

HERE'S
TO YOUR
HEALTH!

Women's Health

Staying Healthy at any Age

Staying healthy is the most important thing a woman can do for herself. Good health is a lifelong process and woman at all ages can develop good habits to ensure a healthy, productive life.



Health tip:

More than half of menstruating teens have cramp-like pain. To reduce this pain, a woman should:

- *Take NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as Advil, Nuprin or Motrin to reduce the pain. NSAIDs are more effective than aspirin or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for menstrual cramps.*
- *Exercise moderately to speed blood flow and elevate mood.*
- *Rest using a hot water bottle or heating pad on the abdomen to reduce the cramping.*

Teens

The teen years are a time of both physical and emotional growth. This is an exciting time for young women as their bodies change and they grow into adulthood. The physical changes that accompany the beginning of monthly menstruation combined with the stress of friendships, school and other activities can seem overwhelming for teens. Teens who develop good health habits now will see the benefits throughout the entire life.

What about Monthly Periods?

Some teens feel it days before they get it and others hardly are aware that they have it. Many young women react differently to the hormonal swings of the menstrual cycle. Just before menstruation begins, levels of the female hormones estrogen and progesterone are low. This is a time when some women may feel bloated or have cramps, sore breasts, headaches or feel tired. A few days after a woman's period starts, she begins to feel better as the hormone levels begin to rise.



Age 20-40

As women enter the primary childbearing years, healthy behaviors gain importance. If a woman is planning to become pregnant, she should be in the best condition possible to help ensure a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Folic acid is essential in reducing the risk of a fetus developing neural tube defects such as Spina Bifida. Folic acid and folate are both versions of a water-soluble B vitamin. Folate can be found in foods such as spinach, dry beans, peas, oranges, broccoli and asparagus. Folic acid is added to many foods including breakfast cereal, flour, rice, pasta and bread.



Health tip:

All women of childbearing age should take 400 micrograms of folic acid each day. This can be obtained in a women's multivitamin. Women who know they are pregnant should have an intake of 600 micrograms each day in a prenatal vitamin.



**Tri-County
Health
Department**

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Health tip:

Adding calcium through your diet or by taking supplements (1000 mg/day) and magnesium (400 IU/day) in the second half of your menstrual cycle has been shown to reduce PMS symptoms.



Health tip:

Taking a tepid or cool shower before going to bed may help prevent night sweats that disrupt sleep. Also wear light bedclothes, use thin cotton or wool blankets and sleep in a cool room.



Health tip:

Low cost flu shots are available each year beginning in November at a variety of locations including the Visiting Nurses Association, local grocery stores, shopping areas, and retirement communities.

What is PMS?

Four out of ten women experience some symptoms of Pre-menstrual syndrome. For many women symptoms such as bloating, weight gain, breast tenderness, food cravings or mood swings are annoying. For a few women, these symptoms can be quite serious and interfere with daily life and personal relationships.

To reduce PMS symptoms:

- Exercise regularly (three to five 20 minute sessions per week). Add an extra 20 minutes on your PMS days.
- Do not skip meals. Eat a balanced diet that is low in refined sugars.
- Try to get enough sleep.
- If you smoke, quit.
- Reduce caffeine, alcohol and salty food intake.

Age 40-60

Good habits—avoiding tobacco, eating a nutritious diet, exercising regularly and obtaining routine medical care and mammograms—can help you avoid chronic illnesses as you age. This is a time when a woman’s body, interests, responsibilities and lifestyle begin to change.

Menopause is one of the major turning points in a woman’s life. Some women dread reaching menopause while others look forward to it. Since you will likely live a third of your life after menopause, good planning is important. The average age for menopause is 51, but age and symptoms may be different among women.

The most common symptoms of menopause are hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, vaginal dryness, difficulty concentrating and weight gain.

To relieve hot flashes:

- Exercise regularly
- Reduce intake of tea, alcohol, hot beverages, and spicy foods
- Wear thin layers of all-cotton clothes that can be removed

Age 60 and older



At this stage in a woman’s life, the top priority is to stay healthy and independent for as long as possible.

Nutrition, exercise and regular medical examinations are very important. Each year, many women needlessly become ill or may die from the effects of flu and pneumonia. Women in this age group should receive annual immunizations to prevent these illnesses.

At any age

Building strong bones, especially before the age of 30, can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis. There are several steps you can take to prevent osteoporosis.

- Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D
- Do regular weight-bearing exercise
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle with no smoking or excessive alcohol
- Have bone density testing or take medications when appropriate.



Health tip:

Depending on your age, women should have a daily calcium intake between 1000 and 1300 mg/day to help prevent osteoporosis. If you have difficulty getting enough calcium from the foods you eat, consider taking a calcium supplement to make up the difference.