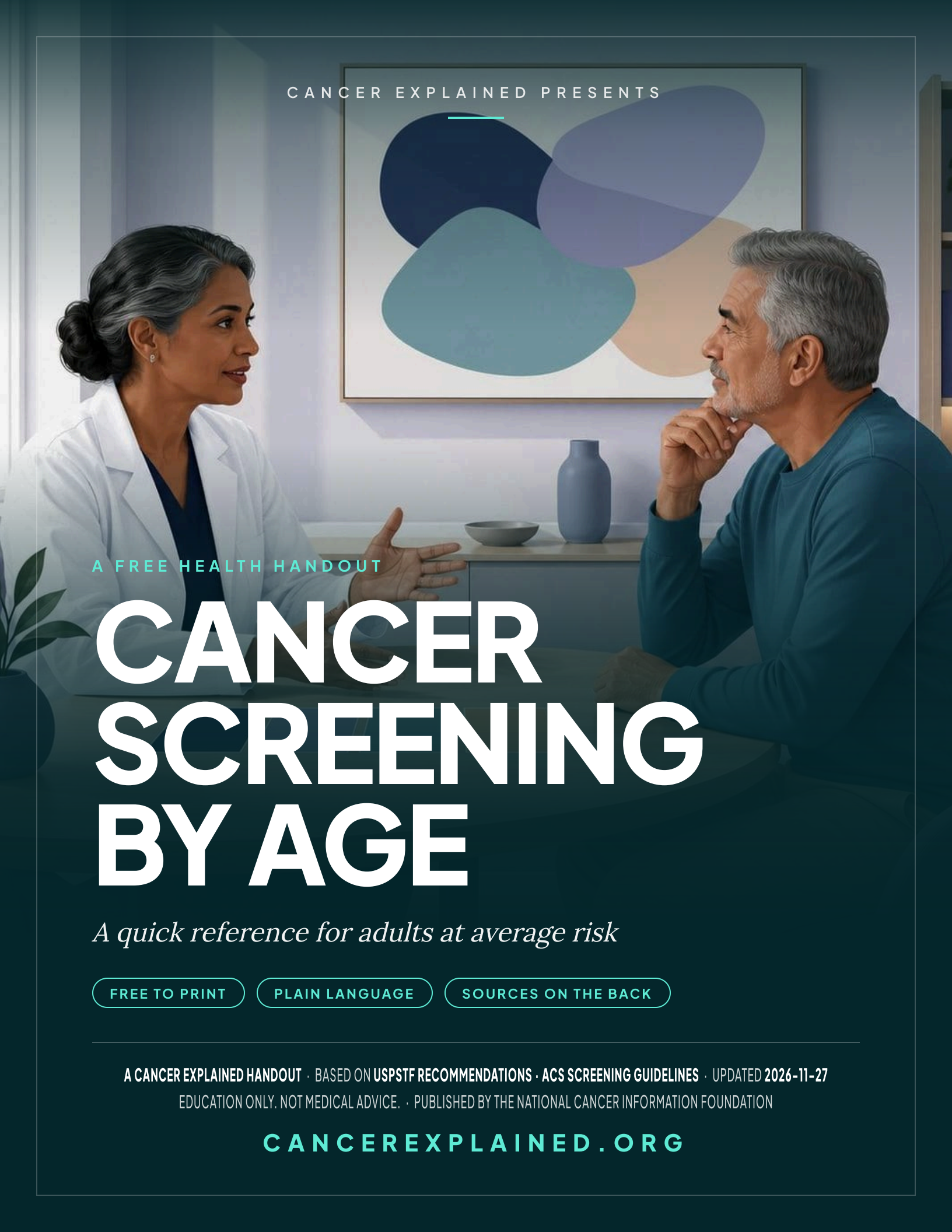


CANCER EXPLAINED PRESENTS

A FREE HEALTH HANDOUT

CANCER SCREENING BY AGE

A quick reference for adults at average risk

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A CANCER EXPLAINED HANDOUT · BASED ON **USPSTF RECOMMENDATIONS · ACS SCREENING GUIDELINES** · UPDATED **2026-11-27**
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Cancer Screening by Age

A quick reference for adults at average risk

1 In your 20s and 30s

- [ ] Cervical cancer: screening (Pap test, HPV test, or both) starts at 21 or 25, depending on the guideline your doctor follows, and repeats every 3 to 5 years.
- [ ] HPV vaccine: catch-up vaccination is recommended through age 26 if not fully vaccinated.
- [ ] Know your body: report new lumps, skin changes, or unusual symptoms to a doctor.

2 In your 40s

- [ ] Breast cancer: mammograms every 1–2 years are recommended starting at 40 for women at average risk.
- [ ] Colorectal cancer: screening starts at 45 — options include at-home stool tests or colonoscopy.
- [ ] Cervical cancer: continue on your regular schedule.

3 In your 50s, 60s, and beyond

- [ ] Continue breast (to about 74) and colorectal (to about 75) screening on schedule.
- [ ] Lung cancer: ages 50–80 with a 20 pack-year smoking history — ask about yearly low-dose CT screening.
- [ ] Prostate cancer: guidelines differ. The American Cancer Society (2026) recommends a PSA test every 2 years from 50 to 69 at average risk, and from 45 for Black men and men whose father, brother or son had prostate cancer. The USPSTF says men 55–69 should decide with their doctor after weighing the pros and cons.
- [ ] Cervical cancer: many women can stop after 65 with a history of normal results — confirm with your doctor first.

4 At any age

- [ ] A strong family history of cancer can mean starting screening earlier — tell your doctor.
- [ ] All adults 18–79 should get a one-time hepatitis C test.

THE BOTTOM LINE

These are general guidelines for average risk. Your doctor tailors the plan to your health and family history.

Sources: USPSTF recommendations (uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation-topics) · ACS screening guidelines (cancer.org/cancer/screening/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer.html)

Learn more in plain language: cancerexplained.org/screening/cancer-screening-guidelines-by-age · **Updated:** 2026-11-27

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