

# Mission In Motion

Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter

April 2012—Cancer Prevention



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## The Importance of Using Sunscreen

Red alert! If you regularly soak up the sun's rays without proper protection, you could be setting yourself up for serious damage to your skin. And we've all heard about the potential dangers of skin cancer.

If you're beyond the pale when it comes to using sunscreen, keep these tips in mind:

- ◆ Always use a sunscreen with SPF15 or higher
- ◆ Use at least one ounce to cover your arms, legs, neck and face
- ◆ Protect your lips by using sunscreen lip balm
- ◆ Avoid using sunscreen on babies younger than six months—use hats, clothing and shade for protection
- ◆ Consider cosmetics that contain sunscreen
- ◆ Choose broad spectrum products that guard against the sun's UVA and UVB rays

Getting sunburned or tanned on a regular basis could signal a red flag about your skin's health. Whenever you're in the sun, heed the warning and slather on some sunscreen to keep beauty—and your health—skin deep.

### It's the ultimate screen saver:

With all the sunscreen products available, it can be mind boggling to understand which one to choose. Consider these answers to your burning questions about sunscreen:

**Q:** Does the kind of sunscreen I use matter?

**A:** Whether lotion, gel or spray form, be sure to use one that blocks both UVA and UVB rays and offers at least Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 15.

**Q:** What does a sunscreen's SPF rating mean?

**A:** The SPF number indicates the product's effectiveness in offering protection from UV rays. Use higher SPF for more protection.

**Q:** Do sunscreens need to be reapplied during the course of a day?

**A:** Always follow the manufacturer's directions regarding reapplication, and still reapply frequently during peak sun hours or after swimming or sweating. For maximum effectiveness, apply sunscreen generously 20 to 30 minutes before going outside.

When used with other protective measures, sunscreen can shield your skin from sun-related damage and the dangers of skin cancer. It's a real lifesaver you'll want to keep on hand, and on your body.

Source: American Cancer Society

### Here's the Bottom Line

This year, over 146,000 new cases of colon cancer will be diagnosed in the United States.

- Colon cancer, or colorectal cancer, is the second leading cancer killer in the United States.
- Colon cancer is most common in men and women ages 50 and older.
- Men and women 50 and over should get tested for colon cancer and follow their physician's recommended screening schedule.

According to the World Health Organization, smokers have an increased risk of developing:

- Lung cancer
- Bladder cancer
- Lung disease
- Mouth cancer
- Heart disease
- Pancreas cancer
- High blood pressure
- Cervical cancer
- Stroke
- Pregnancy complications
- Kidney cancer
- Early menopause

## Screenings.....

Some types of cancer can be found before they cause symptoms. Checking for cancer (or for conditions that may lead to cancer) in people who have no symptoms is called *screening*. Screening can help doctors find and treat some types of cancer early. Generally, cancer treatment is more effective when the disease is found early. Screening tests are used widely to check for cancers of the breast, cervix, colon, and rectum:

- **Breast:** A *mammogram* is the best tool doctors have to find breast cancer early. A mammogram is a picture of the breast made with x-rays. The NCI recommends that women in their forties and older have mammograms every 1 to 2 years. Women who are at higher-than-average risk of breast cancer should talk with their health care provider about whether to have mammograms before age 40 and how often to have them.
  - **Cervix:** The *Pap test* (sometimes called Pap smear) is used to check cells from the cervix. The doctor scrapes a sample of cells from the cervix. A lab checks the cells for cancer or changes that may lead to cancer (including changes caused by human papillomavirus, the most important risk factor for cancer of the cervix). Women should begin having Pap tests 3 years after they begin having sexual intercourse, or when they reach age 21 (whichever comes first). Most women should have a Pap test at least once every 3 years.
  - **Colon and rectum:** A number of screening tests (5) are used to detect *polyps* (growths), cancer, or other problems in the colon and rectum. People aged 50 and older should be screened. People who have a higher-than-average risk of cancer of the colon or rectum should talk with their doctor about whether to have screening tests before age 50 and how often to have them.
1. **Fecal occult blood test:** Sometimes cancer or polyps bleed. This test can detect tiny amounts of blood in the stool.
  2. **Sigmoidoscopy:** The doctor checks inside the rectum and lower part of the colon with a lighted tube called a sig-

moidoscope. The doctor can usually remove polyps through the tube.

3. **Colonoscopy:** The doctor examines inside the rectum and entire colon using a long, lighted tube called a colonoscope. The doctor can usually remove polyps through the tube.
4. **Double-contrast barium enema:** This procedure involves several x-rays of the colon and rectum. The patient is given an enema with a barium solution, and air is pumped into the rectum. The barium and air improve the x-ray images of the colon and rectum.
5. **Digital rectal exam:** A rectal exam is often part of a routine physical exam. The health care provider inserts a lubricated, gloved finger into the rectum to feel for abnormal areas. A digital rectal exam allows for examination of only the lowest part of the rectum.

You may have heard about other tests to check for cancer in other parts of the body. At this time, we do not know whether routine screening with these other tests saves lives. The NCI is supporting research to learn more about screening for cancers of the breast, cervix, colon, lung, ovary, prostate, and skin.

Doctors consider many factors before they suggest a screening test. They weigh factors related to the test and to the cancer that the test can detect. They also pay special attention to a person's risk for developing certain types of cancer. For example, doctors think about the person's age, medical history, general health, family history, and lifestyle. They consider how accurate the test is. In addition, doctors keep in mind the possible harms of the screening test itself. They also look at the risk of follow-up tests or *surgery* that the person might need to see if an abnormal test result means cancer. Doctors also think about the risks and benefits of treatment if testing finds cancer. They consider how well the treatment works and what side effects it causes.

You may want to talk with your doctor about the possible benefits and harms of being checked for cancer. The decision to be screened, like many other medical decisions, is a personal one. Each person should decide after learning about the pros and cons of screening.

National Cancer Institute, [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)



## Protect Your Skin from

### Sunlight....

- Use **sunscreen products** with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. (Some doctors suggest using a product with an SPF of at least 30.) Apply the product's recommended amount to uncovered skin 30 minutes before going outside, and apply again every two hours or after swimming or sweating.
- Wear a **hat with a wide brim** all around that shades your face, neck, and ears. Baseball caps and some sun visors protect only parts of your skin.
- Wear **sunglasses** that block UV radiation to protect the skin around your eyes.
- Wear **long sleeves and long pants**. Tightly woven, dark fabrics are best. Some fabrics are rated with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF). The higher the rating, the greater the protection from sunlight.

### Keep in mind that the sun's rays ....

- ◆ Are strongest between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- ◆ Can go through light clothing, windshields, windows, and clouds
- ◆ Are reflected by sand, water, snow, ice, and pavement

## Be Safe, Not Sorry

### Facts about your Well Woman exam:

Today's woman is busier than ever. Family, work and personal demands can pull you in several directions at once. That's why it's important to take care of yourself, especially when it comes to your health.

Make sure that you include an annual mammogram and Pap test in your wellness regimen to keep yourself healthy. By scheduling these exams regularly, breast cancer and cervical cancer can be detected early, when they're easier to treat. In fact, thanks to the Pap test, cervical cancer has become an uncommon cancer in the United States since the test finds changes in the cervix that can be treated even before they become cancerous. And although breast cancer is the most common cancer that women may have to face in their lifetimes (excluding skin cancer), early detection through regular screening can greatly improve their chances in fighting the disease.

### All's well that starts well:

Prevention is key to maintaining your health and wellness. Follow these guidelines for

scheduling your mammogram and Pap test:\*

- Have an annual mammogram starting at age 40.
- Schedule an annual clinical breast exam by your doctor or nurse if you are 40 or older, and every one to three years if you are in your 20s and 30s.
- Do your monthly breast exam so that you will notice any changes, and report them to your physician right away.
- Schedule a regular Pap test if you are older than 21 or have been sexually active.
- Discuss any risk factors with your physician and determine the most appropriate screening schedule for you.

Women at increased risk, such as those who have a family history of cancer, a genetic tendency or a previous cancer should talk to their physicians about the appropriate screening schedule for them. Take time today to learn more about these exams from your health care provider, health fairs or local community bulletins.

[www.bcbstx.com](http://www.bcbstx.com) \*American Cancer Society

### Tips for having a mammogram

Following are some useful suggestions for ensuring that you will receive a good quality mammogram:

- If it is not posted visibly near the receptionist's desk, ask to see the FDA certificate that is issued to all facilities that offer mammography
- Use a facility that either specializes in mammography or does many mammograms a day
- Continue to go to a high-quality facility on a regular basis so that your mammograms can be compared from year to year
- On the day of the exam, don't wear deodorant or antiperspirant, which can interfere with the reading of the mammogram
- Always describe any breast symptoms or problems that you are having to the technologist who is doing the mammogram
- If you do not hear from your doctor within 10 days, don't assume that your mammogram was normal—call your doctor or the facility

Sources: American Cancer Society

## Stay in the Game with Prostate Cancer Screening

Whether you're playing football, baseball or basketball, a smart game plan can make a difference in whether you win or lose. And the same holds true for your health. By having a wellness plan that includes regular prostate cancer screening, you can increase your odds of beating one of your toughest opponents.

Prostate cancer is the most common male malignancy diagnosed in the United States, with an estimated 189,000 new cases each year. Fortunately, the disease is highly treatable and curable when detected early, and the five-year survival rate for early stage prostate cancer can be as high as 99 percent.

Men age 50 and older who have at least a 10-year life expectancy would benefit from intervention and treatment and should have a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) and digital rectal examination (DRE) annually\*. Currently, African-American men have the highest incidence of prostate cancer in the world – 137 per 100,000 per year. So, if you are African-American, or are younger than 50 and have a strong family history of the disease, you'll want to talk with your physician about a screening schedule that's tailored for you.

Don't let life throw you a curve ball. Safeguard your health by scheduling regular prostate cancer screenings with your physician, or by checking with your local hospital or the Internet for free screenings available in your area.

[www.bcbstx.com](http://www.bcbstx.com)

\*American Cancer Society



## Upcoming Monthly Health & Wellness Training Series:

April 2012 — Allergies

May 2012 — Depression

June 2012 — Physical Fitness

July 2012 — Varicose Veins

August 2012—Immunization Awareness

September 2012—Cholesterol

(All topics subject to change)

\*If you have a subject or topic that you would like more information on, feel free to make your requests at 580-8630.

## April Health & Wellness Training Series:

**Topic: Allergies**      **Date: April 26, 2012 from 2:30pm—3:30pm**

**City Hall—Council Chambers**      **Speaker: Dr. Angel Claudio, MD**

Look for Health & Wellness Training Series flyer for more information.

### Carrot Soup

By Mayo Clinic staff

#### Ingredients      Serves 6

10 carrots, scraped and sliced  
1 1/2 tablespoons sugar  
2 cups water  
3 tablespoons all-purpose (plain) flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
4 cups fat-free milk  
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

#### Directions

In a large saucepan, heat the carrots, sugar and water. Cover and simmer until the carrots are tender, about 20 minutes. Drain the carrots, reserving some of the liquid. Set aside.  
In a separate saucepan, whisk together the flour, salt, pepper, nutmeg and milk. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring constantly until the white sauce thickens.  
In a blender or food processor, add the cooked carrots and white sauce. Puree until smooth. Add reserved liquid to desired consistency. Ladle into separate bowls and garnish each with 1 teaspoon parsley. Serve immediately.

### Upcoming Events:

April 14, 2012—Trash Bash

April 26, 2012—Allergies Training Series

May 19, 2012—Leo Pena Memorial Day 5K Run/Walk

### Next Month's Issue:

May 2012 - Sleep

Mission In Motion

Our mission is to promote health awareness and to encourage healthy lifestyles.

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