Fall 2015

Protect Your Health with the Flu Shot

The flu season most often runs from November through April, so it's best to get your shot in October or November. Once you get a flu shot, your body makes protective antibodies in about two weeks. The flu is a serious disease. People of any age can get it. The flu causes about 36,000 deaths each year in the U.S., mostly among those age 65 and older, and more than 200,000 hospitalizations.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Reality Check: Scheduling Your Mammogram

It's vital to set up routine mammogram screenings. It can raise the odds of catching disease early, which means you can get care early if needed. Knowing the signs of breast cancer also can help save lives. Be on the safe side, and call your doctor if you see any breast changes. Ask your doctor about the right screening plan for you. A doctor's suggestions may change based on your age, health and risk factors.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Goodbye Tobacco, Hello Healthier You

If you smoke, it is a good time to think about quitting. Being smoke-free can create good changes in your life, such as:

• Better health along with better quality and length of your life
• More money — smoking one $5 pack a day adds up to $1,825 a year
• Not exposing others to harmful second-hand smoke
• Easier breathing, which gives you better sleep
• Better sense of smell and taste
• Cleaner smelling clothing, hair, breath, home and car

Say so long to tobacco and hello to a more active, healthier you.

More than 480,000 people in the U.S. die from tobacco-related disease each year. If you are ready to quit, think about a quit-smoking program. Try the American Lung Association’s Freedom From Smoking® at ffsonline.org.

Source: American Lung Association
Exercise May Cut the Risk of Breast Cancer

Early research showed that female college athletes had a much lower risk of breast cancer than their inactive peers. Now, research suggests that all women can cut their breast cancer risk with exercise. Some studies say that it is the amount of exercise a woman averages across her lifetime that matters. But even women who do not start working out until they are older seem to lower their risk.

How much exercise is enough? Women age 40 and younger who worked out about four hours a week cut their risk by 50 percent. But women who only exercised two hours a week also had a lower risk compared to inactive women.

The latest guidelines point to moderate to robust exercise five or more days per week.

Source: American Cancer Society

Get the Skinny on the Health Benefits of Weight Loss

Dropping a few pounds can help you look and feel great. But the benefits go far beyond a smaller pair of jeans. Reaching and keeping a healthy weight:

- Lowers your cholesterol levels. That lowers your heart disease risk.
- Prevents diabetes. In one test, when overweight men and women lost an average of 7 percent of their weight, their risk for getting diabetes dropped by 58 percent.
- Wards off colon and breast cancer. Experts say that obesity may increase breast cancer risk as much as having a family history of breast cancer. And obese women are more likely to develop colon cancer before menopause.
- Protects your mental health. People at a healthy weight have a lower risk of anxiety, depression, and drug or alcohol abuse.
- Decreases your blood pressure.
- Helps you stay active as you age. In one study, older women with more body fat were more likely to lose their mobility.

Sources: Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Signs of Diabetes Often Ignored

A recent report said that about one-in-three Americans with diabetes doesn’t know they’re ill. But uncontrolled diabetes can cause kidney problems, heart disease and stroke. Some may feel hungrier or thirstier than usual. Other signs are losing weight without trying or urinating too often. Blurry vision and sores that don’t heal are also signs. If you have higher-than-normal blood sugar, talk to your doctor. Dropping a few pounds and getting more exercise may also help. Diabetes risk rises for those who:

- are overweight
- have a close family member with diabetes
- belong to a minority group
- have high blood pressure or cholesterol
- exercise fewer than three times a week

Sources: American Diabetes Association, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health