

NUTRITION NEWS

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Cancer Prevention

Routine cancer screenings increase the chances of detecting certain cancers early. And early detection leads to higher cure rates. For most adults, the American Cancer Society recommends specific screening guidelines. Routine screenings should be conducted for breast cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, and prostate cancer.

In addition to screenings, there are certain lifestyle changes you can make that may reduce your overall cancer risk. These changes include the following:

- * Stay away from all forms of tobacco
- * Get to and maintain a healthy weight
- * Get moving with regular physical activity
- * Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables
- * Limit how much alcohol you drink (if you drink at all– if you don't, don't start)
- * Protect your skin

- * Know yourself, your family history, and your risks
- * Have regular check-ups and cancer screening tests

You should also be aware of certain symptoms that many cancers have in common. These include fatigue, lump or area of thickening that can be felt under the skin, weight changes including unintentional weight gain or loss, skin changes such as yellowing darkening or redness of the skin, changes in bowel or bladder habits, persistent cough, difficulty swallowing, hoarseness, persistent indigestion, persistent muscle or joint pain, and persistent unexplained fevers or night sweats.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the US but survival rates are improving, thanks to improvements in screenings and treatment.



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Monthly Exercise

Side Leg Raise/ Sideways Walking

1. With fingertips on something solid to help balance, stand on one leg and raise the other sideways, holding it for 5 seconds.
2. Repeat 8 times.
3. Repeat with the other leg.
4. Extend to walking sideways, with slow steps alongside a bench or table.

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately one in every twenty people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in their lifetime. Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of death in the US. With such a high incidence of colorectal cancer, it is important to be aware of what it is and what you can do to decrease your risk.

The development of colorectal cancer is a slow process, which can take between ten and twenty years. Since this cancer progresses so slowly, it can be detected early on if proper screening is completed as recommended by your physician. The following symptoms can be signs of colorectal cancer, so see your doctor if you experience any of these: dark or tarry stools, blood in stool, urge to have a bowel movement when the bowel is empty, change in stool shape that is more narrow than usual, or an unplanned weight loss without change of eating habits.

The occurrence of colorectal cancer increases with age and screening becomes even more important in the later stages of life. For early detection of colorectal cancers, talk to your physician about the best screening for you and how often you should be screened. Common tests include the colonoscopy, where a physician will use the scope to view the colon and rectum while the patient is under the anesthesia. The physician will be looking for polyps that can develop into cancer, and they may remove them during the procedure.

Diet, physical activity, smoking, being overweight or obese, and family history all factor into your risk for development of colorectal cancers. The good news is that many of these risk factors can be managed with a healthy diet, adequate physical

activity, and abstaining from smoking. Diets high in fiber containing whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, but low in red meats and saturated fat help decrease the risk of certain cancers. To manage a healthy weight, limit your consumption of sugary drinks and processed foods that are high in fat and sugar yet low in fiber.

Physical activity is especially important when it comes to colorectal cancer prevention, with a 25% reduced risk of this cancer reported in physically active individuals in recent studies. Make a goal of at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Physical activity is anything that gets your heart rate above normal. Smoking increases the risk for many cancers including colorectal cancer. If you or someone you love is looking for help to quit smoking, call the New York State Smokers' Quit Line at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487).



In high risk individuals, there are some medications that have been found to reduce the risk of precancerous polyps or colon cancer. Some evidence links a reduced risk of polyps and colon cancer to regular use of aspirin or aspirin-like drugs. It's not yet clear what dose and what length of time would be needed to reduce the risk of colon cancer. Taking aspirin daily also has some inherent risks, including gastrointestinal bleeding and ulcers. Therefore, these options are generally reserved for people with a high risk of colon cancer.

We have talked in the past about the role antioxidants may play in the prevention of cancer. Antioxidants work by defending the body against dangerous substances known as free radicals.

Foods rich in antioxidants include fruits, vegetables, and certain types of tea. Specifically, berries are loaded with antioxidants. Blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, cranberries, and acai berries are all rich sources. Even though summer is a ways off, most supermarkets have a good selection of frozen berries. These are great to use for sprinkling on hot or cold cereals, baking muffins, or making smoothies.

Keep in mind bright colors when thinking about antioxidants. Deep red, oranges, and yellows are usually high in antioxidants. This can include carrots, peppers, tomatoes, and oranges.

One superfood that is getting a lot of press recently is the elderberry. Elderberry is a dark purple berry that has been used for centuries in folk medicine to fight infection and boost immunity. Elderberries need to be cooked before they are consumed as they contain a toxin when raw (sambunigrin). Raw elderberries can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and in large quantities serious illness.

According to the Mayo Clinic, antioxidants help with more than just cancer prevention. Free radicals may also play a role in the development of cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, and some eye afflictions. The Mayo Clinic details the following groups as being rich in antioxidants.

- * **Berries:** colorful berries, particularly blueberries and strawberries, appear to have heart healthy effects. Research suggests that they may lower blood pressure and positively influence blood vessel health.
- * **Curcumin:** curcumin is found in the spice turmeric, the main spice used to prepare curry. Curcumin is thought to have antioxidant properties, as it may decrease swelling and inflammation. Preliminary research suggests that curcumin may prevent cancer and possibly slow the spread of cancer.
- * **Cruciferous vegetables:** this family includes broccoli, cauliflower, Swiss chard, Brussels sprouts, kale, and turnips. Research suggests these foods have a protective effect in preventing prostate, colorectal, and lung cancers.
- * **Corn:** corn often gets a bad rap as a starchy vegetable that isn't good for diabetics. But yellow corn, and even cornmeal, contain substances known for strong antioxidant and anti-inflammation activities.

Foods, rather than supplements, are the safest way to increase antioxidant levels. Some high-dose antioxidant supplements, including beta carotene, Vitamin A, and Vitamin E, have been associated with health risks including an increased risk of overall mortality. No concerns have been raised about the safety of antioxidants consumed in foods.



This soup can be served hot or cold! Try is cold as a summertime treat with gingersnaps crumbled into each serving. Top with heavy cream!

Elderberry Soup

5 ounces elderberries

1 quart water, divided

1 1/2 tsp cornstarch

1/2 pound apples— peeled, cored, and diced

1 lemon peel

White sugar to taste

Place the elderberries in a pot with 2 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low,

and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat, puree in a blender until smooth, and return to the pot. In a small bowl, mix the cornstarch with 1 tbs of the puree, and stir into the pot to thicken.

In a separate pot, bring the apples and remaining water to a boil. Place the lemon peel in the pot. Reduce heat to low, and simmer 10 minutes. Remove peel. Mix the elderberry puree into the apple mixture, and sweeten to taste with sugar.

And April is National Pecan Month!

Caramel Pecan Pumpkin Pie

2 eggs

1/2 cup half and half

3/4 cup white sugar

1 tbs flour

1 tsp lemon zest

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

1/8 tsp ground allspice

9" pie shell

3/4 cup packed light brown sugar

1 cup chopped pecans

3 tbs butter

Beat the first 3 ingredients until sooth. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Pour into shell. Bake at 375 degrees for 25 minutes. Prepare the topping by mixing the brown sugar, pecans and butter until blended. Spoon over the top of the pie. Continue baking until the topping is golden and bubbly and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, about 20 more minutes.



HEAP

If you received HEAP last year but have not yet received an application for this year, please call our Office at 867-1195.

If you did not receive HEAP last year but want to apply this year, please call our Office at 867-1195.

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