

## Staying Healthy Today and for the Future

### 1. Accidents

- More young women die in motor vehicle accidents than any other cause. Wear seatbelts, don't text and drive, don't drink and drive (or go with those who do).

### 2. Depression - If life is getting you down, let us know.

- Major causes of depression include being in an abusive relationship, being a victim of physical or sexual abuse in the past, or having had an abortion or other traumatic experience. Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common cause of death in women.

### 3. Drugs

- Poisonings, including alcohol and drug overdoses, is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death for women 15-24. Whether it is alcohol or prescription meds, it is much easier to not start than to try to stop. If you are hooked, ask about ways to get your life back.

### 4. Sexual health

- A multi-vitamin with folate can help prevent birth defects.  
- Discuss birth control options if you are sexually active and do not want to get pregnant. Consider whether your partner wants you or just your body and whether he is likely to stick around if you are pregnant.  
- Sexually transmitted diseases can damage your chances of having children someday when you want them. The more partners you expose yourself to, the greater the chances of picking something up. Abstain or stay in a relationship with only one partner. Condoms are far from perfect protection.

### 5. Exercise

- Exercise is good for every part of you- improves energy, makes you feel good, keeps your bones strong and helps keep your weight in check.  
- You don't have to go to the gym or get hot and sweaty—even a 15-20 minute walk at lunchtime is a good start.

### 6. Keep your heart healthy

- **Don't smoke.** Also keeps your teeth white, avoids ashtray breath, makes breathing enjoyable, helps prevent cervical and lung cancer PLUS keeps money in your pocket.  
- **Blood pressure** – Have it checked yearly; keep it down by avoiding sodium in diet (also helps prevent water retention)  
- **Cholesterol** – only needs checked if you are obese  
- **Diabetes**- check every 3 years if obese or if runs in family

### 7. Cancer

- If it runs in the family, you may need tests earlier or more often than recommended for those at average risk  
- **Cervical cancer**- Pap tests are now recommended only every 3 years starting at age 21. Even better than catching cancer early is preventing it- most all cervical cancer is caused by the HPV virus which is sexually transmitted. Consider being immunized against HPV and minimize the number of sexual partners you have in your lifetime.  
- **Breast cancer**- Monthly self-breast exams are no longer recommended but it is good to know your body and have abnormal lumps checked out.  
- **Skin cancer**- Avoid tanning beds. Wear sunscreen whenever in the sun. Have any moles checked that change in size, shape or color  
- Eat a **healthy diet**, low in saturated fat and high in fruits and vegetables. No vitamin or supplement has been shown to be better than a good diet.

### 8. Bones

- Build strong bones today so you don't have weak bones when you get old. Get 1000mg/day of calcium and 400 units of Vitamin D each day through diet or supplements

## **Recommendations for Healthy Living**

1. Don't smoke. Ask if you need help quitting.
2. Maintain a healthy weight.
3. Eat healthy foods. Eat lots of fruits, vegetables and fiber. Eat less animal fat and processed foods. Drink lots of water and avoid sweetened beverages.
4. Exercise. Get on your feet! Work up to walking or moderate exercise 30 minutes at least 5 days a week.
5. Listen to your body-- when things aren't right, get it checked out
6. Get enough sleep and avoid over the counter sleep aides
7. Get help if you are in an abusive relationship
8. Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day (if over 21). Ask for help if alcohol has become a problem for you.
9. Let us know if you feel depressed on most days for more than 2 weeks or if you feel like life isn't worth living.

## **Prevent problems now**

### **Immunizations**

- HPV vaccine against cervical cancer (up to age 26)
- Meningitis vaccine if in high school or college
- Tetanus-pertussis – every 10 years
- Flu shot- yearly

### **Get tested**

- Chlamydia (yearly) + HIV test if sexually active
- Cholesterol- if overweight or heart disease in family
- Blood sugar- if overweight or diabetes in family

### **Cancer screening**

- Pap test- every 3 years starting at 21
- HPV testing not recommended until age 30

# ***Our Goal... Your Good Health***

**Recommendations for Healthy Living  
from Your Family Physician**

## **Women 15 to 29**

**Forum Family Medicine  
Specializing in You and Your Family**

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