

Cancer 101



Cancer Screening & Early Detection Lesson 2

We will learn to explain to family and friends:

- The importance of early detection
- Screening methods used in the detection of cancer
- Symptoms of cancer
- How Cambodians are doing with cancer screening and early detection
- Possible barriers to practicing early detection

Why is early detection important?

- A person's chance for a full recovery is better if cancer is detected and treated earlier.
- The goal of early detection is to discover and stop a cancerous tumor before it grows and spreads (**metastasizes**).

What is cancer screening?

- Screening means checking for cancer in a person who DOES NOT have any symptoms (signs) of the disease.
- Medical Screening Tests are effective tools to find cancer early.
- Some types of cancers have special screening tests that help detect cancer as early as possible.

Screening for Breast Cancer

- **Mammogram:**

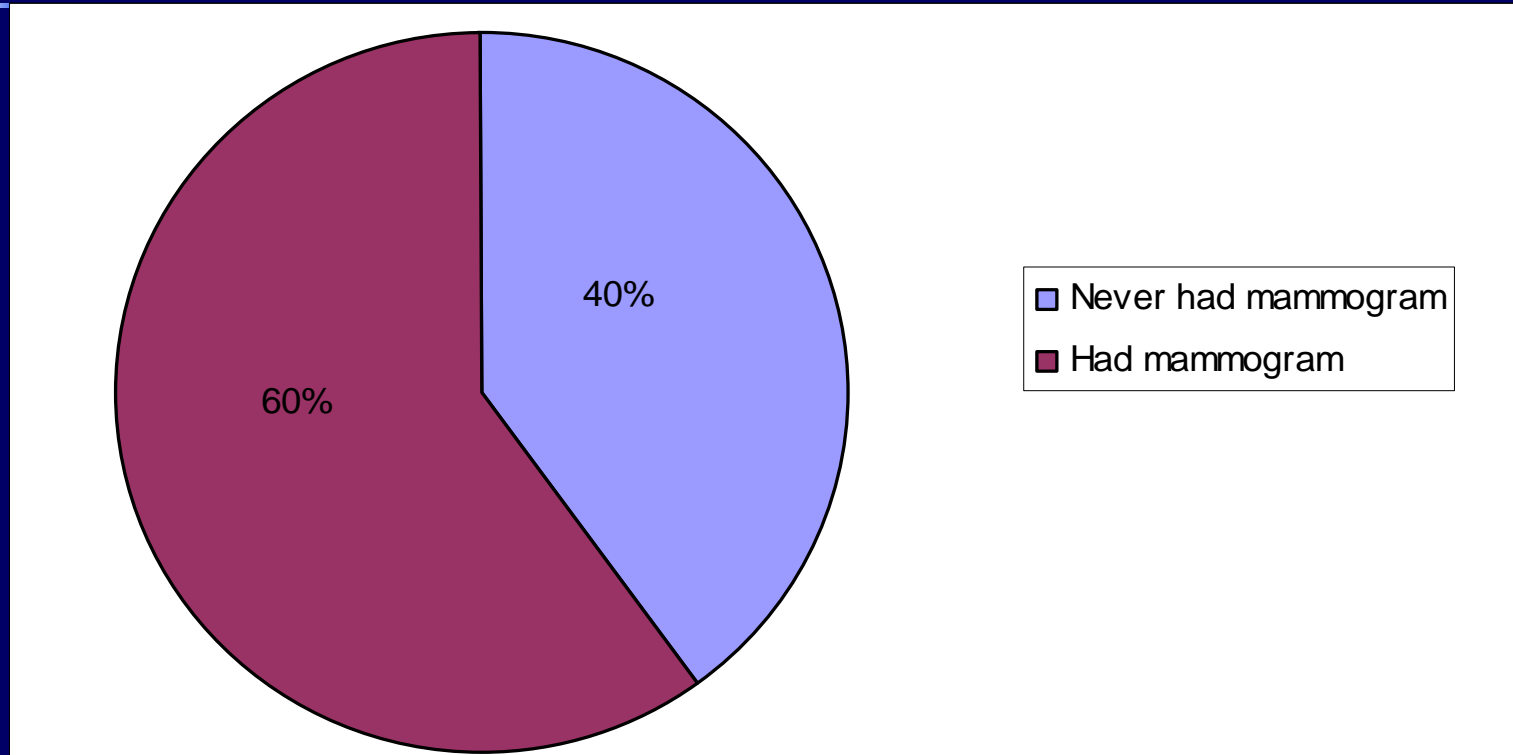
Mammogram: a mammogram is a special x-ray of the breast that can often find tumors that are too small for you or your doctor to feel. During the test, the breast is compressed to spread the tissue apart and to allow a lower dose of x-ray. Although this may be temporarily uncomfortable, it is necessary in order to produce a good mammogram. The compression is only in place a few seconds of the examination and the entire procedure for screening mammography takes about 20 minutes.

Screening for Breast Cancer

- Breast Self Examination: the examination of one's own breasts is called breast self-examination, (BSE). Studies so far have shown that BSE alone reduces the number of deaths from breast cancer. However, it should **NOT** be used in place of clinical breast examination and mammography.
- Clinical Breast Examination: during your routine physical examination, your doctor or health care professional may do a clinical breast examination (CBE). During a CBE, your doctor will carefully feel your breasts and under your arms to check for lumps or other unusual changes.

**How are Cambodian
women doing with
breast cancer
screening?**

Cambodian Women and Breast Cancer Screening



Source: Seattle-King County Cambodian Women's Health Study 1995-1999

Screening Guidelines

Because early breast cancer does not produce symptoms, it is important for all women to follow the guidelines for finding breast cancer early. These include the following:

- A mammogram and a Clinical Breast Exam (CBE) by a doctor or nurse every year for women over the age 40.
- Between the ages of 20 and 39, women should have a clinical breast exam every 3 years.
- All women over 20 should do breast self- examination (BSE) every month.

Screening for Cervical Cancer

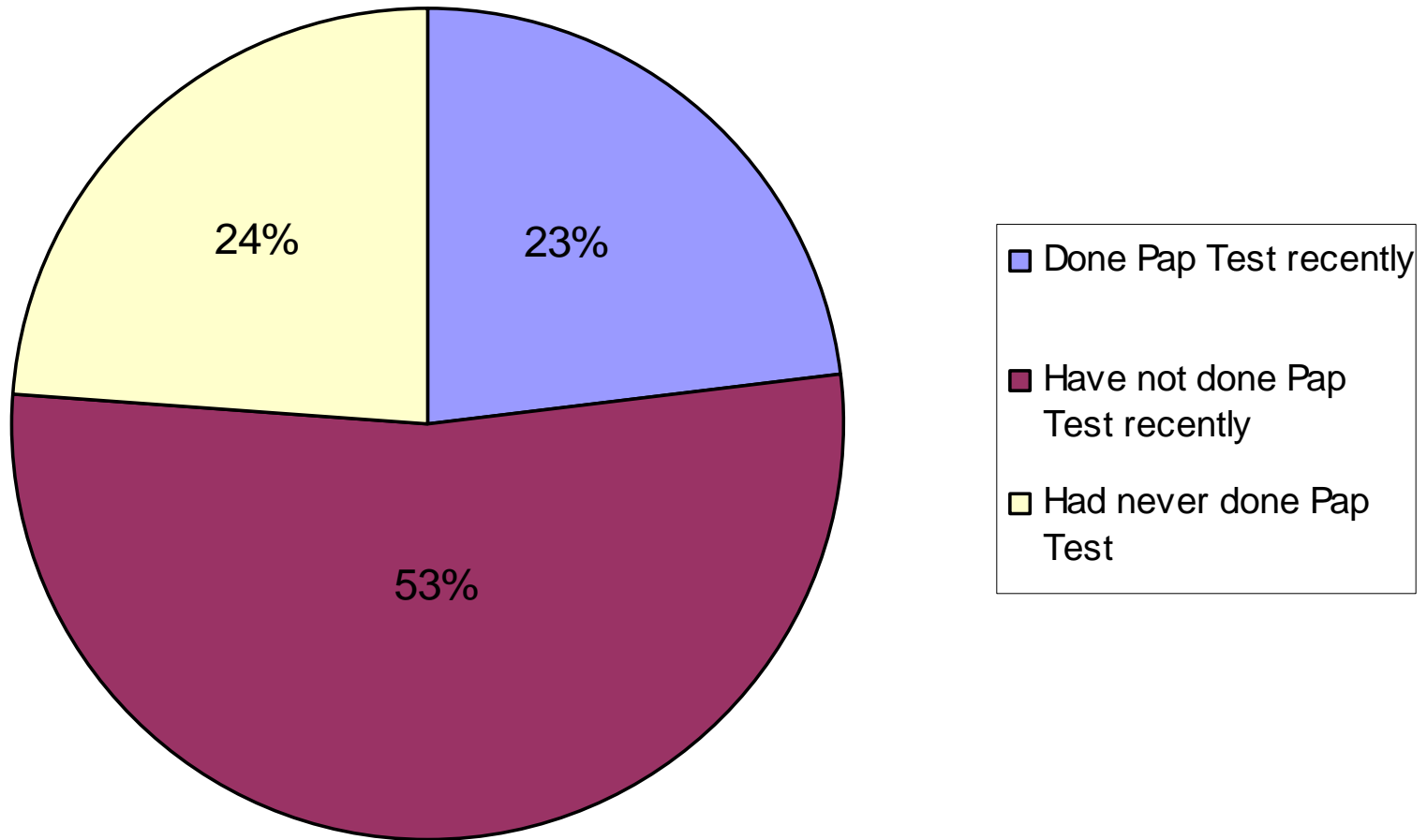
- The Pap Test (sometimes called a Pap smear) is a way to examine cells collected from the cervix (the lower, narrow end of the uterus). The main purpose of the Pap test is to find abnormal cell changes that may arise from cervical cancer or before cancer develops.
- Doctors and other specially trained health care professionals, such as physician assistants, nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners, may perform Pap tests and pelvic exams. These individuals are often called clinicians.

Pap Test (continue...)

- A Pap test is simple, quick, and painless; it can be done in a doctor's office, a clinic, or a hospital. While a woman lies on an exam table, the clinician inserts a speculum into her vagina to widen it. A sample of cells is taken from the cervix with a wooden scraper and/or a small cervical brush. The specimen (or smear) is placed on a glass slide and is sent to a laboratory for examination.

**How are Cambodian
women doing with
cervical cancer
screening?**

Cambodian Women & Cervical Cancer Screening



Source: Seattle-King County Cambodian Women's Health Study 1995-1999

Screening Guidelines

- Cervical cancer screening should begin approximately three years after a woman begins having sexual intercourse, or at 21 years old.
- Women should have a Pap test at least once every three years.
- Women 65 to 70 years of age who have had at least three normal Pap tests and no abnormal Pap tests in the last 10 years may decide, upon consultation with their healthcare provider, to stop cervical cancer screening.
- Women who have had a total hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix) do not need to undergo cervical cancer screening, unless the surgery was done as a treatment for cervical precancer or cancer.

Cervical Cancer Screening Guidelines

- Women should seek expert medical advice about:
 - ♥ When they should begin screening.
 - ♥ How often they should be screened.
 - ♥ When they can discontinue cervical screenings.
 - ♥ Learning if they are at increased risk of developing cervical cancer, then following their doctor's advice about checkups.
 - ♥ When to get cervical cancer screening if they are newly sexually active or have multiple sex partners.

Screening for Colorectal Cancer

- **Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)** - Used to find blood in the stool that cannot normally be seen. People having this test receive a kit with instructions to take the test at home. The kit is sent to the laboratory for testing.
- **Barium Enema** - A liquid is inserted into the colon and air is added to expand the colon. Then an x-ray is taken of the colon.
- **Digital Rectal Exam** - The doctor inserts a gloved finger into the rectum to feel for any abnormal growths in the rectal area. This test can be done at a regular doctor's visit.

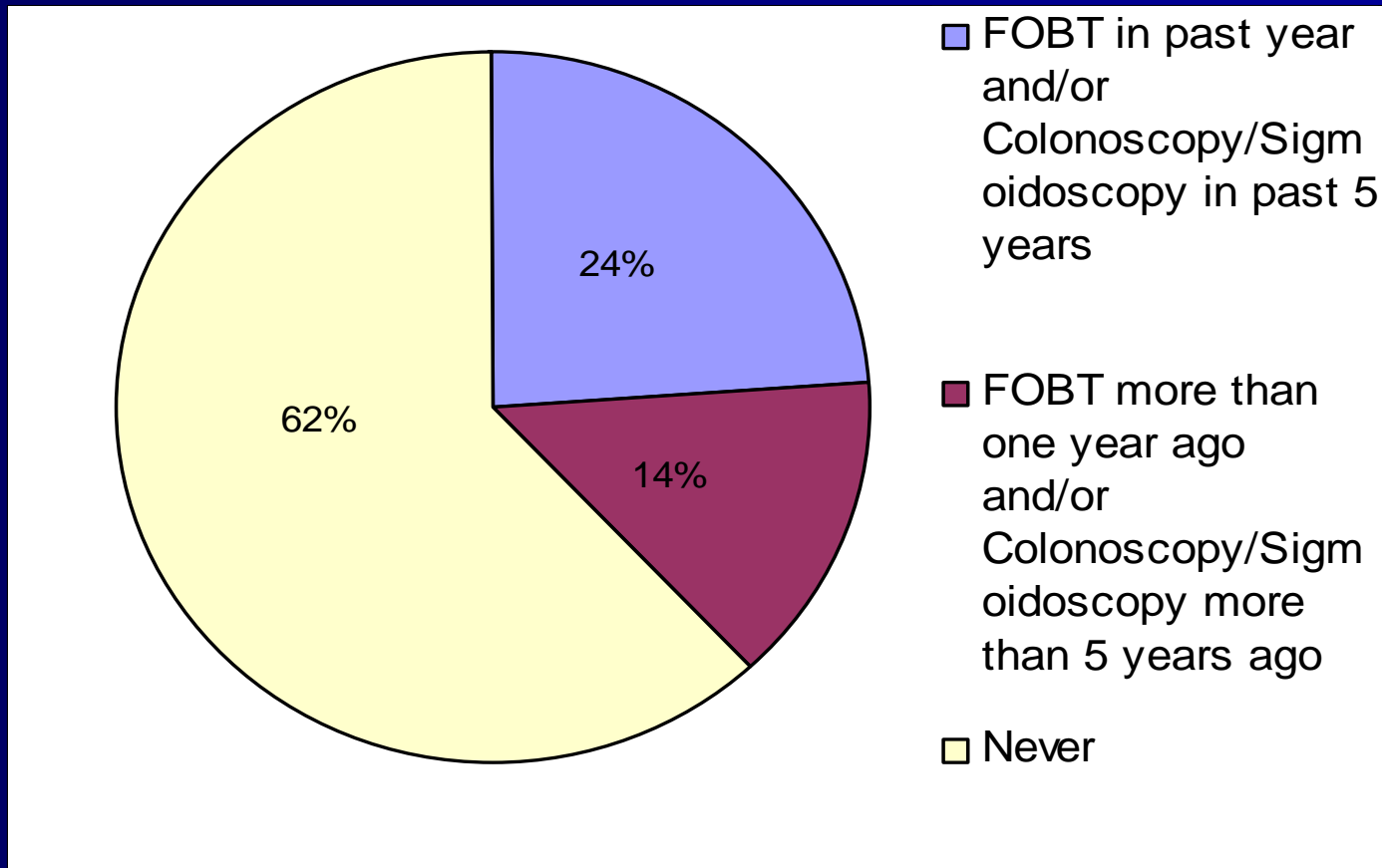
Screening for Colorectal Cancer

(cont...)

- **Sigmoidoscopy:** A thin tube is inserted into the rectum. A small camera is attached outside the body and allows the doctor to look inside the rectum and the last part of the colon for polyps or cancer.
- **Colonoscopy:** A longer tube is inserted into the rectum. It is connected to a video camera so the doctor can look for polyps or cancer in the entire colon. Polyps can be removed by small clippers at the end of the tube and sent to the laboratory to see if cancer is present.

**How are Cambodians
doing with colorectal
cancer screening?**

Cambodians & Colorectal Cancer Screening



Source: 2001 California Health Interview Survey

Colorectal Cancer Screening Guidelines

- Screening should begin in all people at age 50. If you are at higher risk, screening should begin at age 40.

- The American Cancer Society (2) recommends one of the following screening options for people with average risk beginning at age 50:
 1. Yearly stool blood test + sigmoidoscopy every 3-5 years **OR**
 2. Colonoscopy every 10 years **OR**
 3. Double contrast barium enema every 5-10 years

Screening for Prostate Cancer

- Digital Rectal Exam (DRE): During this examination, a doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the patient's rectum to feel the prostate gland for any abnormally firm areas that might be cancer. The prostate gland is next to the rectum and most cancers begin in the part of the gland that can be examined by this type of an exam
 - * The DRE test is more effective when used together with the PSA test.

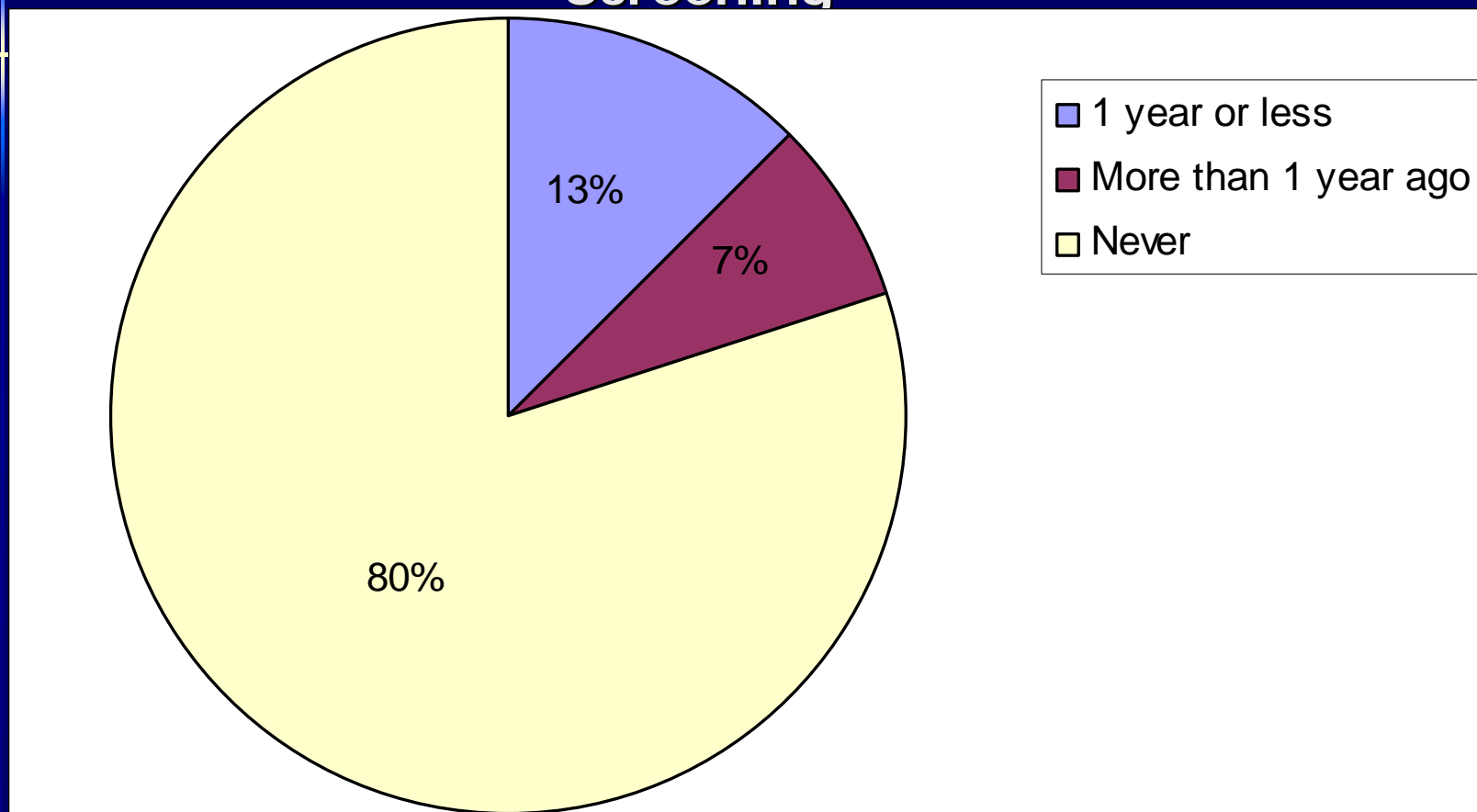
Screening for Prostate Cancer

- Prostate Specific Antigen Test (PSA) or PSA Blood Test:
 - ✓ Blood is drawn and measured for a substance called PSA
 - ✓ Normal levels are at or below 4.0 ng/ml.
 - ✓ If your PSA level is slightly higher, it does not mean that you have prostate cancer. Other conditions may cause the PSA level to rise above 4.0. Your doctor might recommend that you have another test at a later time just to see if the level remains high. He/she may also recommend additional tests to find out if cancer is present.

**How are Cambodian
men**

**doing with
prostate cancer
screening?**

Cambodian Men 40 and Older Have the Lowest Percentage for Ever Having Had a DRE, and the Lowest Percentage for Ever Having Had a PSA Blood Test for Prostate Cancer Screening



Source: 2001 California Health Interview Survey

Prostate Cancer Screening Guidelines

- At age 50, talk to your doctor about beginning annual prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood tests and digital rectal exams of the prostate gland.
- Factors to consider include your overall health and life expectancy.
- Men who are at high risk (family history of prostate cancer) should talk to their doctors about getting screenings at an early age.

Self Examination/Body Awareness

- Breast Self-Exam (BSE)
- Moles Exam

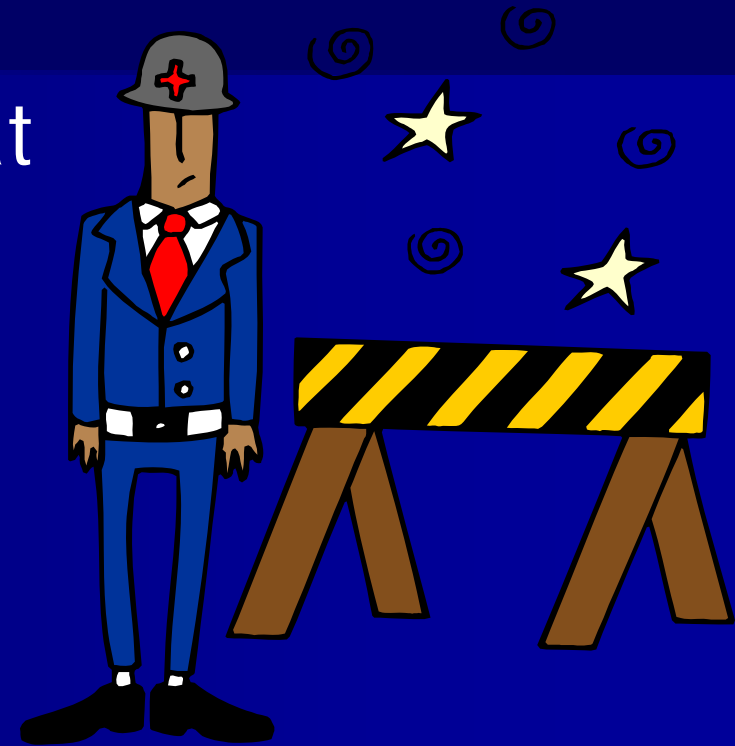
Symptoms of Cancer

- Changes in bowel or bladder habits.
- A sore that does not heal.
- Unusual bleeding or discharge.
- Thickening or lump in breast or any other part of the body.
- Indigestion or difficulty swallowing.
- Obvious change in wart or mole.
- Nagging cough or hoarseness.
- Unexplained changes in weight.

Barriers to Screening

There are many barriers that affect one's decision to participate in cancer screening. For example:

- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Childcare



Did we cover. . .

- The importance of early detection?
- Screening methods used in the detection of cancer?
- How Cambodians are doing with cancer screening for early detection?
- Symptoms of cancer?
- Possible barriers to practicing early detection?

References:

- American Gastroenterological Association (<http://www.gastro.org/public/drdan-colc.html>)
- American Cancer Society www.cancer.org
- National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service (<http://cancernet.nci.nih.gov>)
- Harvard Center for Cancer Prevention (www.yourcancerrisk.harvard.edu)