

Wellness News

Tips to stay healthy throughout the year
Issue VI ■ October 2020 ■ Women's Health



Women's Health

There are many health concerns that equally affect both men and women; however, there are certain conditions found to be more prevalent among women. Those including breast cancer, osteoporosis, as well as depression and anxiety. Creating awareness, knowing signs and symptoms as well as courses of action & resources are key to proper detection and treatment of these conditions.

Breast Cancer in Women

Breast Cancer is the second leading type of cancer among American women. Each year, more than 260,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States. It is also estimated that 2,500 men are diagnosed with breast cancer each year.

Learn the signs and symptoms, and if you have any concerns, don't hesitate to contact your doctor.

Early Detection

Since there are very few controllable risk factors for developing breast cancer; regular screenings and checkups are incredibly important to staying healthy and for early detection. Including,

- Self-Breast Exam
- Clinical Breast Exam
- Annual Mammograms for women ages 45+

Signs and Symptoms

Knowing what to look for is critical to discovering cancer early. The most common symptom is a painless, hard mass with irregular edges. Other symptoms may include:

- Swelling of any kind
- Skin irritation or dimpling pattern
- Pain in the breast or nipple
- Nipple retraction (turning inward)
- Redness, thickening or scaling of the breast/nipple skin
- Nipple discharge (other than breast milk)
- Swollen lymph nodes under the arm and/or collarbone

It is normal to feel upset if you notice a symptom, but it is important to contact your doctor right away.

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become weakened or brittle which can lead to an increased risk of fracture. As women age, they become increasingly more at risk for developing this condition.

Early Detection

It is recommended for women to have an initial examination with their physician once they've reached menopause. The course of action following will be dependent on a variety of

personal factors, but it is important to maintain an open conversation with your doctor to discuss the best approach for you.

Mental Health

Mental health is getting much more attention these days in effort to break the stigma. This is imperative as women are more likely to be affected by depression and/or anxiety at some point in their lives.

Things to Know about Depression

- Depression is a medical condition that often requires some variety of treatment to feel better.
- There can be physical symptoms to depression along with (or sometimes in absence of) feelings of sadness.
- Certain types of depression are unique to women. Including, PMS or PMDD, perinatal depression and perimenopausal depression.

Self-Awareness for Early Detection

Body awareness is a valuable tool for everyday health. Taking time to get to know what looks and feels normal for your body on a regular basis, can be a key and primary indicator for any first signs of irregularities or possible disease.

The same can apply for your mind and way of thinking. Pay attention to your thoughts and thought patterns, this can help you and others identify when something may be feeling off.

If you do notice any changes or irregularities in your body or thought patterns, make an appointment with your doctor.

Reducing Risk

Some risk factors for these conditions are uncontrollable, such as sex and age. However, there are lifestyle behaviors we can adopt to help reduce the overall risk.

Reducing Risk

- Keep a healthy weight
- Eat a healthy, well balanced diet
- Exercise regularly
- Limit or avoid alcohol intake
- Avoid tobacco use
- If you have a family history of any medical condition, talk with your doctor

Support & Resources

Coping with cancer or illness directly or indirectly for a loved one, can bring about a range of emotions. It is very important to utilize your support system as well as reach out to your doctor for additional support as needed.

CareFirst Resources

- [Find A Doctor or Healthcare Facility](#) – Search by provider last name or type of provider within your network. Also search for health care facilities, including hospitals, urgent care and labs.
- [CareFirst Video Visit](#) – Get the care you need when and where you need it. From sudden colds to allergy woes, simply sign in to connect with a doctor on your smartphone, tablet or computer right away. For mental health, diet/nutrition, or breastfeeding support, schedule a visit and meet with a licensed professional from the comfort of your home.
- [AskMD](#) - More than just your standard symptom checker, AskMD gets you from "what's wrong" to what you can do about it. Not meant to be used as a diagnostic tool but rather to be used to provide guidance for a conversation with your doctor.
- [Sharecare Inspirations/Relax 360](#) – Soothing video content in the palm of your hand designed to help reduce and eliminate daily stress.