

Women's Health Awareness Month

May 10th is National Women's Check-Up Day

Leading Causes of Death Can Be Successfully Prevented or Treated If Caught Early

The Monday following Mother's Day, National Women's Check-Up Day, is the perfect opportunity to encourage moms, aunts, sisters, spouses, and best friends to visit a health care professional to receive preventive services and screenings. Since many of the leading causes of death among women can be successfully prevented or treated if the warning signs are caught early enough, a reminder from loved ones to get a regular health check-up is one of the nicest gifts a woman can receive.



The second annual National Women's Check-Up Day, Monday, May 10, 2004, marks the start of National Women's Health Week, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This nationwide observance is to promote awareness of the measures women can take to prevent fatal and debilitating illnesses. According to HHS, maintaining regular check-ups, being physically active, eating a healthy diet, not smoking, and following general safety rules are five health habits for improving women's health.

Women should consider the following screening tests:

- **Mammograms** every 1 to 2 years starting at age 40
- **Pap Smears** every 1 to 3 years if sexually active or are older than 21
- **Cholesterol Checks** regularly, starting at age 45 (If smoker, diabetic, or if heart disease runs in the family, cholesterol checks should start at age 20)
- **Blood Pressure** checked at least every 2 years
- **Cholesterol Cancer Tests** starting at age 50
- **Diabetes Tests** if diagnosed with high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- **Depression Screening** should be discussed with doctor if feeling "down," sad, or hopeless with little interest or pleasure in doing things for 2 weeks straight
- **Osteoporosis Tests** should start at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis (thinning of the bones); if between the ages of 60 and 64 and weigh 154 lbs. or less, testing should be discussed with doctor
- **Chlamydia Tests** if age 25 or younger and sexually active—if older, discuss testing with doctor; also, discuss testing for other sexually transmitted diseases with doctor

--4woman.gov The National Women's Health Information Center

Women and Problem Drinking

Fewer women than men drink. However, among the heaviest drinkers, women equal or surpass men in the number of problems that result from their drinking. For example, female alcoholics have death rates 50 to 100 percent higher than those of male alcoholics, including deaths from suicides, alcohol-related accidents, heart disease and stroke, and liver cirrhosis.

When Is Drinking a Problem?

Answering the following four questions can help you find out if you or someone close to you has a drinking problem.

- Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
- Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

One "yes" answer suggests a possible alcohol problem. If you responded "yes" to more than one question, it is very likely that you have a problem with alcohol. In either case, it is important that you see your health care provider right away to discuss your responses to these questions.

Even if you answered "no" to all of the above questions, if you are having drinking-related problems with your job, relationships, health, or with the law, you should still seek help.

An Individual Decision

A woman's genetic make-up shapes how quickly she feels the effects of alcohol, how pleasant drinking is for her, and how drinking alcohol over the long term will affect her health, even the chances that she could have problems with alcohol. A family history of alcohol problems, a woman's risk of illnesses like heart disease and breast cancer, medications she is taking, and age are among the factors for each woman to weigh in deciding when, how much, and how often to drink.

The Battle Over Homework— Practical Solutions

Every night there's a battle over homework—talking, begging, asking or demanding. Both you and your child have become frustrated. Does this cycle sound familiar?



Here are some strategies to help alleviate tension and change your child's attitude and behavior toward homework.

- Try to put yourself in your child's shoes to better understand what he/she feels. Really listen to and acknowledge that you understand your child's concerns about homework. Let the child know your concerns and feelings. Talk about how you felt about homework when you were in school. Express the importance of doing homework and the benefits.
- Work with your child to set aside a time and place to do homework.
- Create a "homework" environment by eliminating distractions—television, stereo, phone calls—and minimize noise.
- Be a role model by reading a book or newspaper while your child works on his/her homework.
- Make yourself accessible and let your child know you are willing to help with assignments, take him/her to the library, buy materials for assignments, or even enlist a tutor.

Explain that you will no longer hound, scold or force your child to do homework. Allow your child to experience the consequences of his/her actions. Instead of shaming, humiliating, or punishing, have faith in your child to learn from mistakes—and provide constant encouragement.

Have a Good Laugh— for You

It can reduce tension and stress, improve the body's resistance to illness and bring people closer together. It's laughter, and a growing body of research is proving its benefits in our daily lives.



To find your funny bone when you need it— See a funny movie. Read a funny book or listen to a funny book-on-tape. Look up a favorite comic strip. Go to a comedy club. Keep funny things in or around your desk or work area— Joke-a-Day calendars, toys, or something that just makes you smile can lighten stressful times. Talk to someone who always makes you laugh. Remember a funny story about you or someone you know. And sharing laughter is a great feeling. If you know someone who could use a 'pick-me-up,' send a funny card or share your favorite joke. —HEALTH SENTRY

8 Traits of Emotional Wellness

Most of us have a pretty good idea of what it means to be physically fit—regular exercise, a balanced diet, no smoking, etc. But what does it mean to be *emotionally* fit?

The key to our emotional wellness, researchers believe, rests in possessing the following eight traits:

- One:** The ability to step back and look at yourself honestly.
- Two:** The ability to change.
- Three:** The ability to increase your boundaries of responsibility.
- Four:** The ability to take responsibility for your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
- Five:** The ability to trust and be open to your feelings.
- Six:** The ability to tolerate stress.
- Seven:** The ability to be flexible
- Eight:** The ability to recognize when you have a problem.

—HEALTH SENTRY

When Looking for Childcare Centers. . .

Look. . . Do the caregivers enjoy talking and playing with the children? Do they talk to children at eye level?

Listen. . . What does the center sound like? Is it calm, dull, happy, or loud?

Count . . . How many children are in the center for each staff person? The fewer children per staff member, the better the chance your child will receive adult attention.

Ask. . . What experience or training do the caregivers have?

—CHILD CARE AWARE.



Human Behavior Associates, Inc.

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