

HEALTHY PRACTICES FOR WOMEN OF ALL AGES

In addition to your regular Ob/Gyn visit, please review this list of healthy practices. Modifying your daily activities accordingly may improve your overall health and well-being. If you have any questions regarding these recommendations, please feel free to discuss them with us.

DIET AND EXERCISE:

- ❖ Limit fat and cholesterol; emphasize fruits, grains, and vegetables.
- ❖ 8 glasses of water daily will improve your health in many ways.
- ❖ 30 grams of daily fiber intake by diet and supplements improves weight management, reduces constipation, and may decrease the risk of colon cancer.
- ❖ Exercise for 30 minutes at least five times a week. Consider aerobics & weight training.
- ❖ Stay at a healthy weight. Balance your caloric intake with calories burned off. We will be happy to review your ideal Body Mass Index with you.
- ❖ **Obesity increases risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high cholesterol, hypertension, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, gall bladder disease, and some cancers such as breast, uterine, and colon.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR:

- ❖ You should not feel pressured to engage in sexual behavior. Please tell us if you are being abused.
- ❖ Be sure to use contraception if pregnancy is not desired.
- ❖ Emergency contraception ("morning after pill" in the event of contraception failure) is available by prescription through our office.
- ❖ Regular use of condoms helps prevent sexually transmitted diseases.
- ❖ Consider HIV testing if you have:
 - Had more than one sexual partner.
 - Had any sexually transmitted diseases.
 - Used intravenous drugs.
 - A sexual partner with these risks factors.
 - A sexual partner who has had male homosexual exposure.
 - Received a blood transfusion during 1978-1985.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE:

- ❖ Do not smoke. Ask us for assistance in quitting.
- ❖ Avoid alcohol use when driving, boating, swimming, or operating other machinery.
- ❖ A safe intake of alcohol is considered 1 drink or less each day.
- ❖ Recreational drug use (marijuana, cocaine, etc.) is dangerous and can be habit-forming.

OSTEOPOROSIS PREVENTION:

- ❖ Osteoporosis is preventable and healthy habits are important at all ages: from building the bones before age 30, to limiting bone loss after menopause. You may not have any symptoms until you break a bone!
- ❖ Consume 3 servings of calcium-rich foods daily (milk, yogurt, cheese, green leafy vegetables) or use calcium supplementation for adequate calcium intake of 1,000-1,500 mg depending on your age and hormone status. Vitamin D intake of 800-1,000 IU per day is necessary for calcium absorption.
- ❖ Engage in regular weight-bearing or resistance exercise.
- ❖ Dr. Kerpelman, head of our Bone Health Division, recommends bone density screening (DXA) in all women over 65 and in younger women with risk factors (includes menopause, loss of height, tobacco, thyroid dysfunction, history of an eating disorder, certain medications).
- ❖ **DXA testing is quick, painless, and conveniently available within our office. This scan may help determine if additional medication is necessary to prevent fractures.

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BREAST HEALTH:

- ❖ Breast self-examinations should be done monthly (best just after your menstrual period or same day each month if you are not menstruating).
- ❖ A mammogram should be done every year beginning at the age of 40, or earlier if a strong family history of premenopausal breast cancer.

BLADDER PROBLEMS:

- ❖ Urinary incontinence is a major source of embarrassment for many women. It is a major reason for nursing home admissions and often results in isolation and depression.
- ❖ Dr. Bharucha, head of our office Bladder Testing Division, recommends a thorough evaluation if urine loss adversely affects your life. With proper evaluation, many patients can be cured or markedly improved.

COLON CANCER SURVEILLANCE:

- ❖ Screening is recommended at age 50 with annual stool occult blood cards and a sigmoidoscopy every three to five years, or colonoscopy every ten years. Earlier or more frequent testing may be advised based on risks.

INJURY PREVENTION:

- ❖ Seat/lap belts should be worn at all times, even during short trips “around the block.”
- ❖ Wear a helmet when using motorcycles, bicycles, roller blades, ATV's, or skiing.
- ❖ Place smoke detectors in your house and replace the batteries twice a year.
- ❖ Store guns and firearms unloaded, in a locked area. Trigger locks should also be used.
- ❖ Consider CPR training for household members.
- ❖ Remove loose rugs and clutter to prevent falls and broken bones.
- ❖ **If you are currently in a relationship where you feel threatened or unsafe, please discuss your situation with us or call Alternatives for Battered Women at (585) 232-7353. Help is available.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

- ❖ A tetanus/diphtheria booster shot is recommended every 10 years.
- ❖ Influenza vaccine is advised yearly for pregnant women, women over 50, or at any age based on medical history and risks.
- ❖ An HPV vaccine was recently licensed by the FDA for females, ages 9-26 years. The vaccine protects against four types of HPV (6, 11, 16, 18) which are known to cause 70% of cervical cancers and 90% of genital warts. We are currently offering this vaccine for our patients.
- ❖ A Measles-Mumps-Rubella vaccine is indicated for non-pregnant women born after 1956 unless documentation of previous immunization or proof of immunity.
- ❖ Adults susceptible to varicella (never had chicken pox or childhood vaccine) should be vaccinated.
- ❖ Pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine is indicated once for women age 65 and older.
- ❖ Hepatitis A and/or B vaccines are recommended for high-risk individuals.

DENTAL HEALTH:

- ❖ Schedule regular visits to the dentist.
- ❖ Floss and brush with fluoride toothpaste daily.

HEALTH CARE PROXY:

- ❖ All adults should have a health care proxy (a legal document that designates another person to make health care decisions for you in case you were unable) and consider a living will.