

Prevention Matters: Cervical Cancer

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cervical cancer may be **one of the easiest female cancers to prevent**, thanks to vaccinations and screening tests.

A number of studies have shown that screening has helped to drastically decrease the number of deaths related to cervical cancer.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following for early detection of cervical cancer:

- Women aged 21-29 should have a Pap test every 3 years
- Women aged 30 and older should have a Pap test combined with a human papilloma virus (HPV) test every 5 years, until the age of 65
- Women who have abnormal screening results may need to have follow-up testing done 6 to 12 months after their initial screening
- Talk to your health care provider about your risk for cervical cancer. Some women are at higher risk for developing cervical cancer and may need to be screened more often

Vaccination

Vaccination against the HPV virus is an effective first step in prevention. Getting vaccinated early is the best strategy. The recommendation, according to the CDC, is that girls—and boys—get the HPV vaccine at 11 to 12 years old.

TYPES OF SCREENING TESTS

Pap test

The Pap test looks for precancers—cell changes on the cervix that might develop into cancer if they are not treated in a timely fashion.

Samples collected during the Pap test are examined for any abnormalities. If there are abnormal results, your health care provider will contact you to discuss whether or not additional tests should be done, and if any treatment is needed.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) DNA test

The HPV test is an important screening test for women aged 30 and over. Research has shown that HPV infection is associated with the majority of cases of cervical cancer. There are over 150 strains of HPV virus, but, only a few of them are linked to cervical cancer. Your health care provider will test you for these specific strains.

The HPV DNA test is performed in a similar fashion to a Pap test. Your doctor may be able to perform both tests during a routine pelvic exam.

Don't underestimate the importance of screening

If your Pap or HPV test detects pre-cervical cancer, you should be able to seek treatment before it progresses.

You and your health care provider can become partners in prevention of other gynecologic cancers, too. Always share information with your provider on any discomfort or significant changes you've noticed. □



Low-Impact Exercising

Physical activity can subject your body—especially your joints—to wear and tear.

This is especially true of “high-impact” exercises such as jogging, running, and sports, like basketball and tennis, that require a lot of jumping and running. Moderate-intensity, low-impact exercises, however, can offer many of the same health benefits as high-impact activities, while being easier on your body. Lower-impact exercises can also improve your fitness, while reducing your risk of injury.

Here are some ideas for low-impact exercising. Find the activity that suits you best; then check with your health care provider to double-check that you’re okay to begin your new routine:

WALKING – Walking is a low-impact and relatively stress-free movement that engages the muscles in your lower body in a natural way. Walking has the fringe benefit of helping your balance and relaxing your nervous system.

CYCLING – Hopping on a bike is a great way to exercise your lower body and improve your cardiovascular health. So, why not give it a try? Bike to work, bike to a friend’s house, or just bike on a trail.

SWIMMING – Swimming is a great low-impact exercise with many benefits, such as improving your cardiovascular health, strengthening your shoulders, and improving your lung function.

ROWING MACHINE – Rowing machines can be found at many fitness centers. They serve as a great way to work out your arms, back, legs, and core, while also spicing up your cardio routine.

KAYAKING – Rowing machine not enough fun? Want to get out on the water? Grab a kayak. Kayaking works your arms and core, while allowing you to burn up to 400 calories an hour.

TAI CHI – Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art, which, when practiced on a regular basis, improves strength, flexibility, concentration, and balance.

YOGA – Yoga is usually a low-impact exercise that improves flexibility, muscle strength and tone, cardiovascular endurance, and often your mood. Your best bet is to learn from a certified instructor in order to maximize the benefits and minimize your chances of getting injured.

PILATES – Pilates combines strength, flexibility, balance, and resistance with minimal impact on the joints. Pilates movements emphasize stretching, breathing, and flexing of muscles.

Choose your favorite low-impact exercise and get started today. You’ll start feeling—and looking—better in no time. □



“New Kid on the Block”

Starting a new job can sometimes feel like visiting a new country. One of the most important things you can do to assimilate into a new working environment, is to learn your company’s culture, politics, and personalities.

Being the “**new kid on the block**” doesn’t need to be an overwhelming experience. Here are some tips that can help you start things off “**on the right foot.**”

Get to know your new culture

- How do they like to communicate with one another? Phone? In-person meetings? Email?
- What hours do they work? Is it a strict 9-5 environment, or is it more informal?
- Do they go out for lunch frequently, or eat at their desks?
- How do they dress? Are you working in a casual, semi-formal, or formal environment?

Don’t be afraid to ask questions

- How are these types of situations handled around here?
- Who is the best resource in the office for this particular skill or product?

DO YOUR HOMEWORK. A good way to ease into your new culture is to be knowledgeable about your new company and how it fits into its industry. You’ve already read your company’s website in preparation for your interview; now check out its clients’ websites, and any recent news articles you can find that are associated your company and your field. You can also look at comparable companies and competitors for best practices related to your function within your new company.

GET THE LAY OF THE LAND.

Introduce yourself to people in other areas and departments and see how their work relates to yours

Check in with your supervisor

The first couple of weeks at a new job are important. In order to be sure that you’re meeting your team’s needs, check in with your supervisor. Here are some questions to ask:

- Is there anything I should be doing differently?
- Are there any ways I can improve?
- What kind of goals and tasks should I be accomplishing during my first few weeks here?

Give yourself time

During your first couple of weeks at a new job, mistakes are bound to happen. However, don’t let them phase you. Find out what you did wrong, and learn from your errors. Each week should bring you more proficiency and comfort with your job and your new culture.

Remember, the feeling of being the “**new kid on the block**” doesn’t last long. With time, patience, and experience, you’ll soon hit your stride. □



How to Avoid Excess Calories When Dining Out

Dining out can really throw you off your game if you're not careful. Part of the problem is that you're not in control of the portions or ingredients. That's why it's so important to make wise choices for a healthier you.

On the lighter side

Choose those things on the menu that have less fat and fewer calories. For example:

- Order steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes, instead of fried or sautéed dishes
- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, instead of 2% or whole milk
- If you are eating something that comes with dressing, sauce, or gravy, ask for it to be served on the side and only use it sparingly
- If you order pizza or flatbread, choose vegetables as toppings (instead of meat) and go easy on the cheese
- Avoid cream sauces and cheese toppings
- If you have a soup with your meal, choose one that has a vegetable-based broth instead one that's cream or meat based

Watch your portion size

You may find that your portion sizes are

leading you to eat more calories than you need.

Studies have shown that many people unintentionally consume more calories than their body needs, especially when they are served larger portions.

Here are some tips to help you watch your portion size:

- Order an appetizer or side dish as your main meal
- Share an entrée with a friend
- Set aside or pack half of your dish immediately upon being served

(You can often make another meal out of the leftovers.)

Add more fruits and vegetables

- Vegetables can be used to add color

and variety to salads, sandwiches, and other dishes

- If you order a meal that includes a side dish, choose salad or fruit, instead of chips or fries
- If you have an urge to snack, eat fruit instead of cookies or other sweets

Fruits and vegetables also have the advantage of adding more bulk to your meal, which helps you feel more satisfied.

Think about what you drink

Most people try to reduce their caloric intake by avoiding certain types of food. However, you can also reduce your caloric intake by being mindful of the types of beverages you drink. You may be surprised to find out how many calories you consume.

Beverages such as sodas, juices, and alcohol have extra calories that you don't need. Water, tea, or coffee, on the other hand, can have low to no extra calories. □