

Healthy Living Newsletter

Take Control of Your Health, Your Benefits, and Your Future Wellness / April, 2011



Breast Cancer

When you are told that you have breast cancer, it is natural to wonder what caused the disease. No one knows the exact causes of breast cancer. Doctors seldom know why one woman develops breast cancer and others do not.

Doctors do know that bumping, bruising, or touching the breast does not cause cancer.

Doctors also know that women with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop breast cancer.

Risk Factors:

- **Age.** The chance of getting breast cancer increases as you get older. Most women are over 60 years old when they are diagnosed.
- **Family history of breast cancer.** Your risk is higher if your mother, father, sister, or daughter had breast cancer. The risk is higher if your family member had breast cancer before age 50.
- **Being younger when you had your first menstrual period.**
- **Starting menopause at a later age.**
- **Being older at the birth of your first child.**
- **Never giving birth.**
- **Not breastfeeding.**
- **Personal history of breast cancer or some non-cancerous breast diseases.**
- **Treatment with radiation therapy to the breast and/or chest.**
- **Being overweight.**
- **Long-term use of hormone replacement therapy.**
- **Using birth control pills.**
- **Drinking alcohol.** Research shows that the type of alcohol consumed—wine, beer, or mixed drinks—makes no difference in the risk. To protect yourself, you should consider limiting alcohol to less than one drink a day, or avoid alcohol completely.
- **Lack of exercise.** Regular exercise helps you maintain a healthy weight and may aid in breast cancer prevention. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. If you have not been particularly active in the past, start your exercise program slowly and gradually work up to a greater intensity. Try to include weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, jogging, or aerobics, which have the added benefit of keeping your bones stronger.

- **Consider limiting fat in your diet.** For a protective benefit, limit fat intake to less than 35 percent of your daily calories and restrict foods high in saturated fat. By reducing the amount of fat in your diet, you may decrease your risk of other diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and stroke.

*Source: www.cdc.gov,
www.mayoclinic.com & www.cancer.gov*

Biopsy

A biopsy is the removal of tissue to look for cancer cells. A biopsy is the only way to tell for sure if cancer is present.

The procedure can be performed in several ways:

- **Fine-needle aspiration biopsy:** A thin needle is used to remove cells or fluid from a breast lump.
- **Core biopsy:** A wide needle is used to remove a sample of breast tissue.
- **Skin biopsy**
- **Surgical biopsy**

Source: www.cancer.gov

Health & Wellness Events

See your Occupational Health Manager or Wellness Champion about Health & Wellness activities this month in your facility.

Types of Mammograms

- **Screening mammograms** are done for women who have no symptoms of breast cancer. It usually involves two x-rays of each breast. Screening mammograms can detect lumps or tumors that can not be felt. They can also find microcalcifications, or tiny deposits of calcium in the breast. These deposits sometimes mean that breast cancer is present.

- **Diagnostic mammograms** are used to check for breast cancer after a lump or other symptom has been found. Signs of breast cancer may include pain, thickened skin on the breast, nipple discharge, or a change in breast size or shape. This type of mammogram also can be used to view breast tissue that is hard to see on a screening mammogram. A diagnostic

mammogram takes longer than a screening mammogram because it involves multiple x-rays in order to obtain views of the breast from several angles. The technician can magnify a problem area to make a more detailed picture, which helps the doctor make a correct diagnosis.

Source: www.womenshealth.gov

Prostate

Symptoms

Most of the time, prostate cancer does not initially cause symptoms. By the time symptoms do occur, the disease may have spread beyond the prostate. Symptoms may include the following:

- Urinary problems:
 - >Not being able to urinate
 - >Having a hard time starting or stopping the flow of urine
 - >Needing to urinate often, especially at night
 - >Weak flow of urine
 - >Urine flow that starts and stops
 - >Pain or burning during urination
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Frequent pain in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs

Although these problems can be symptoms of cancer, they are much more likely to be caused by noncancerous conditions. It is important to check with your doctor for a diagnosis.

Diagnosis

A diagnosis of prostate cancer can be confirmed only by a biopsy. During a biopsy, a urologist removes tissue samples, usually with a needle. These are usually done in the doctor's office

with local anesthesia. Then a pathologist checks for cancer cells.

Men may have blood tests to see if the cancer has spread. Some men may need the following imaging tests:

- **Bone Scan:** A doctor injects a small amount of a radioactive substance into a blood vessel, which travels through the bloodstream and collects in the bones. A scanner is used to detect and measure the radiation and form pictures of the bones.
- **Computerized Tomography (CT) Scan:** An x-ray machine linked to a computer takes a series of detailed pictures of areas inside the body. Doctors often use CT scans to see inside the pelvis or abdomen.
- **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI):** A strong magnet linked to a computer is used to make detailed pictures of areas inside the body.

Treatment

Three treatment options are generally accepted for men:

- **Radical prostatectomy** is a surgical procedure to remove the entire prostate gland and nearby tissues. Sometimes lymph nodes in the pelvic

area are also removed. Radical prostatectomy may be performed using a technique called nerve-sparing surgery that may prevent damage to the nerves needed for an erection. However, nerve-sparing surgery is not always possible.

- **Radiation therapy** involves the delivery of radiation to the prostate. Radiation therapy is usually administered in an outpatient setting using an external beam of radiation. Radiation can also be delivered in a technique known as brachytherapy, which involves implanting radioactive seeds directly into, or very close to the tumor using a needle. Patients with high-risk prostate cancer are candidates for adding hormonal therapy to standard radiation therapy.
- **Active surveillance (watchful waiting)** may be an option recommended for patients with early-stage prostate cancer, particularly those who have low-grade tumors with only a small amount of cancer seen in the biopsy specimen. These patients have regular examinations, PSA tests, and, sometimes, scheduled biopsies.

Endometrial Cancer



Endometrial cancer is the most common type of uterine cancer. Although the exact cause is unknown, increased levels of estrogen appear to play a role. Estrogen helps stimulate the lining of the uterus.

Most cases of endometrial cancer occur between the ages of 60 and 70 years, but a few cases may occur before age 40.

The following increase the risk of endometrial cancer:

- >Diabetes
- >Estrogen replacement therapy without the use of progesterone

- >History of endometrial polyps or other benign growths of the uterine lining
- >Infertility
- >Infrequent periods
- >Tamoxifen, a drug for breast cancer treatment
- >Obesity
- >Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)
- >Starting menopause after age 50

Source: www.cancer.org & www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Screening Tests for Colorectal Cancer

High-sensitivity FOBT (stool test):

This test checks for hidden blood in fecal matter (stool). Currently, two types of FOBT are available.

- **Guaiaac FOBT** uses the chemical guaiac to detect heme in stool. Heme is the iron-containing blood protein hemoglobin.
- **Immunochemical FOBT** uses antibodies to detect human hemoglobin protein in stool. You receive a test kit from your health care provider. At home, you use a stick or brush to obtain a small amount of stool. You return the test kit to the doctor or a lab, where the stool samples are checked for anything unusual.

How often: Once a year.

Sigmoidoscopy:

In this test, the rectum and *lower* colon are examined using a lighted instrument called a sigmoidoscopy. During this procedure, precancerous and cancerous growths in the rectum and lower colon can be found and either removed or biopsied.

How often: Every five years.

Colonoscopy:

In this test, the rectum and *entire* colon are examined using a lighted instrument called a colonoscope. During this procedure, precancerous and cancerous growths throughout the colon can be found and either removed or biopsied, including growths in the upper part of the colon, where they would be missed

by sigmoidoscopy. Colonoscopy is also used as a follow-up test if anything unusual is found during one of the other screening tests.

How often: Every ten years.

Virtual colonoscopy:

In this test, special x-ray equipment is used to produce pictures of the colon and rectum. A computer assembles these pictures into detailed images that can show polyps and other abnormalities.

Double contrast barium enema (DCBE)

Digital rectal exam (DRE)

Source: www.cdc.gov & www.cancer.gov

Cancer Prevention Tips

- Be as lean as possible without becoming underweight.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day.
- Avoid sugary drinks. Limit consumption of energy-dense foods (particularly foods high in added sugar, or low in fiber, or high in fat).
- Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes, such as beans.
- Limit consumption of red meats (such as beef, pork, and lamb) and avoid processed meats.
- If consumed at all, limit daily alcoholic drinks to two for men and one for women.
- Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium).
- Do not use vitamin supplements to protect against cancer.
- It is best for mothers to breastfeed exclusively for up to six months and then add other liquids and foods.

Source: *UPS RoadMap to Health*

Skin Cancer

General Fact

- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. More than two million people are diagnosed annually.



What is the Difference between SPF and UPF?

SPF (Sun Protection Factor) measures the amount of time it takes for sun-exposed skin to redden, while UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) measures the amount of radiation that penetrates a fabric and reaches the skin.

Protective Clothing

As a rule, light-colored, lightweight, and loosely-woven fabrics do not offer much protection from the sun. That white t-shirt you slip on at the beach when you feel your skin burning provides only moderate protection from sunburn, with an average ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of seven. At the other end of the spectrum, a long sleeved dark denim shirt offers an estimated UPF of 1,700, which amounts to a complete sun block. In general, clothing made of tightly-woven fabric best protects your skin from the sun. The easiest way to test if a fabric can protect your skin is to hold it up to the light. If you can see through it, then UV radiation can penetrate it and your skin.

The color of fabric also plays a role. Darker-colored fabrics are more effective than lighter-colored fabrics at blocking the sun. For instance, the UPF of a dark green cotton T-shirt is ten versus seven for white cotton, while a thicker fabric such as velvet in black or blue or dark green has an approximate UPF of 50.

What clothing is made of matters. Fabrics, such as unbleached cotton contain special pigments called lignins that act as UV absorbers. High-luster polyesters and even thin, satiny silk can be highly protective because they reflect radiation.

Use Your Head

Up to 80 percent of skin cancers occur on the head and neck, so a wide-brimmed hat is a great way to shade your face, ears, scalp, and neck from the sun's rays. A hat with a four-inch brim provides the most protection. If you choose a baseball cap, also use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 to protect your exposed ears and neck.

Grab Your Shades

Sunglasses protect the tender skin around the eyes and reduces the risk of developing cataracts. For maximum protection, look for sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays. Try wrap-around lenses, which keep UV rays from sneaking in at the sides.

Slip, Slop, Slap...and Wrap

An easy way to remember important sun safety tips is to: **Slip** on a shirt, **Slop** on sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher), **Slap** on a hat, and **Wrap** on some sunglasses.

Sources: www.skincancer.org, www.cdc.gov/ChooseYourCover, www.skincancerprevention.org & www.cancer.org.au

Questions?

If you have any questions or topics that you would like to see covered in this newsletter, e-mail your suggestions to:

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Sneak Peek

The major topics for the May issue of the newsletter will be:

- **High Blood Pressure (HBP) Control**
- **Banana**
- **Potassium and High Blood Pressure**

