The Cooking for a Life Time Cancer Prevention Cooking Schools reach out to women who are rarely or never screened for breast and cervical cancer to encourage them to be screened and to motivate them to make changes in their food intake and activity to reduce risk for cancer.

The American Institute for Cancer Research states that about a third of cancers could be prevented by weight control, a healthy diet and regular physical activity. This includes eating more whole grains, fruits and vegetables, limiting sugary drinks and alcohol, reducing the intake of processed and red meat and controlling sodium intake.

In Georgia, the percentage of women over the age of 50 who have gotten mammograms has remained unchanged at about 80% since 2000. The number of women receiving Pap tests has actually decreased from 89% to 86.6%. Older women and women that have lower socioeconomic status and education are less likely to get screened.

In partnership with the American Cancer Society and the Georgia Department of Health, Extension FACS agents present the Cooking for a Life Time Cancer Cooking Schools across the state of Georgia. Women who attend learn how to reduce their risk for cancer through healthy food selection and preparation and are referred to the Breast and More or private clinics to have mammograms and Pap tests.

The Cooking for a Life Time Cancer Prevention Cooking Schools were presented in 11 counties in Georgia reaching 515 women. The average age of the women was 50 with a range of 18-89 years. The majority of the participants were African Americans. Nearly 69% had never attended an Extension program before. Of those attending, over 29% had not had a regular Pap test and nearly 20% of those age eligible had not had their recommended mammogram. Of those who had not had their Pap tests, 49% stated they would be more likely to get one after the program and nearly 48% of the women who had not gotten their recommended mammograms intended to do so after the program. Women eligible for the Breast and More program were either given appointments that day for the tests or were provided referral coupons to the program. The top 5 changes the women indicated they would make in their eating habits after the program were 1) use the New American Plate from the American Institute for Cancer Research to plan their meals (59.7%); 2) add up trans and saturated fat grams on the nutrition label (59.5%); 3) eat 7-9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day (59.4%); 4) use less vegetable oil in cooking (58%); 5) cut portion sizes (54.9%). Nearly 97% of women who attended reported that the schools were helpful or very helpful.

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County: Clarke
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