foodbank website to learn about the resources they have available.

**Ready to get involved with health coaching?
Reach out to us by replying to this email,
giving us a call, or messaging us on Facebook!**

The first steps are for members ages 35-64 to send us their blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar results from a health care visit, and to complete the heart health and social determinant of health questions.



Open Enrollment

Want to change health insurance plans or sign up for a new plan?

Open Enrollment is the time to review your health insurance plan and make any changes. Open Enrollment is from November 1 - January 15 every year.

- If you sign up between November 1 - December 15, your new coverage will begin on January 1, 2025.
- If you sign up between December 16 - January 15, your new coverage will begin on February 1, 2025.

Some people do not need to wait for Open Enrollment to sign up for health insurance.

- If you are eligible for Medicaid (Green Mountain Care), you can sign up for coverage at any time.
- You may be able to sign up for coverage at any time if you meet income and other rules for financial help.
- Special Enrollment Periods give you 60 days to sign up for health insurance when you have a life change (such as losing health insurance, marriage, divorce, moving to Vermont).
- Visit the [When can I apply?](#) page to learn more about signing up outside of Open Enrollment.

Visit [Vermont Health Connect](#) to sign up for health insurance.

Have more questions? You can call 855-899-9600 to reach VT Health Connect. You can also reach You First's Melissa with questions at melissa.doane@vermont.gov.

You First Member Highlights

You First members have had a busy summer! We are so grateful for the pictures and updates you have shared with us. Here are a few recent photos:





You First currently has about 688 members, with members from every county in Vermont. Most of you learned about You First from your health care provider or a friend or relative.

- 73% of You First members are up-to-date on breast cancer screening
- 69% of You First members are up-to-date on cervical cancer screening
- 389 You First members have received their heart health screening

We are grateful for the opportunity to support your health!

We'd love to feature YOUR member story in our newsletter or Facebook page! Let us know if you want to share your You First experience.

Stay in Touch!

Please let us know if you have a change in insurance and if you receive a bill for a service we can pay for.

Follow us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on program offerings and office closures. Please note that our office will be closed on 11/11, 11/28 and 11/29 for state holidays.

You can call us at 1-800-508-2222, email us at YouFirst@vermont.gov, fax us at 802-657-4208, or send us mail.

If you know someone who is interested in joining You First, please send them this newsletter, tell them about the program, or ask them to [fill out our form online](#). We can also mail an application to you to give to them. We have applications in 12 languages. Our program has a 90 day retroactive period, so they can join even if they already had a

mammogram or Pap test.

[Follow the You First Facebook page!](#)



YOU FIRST

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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