



NUTRITION NEWS

WRITTEN BY: SHANNON DAVIS, RD, CDN

LAYOUT BY: KAYLYNN SCHAFFER

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Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Each October, the subject of the monthly newsletter is breast cancer. This is because most of us know or have known someone who has the disease or who was directly affected by it. According to the American Cancer Society, there were over 252,000 new cases of breast cancer diagnosed in the past year.



The Mayo Clinic states that after skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in the United States. (It can also occur in men, although this is much more rare.) Breast cancer survival rates have, and continue to increase, partly attributable to early detection.

Symptoms of breast cancer include the following:

- A breast lump or thickening that feels different from the surrounding tissue
- Change in the size, shape, or appearance of a breast

- Changes to the skin over the breast, such as dimpling
- A newly inverted nipple
- Peeling, scaling, crusting, or flaking of the pigmented area of skin surrounding the nipple
- Redness or pitting of the skin over your breast, like the skin of an orange

Early detection is especially crucial if you are predisposed to breast cancer. The following factors can increase your chance of developing the disease: increasing age, a personal history of breast conditions, a family history of breast cancer, radiation exposure, obesity, beginning your period at a younger age, beginning menopause at an older age, having your first child at an older age, having never been pregnant, drinking alcohol, and smoking. If you are at risk, talk to your physician about screening tools that are available.

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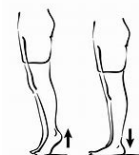
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Monthly Exercise

Heel Raise


Helps with walking and climbing stairs.


1. With fingertips on something solid to help balance, lift both heels off the floor and stand on your toes for three seconds, then slowly lower your heels to the floor
2. Repeat 5 times.



As stated on the previous page, obesity puts you at risk for developing breast cancer. It also increases your risk of other cancers, including colon cancer, stomach cancer, and pancreatic cancer.

Most of the following tips are nothing new, but they bear repeating.

- * Fruits and vegetables protect against many different cancers. A diet rich in these foods can also contribute to a healthy weight, which also lowers your risk of developing certain cancers. 
- * Fiber offers a protective benefit against cancer. Fiber adds bulk to the stool and helps move foods quickly through the gastrointestinal tract. It can also help you achieve a desirable weight by contributing to a feeling of satiety and preventing overeating.
- * Antioxidants offer a protective benefit against the development of cancer. They are generally found in fruits and vegetables. As a rule of thumb, the darker and richer the color of the food, the more antioxidants it contains. Good sources of antioxidants include blueberries, pomegranates, Goji berries, Acai berries, and cranberries.
- * Choose appropriate portion sizes of whatever food you eat. Keep in mind that it is possible to overeat healthy food as well. This can still contribute to excess weight, which may increase your risk of developing cancer.
- * Limit your intake of sugar sweetened beverages.

- * Limit your intake of processed meats, including bacon, sausage, lunch meats, and hot dogs. 
- * Choose fish and poultry instead of red meat— it is generally leaner, although lean red meat in moderation is also an acceptable option.
- * Prepare meat, poultry, and fish by baking, broiling, or poaching. Avoid frying and charbroiling.
- * Eat at least 2 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables daily. Fresh is great, but frozen is also a great (and at times more accessible) option.
- * Limit your use of creamy sauces, dressings, and dips with fruits and vegetables. It adds unnecessary calories and fat without adding a noticeable benefit.
- * Choose whole grains instead of refined grain products.
- * If you drink alcohol, limit the amount.

Anti-inflammatory foods may also offer a protective benefit. Omega-3 fatty acids are considered anti-inflammatory. They are found in cold water fish, walnuts, fish oils, and even in supplements (although it is generally preferable to get them from foods instead of in pill form.)

Lastly, look for foods that are rich in Vitamins A, D, E, and C. Folate (found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains), selenium (found in meats and whole grains), and carotenoids (found in fruits and vegetables) also offer protective benefits from the development of cancer.



On a less pleasant note, October is generally when we start thinking about flu season. Each year, the Centers for Disease Control recommend that the majority of the population (including the elderly) get a flu vaccination. Of all age groups, including children, people over the age of 84 have the highest risk of dying from complications from the flu.



Each year, the efficacy of the flu vaccine is studied. The developers of the flu vaccine have to predict which strain will be the most prevalent for the upcoming flu season. Because of this, there are certain years when the protection offered by the vaccine is better than others.



Getting the flu vaccine contributes to the following statistics:

- A reduction in hospital admissions by 70%
- A reduction in death by 85% among older adults who do not live in nursing homes
- Among nursing home residents, a reduction in hospital admissions by 50%
- Reduces the risk of pneumonia by about 60% among nursing home residents
- Reduces the risk of death by 75-80% among nursing home residents

Symptoms of the flu in the elderly are generally the same as those in the rest of the population. These include a high temperature, fatigue (lasting as long as 3 weeks), general aches and pains, chest discomfort, cough, sore throat, and runny or stuffy nose. Remember that more serious complications can arise when the flu

strikes the elderly population, especially if the individual has any other medical issues.

The elderly population also has the option of getting vaccinated against other serious diseases. There are now vaccines available to protect against pneumonia, shingles, and tetanus, just to name a few. The decision to get vaccinated can be complicated by whether or not your insurance covers these vaccines. Some of the vaccines can be expensive. Your medical history should also play a role in determining which vaccinations you receive.

There are side effects to most vaccines. Although generally mild, side effects can include pain (usually temporary) at the injection site, redness and/or swelling at the injection site, headache, muscle aches, fever, and general malaise. Side effects not only vary from person to person but may vary individually, depending on the year. The side effects may also be influenced by your current state of health as well as by the current condition of your immune system.

Also bear in mind that not all vaccinations are available to all people. Certain treatments, such as chemotherapy, may contraindicate our need for vaccinations. Even living with someone who is undergoing chemotherapy treatments may preclude that individual from being vaccinated themselves. Be sure to talk over all your options with your health care provider.



One of the best things you can eat to protect yourself from illness is eating a diet rich in antioxidants. Here is a great recipe that is loaded with them! This is one of my favorite recipes because you can substitute different fruits for the blueberries. It also packs a protein punch because of the cream cheese! Preparing it the night before makes it a go-to for busy mornings as well!

Overnight Blueberry French Toast

- 12 slices day old bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 12 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 tbs cornstarch
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 tbs butter



Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish. Arrange half the bread cubes in the dish, and top with cream cheese cubes. Sprinkle 1 cup blueberries over the cream cheese, and top with remaining bread cubes.

In a large bowl, mix the eggs, milk, vanilla extract, and syrup. Pour over the bread cubes. Cover, and refrigerate overnight.

Remove the bread cube mixture from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before baking. Preheat the oven to 350°.

Cover, and bake 30 minutes. Uncover, and continue baking 25 to 30 minutes, until center is firm and surface is lightly browned.

In a medium saucepan, mix the sugar, cornstarch, and water. Bring to a boil. Stirring constantly, cook 3 to 4 minutes. Mix in the remaining 1 cup blueberries. Reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes, until the blueberries burst. Stir in the butter, and pour over the baked French toast.

HERKIMER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING

109 Mary St., Herkimer, NY 13350

Phone: 315-867-1121

Fax: 315-867-1448

Email: hcofa@herkimercounty.org

Web: www.herkimercounty.org; then 'departments' then 'Office for the Aging'

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