

A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO EARLY DETECTION OF COMMON AILMENTS

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Prevention of diseases and ailments, that occur only or mostly in women, starts at a young age. Three common diseases and ailments found in women include breast cancer, osteoporosis, and hypertension.

According to the National Cancer Institute, breast cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the United States. Nevertheless, there has been a decline in the number of deaths in recent years, especially in younger women. This decrease stresses the importance of monthly breast self-exams. Women over 40 should have an annual mammogram and women 20-39 should have a mammogram every three years.

Self-breast exams should be done after your period ends. During or just before you have your period, your breasts are more likely to be lumpy from natural fluids inside of your breast. To perform a self-breast exam, you should first lie on your back. Use the tip of the first three fingers of the hand opposite the breast that you are examining. Gently press on your breast in a circular motion.

Osteoporosis is a disease that thins and weakens your bones gradually over a long period of time. Prevention of this disease starts during teenage years when adult bone mass is forming. Approximately 99 percent of the calcium in your body is stored in healthy bone.

Increasing your intake of calcium, doing weight-bearing exercises regularly, and giving up smoking are all ways to prevent

osteoporosis. Milk and green leafy vegetables are excellent sources of calcium.

According to the American Heart Association, 25 million American women have hypertension, or high blood pressure, which causes nearly 700,000 deaths a year.

Hypertension is more common in adults, particularly African Americans, overweight people, people who drink two ounces or more of alcohol daily, and women who are taking oral contraceptives.

There is no cure for hypertension, but it can be controlled by reducing weight, alcohol consumption, stress, and increasing calcium intake and consumption of fruits and vegetables. This disease left untreated increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

When women turn 18, or when sexual activity begins, an annual Pap smear test should be done by a gynecologist. Pap smear is a method for the earlier detection of uterine cancer. The test is painless and involves taking a sample of cells, which are scraped from the cervix, and having them examined for abnormal cells that could indicate uterine cancer.

For further information, students can visit the campus infirmary and talk to one of the nurses and/or pick up pamphlets, or visit www.ivillage.com, a Web site directed toward women.

A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO BECOMING HAPPILY FIT

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Adequate nutrition and exercise is important for everyone, but are young women meeting the standards set by health officials? Chances are many are not, and this can affect their health when they are older.

Proper nutrition is one key factor in remaining healthy. If you stick to the recommended servings from the five food groups stated in the USDA Food Guide Pyramid, you are almost guaranteed a balanced diet with enough minerals and vitamins.

Calcium is an important part of your everyday diet. Young women should get at least 1,200mg of calcium a day. Many women don't drink milk because they don't like the taste or because it is fattening. Skim milk has 0 fat and one cup equals 300mg of calcium. Not too bad, huh?

Many young women have good intentions to eat well, but sometimes the Burger King, Wendy's, or McDonald's down the street from campus is too tempting. Well, there's good news. There is a way to still eat healthy without sacrificing fast food.

Do not go for the double cheeseburger or whopper. Instead, opt for a small hamburger or roast beef sandwich. The equivalent is three ounces of protein, which is the perfect size for a meal.

Remember to add a salad. Most fast food restaurants have side salads. If they do not, ask for extra vegetables on your sandwich.

Avoid fried foods. If you opt for fish or fried chicken sandwiches, you will end up with more fat and calories than a burger. This is because these sandwiches have been cooked in hot oil and soak up the extra calories. If you absolutely have to have french-fries, go for the smallest size available.

Stay away from soft drinks, which are loaded with empty calories. Go for milk or water instead. Skim milk is full of calcium, riboflavin, and Vitamin D.

Exercise is on the mind of many female students, but between classes and jobs, not too many women have time to go to the campus fitness center. For females that do not live on campus, local health clubs and gyms can be pricey.

Here are a few exercises women can do in the comfort of their home or dorm room that take little time and don't cost a thing. These exercises focus on three areas that give

many women trouble: the thighs, abs, and butt.

Thighs: Lean head, shoulders, lower back, and butt against a wall, with feet about 18 inches in front.

1) Keeping knees hip-width apart, slide down the wall until you are in a chairlike position. Your legs should not go any lower than a right angle to the floor.

2) Hold position for 30 seconds; work up to five minutes.

Abs: The basic crunch.

1) Lie on back with knees bent, feet hip-width apart and pressed flat to the floor. Place hands behind your head so that thumbs are behind your ears (don't lace fingers together). Hold elbows out wide and tuck chin slightly toward chest.

2) Lift head, neck, and shoulder blades up and off the floor. Hold for a moment at the top, then slowly lower. Do one to three sets, eight to 15 repetitions per set.

Butt:

1) Get down on knees and forearms.

2) Starting with the left, bend leg at a 90-degree angle, then flex foot and lift toward ceiling. Being careful not to move pelvis, pulse foot three to four inches toward the ceiling. After 15 reps, switch legs.

For an alternative choice in exercise, many women are turning to yoga. Yoga is a physical and spiritual practice with roots in ancient India. The best way to try yoga without taking expensive classes is to buy a videotape and workout in your dorm room or living room.

The campus also sponsors many activities for young women to get involved with, including walk-a-thons, golf, and tennis. Students can contact the student center for upcoming activities.

No matter how well you eat, or how fit you are, the most important thing to keep in mind is to be happy with yourself.

For more information on Health and Fitness, visit www.ivillage.com.

TO ALL WOMEN:

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE UNIQUELY BEAUTIFUL. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO MEASURE YOUR LEVEL OF WORTHINESS TO ANYBODY'S STANDARDS. "I WILL PRAISE YOU, FOR I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE..." PSALMS 139:14.

What Counts as 1 Serving?

The amount you eat may be more than one serving. For example, a dinner portion of spaghetti would count as 2 or 3 servings.

Bread, Cereal, Rice, & Pasta Group

1 slice of bread
½ cup of cooked rice or pasta
½ cup of cooked cereal
1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal

Vegetable Group

½ cup of chopped raw or cooked vegetables
1 cup of leafy raw vegetables

Fruit Group

1 piece of fruit or melon wedge
½ cup of juice
½ cup of canned fruit
¼ cup of dried fruit

Milk, Yogurt, & Cheese Group

1 cup of milk or yogurt
1½ ounces of natural cheese
2 ounces of process cheese

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, & Nuts Group

2½ to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish
Count ½ cup of cooked beans, or 1 egg, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter as 1 ounce of lean meat

Fats, Oils, & Sweets

LIMIT CALORIES FROM THESE especially if you need to lose weight

How Many Servings Do You Need Each Day?

	Women & some older adults	Children, teen girls, active women, most men	Teen boys & active men
Calorie level*	about 1,600	about 2,200	about 2,800
Bread group	6	9	11
Vegetable group	3	4	5
Fruit group	2	3	4
Milk group	2-3**	2-3**	2-3**
Meat group	2	2	3
	for a total of 5 ounces	for a total of 6 ounces	for a total of 7 ounces

*These are the calorie levels if you choose lowfat, lean foods from the 5 major food groups and use foods from the fats, oils and sweets group sparingly.

**Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, teenagers, and young adults to age 24 need 3 servings

A Closer Look at Fat and Added Sugars

The small tip of the Pyramid shows fats, oils and sweets. These are foods such as salad dressings, cream, butter, margarine, sugars, soft drinks, candies, and sweet desserts. Alcoholic beverages are also part of this group. These foods provide calories but few vitamins and minerals. Most people should go easy on foods from this group.

Some fat or sugar symbols are shown in the other food groups. That's to remind you that some foods in these groups can also be high in fat and added sugars. When choosing foods for a healthful diet, consider the fat and added sugars in your choices from all the food groups, not just fats, oils and sweets from the Pyramid tip.

