

## Top Threats to Your Health and What You Can Do

### 1. Heart Disease and Stroke – More women die of heart disease and stroke than all cancers combined

- **Don't smoke.** If you do, quitting cuts your chance of a heart attack in half after 1 year

- **Blood pressure** – check yearly and treat if high (over 140/90)

- **Cholesterol** – check every 5 years, more often if high

- **Diabetes**- check every 3 years if at risk or if runs in family

- **Know your risk**- check out [Reynoldsriskscore.com](http://Reynoldsriskscore.com) and [westernstroke.org/personalstrokerisk1.xls](http://westernstroke.org/personalstrokerisk1.xls)

- if your heart risk is over 20% or if you have diabetes, kidney problems or have had heart problems, take a statin cholesterol medicine

- if your stroke risk is over 8-11% and you don't have risk factors for stomach bleeding, take a 81mg aspirin daily

- **Know the symptoms** and don't wait to call for help

A heart attack can cause pain, heaviness, or pressure in the chest, but half of women get no chest pain. Shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness and sweating can also occur.

A stroke or brain attack can start as sudden weakness on one side of the body, difficulty speaking, understanding, or walking. If you think you may be having a heart attack or stroke, call 911; the longer symptoms occur, the more damage can be done

### 2. Cancer

- **Breast cancer**- Have a mammogram every 2 years (doing one yearly doesn't decrease risk of dying from breast cancer but does increase the chance of false positive tests).

-**Lung cancer**- Avoid cigarette smoke

If you have smoked the equivalent of 1 pack/day for 30 years, discuss the option of a low-dose CT scan to screen for lung cancer

- **Colon cancer**- Colonoscopy (telescope exam of the large intestine) starting at 50 and repeated every 10 years (if normal can catch small growths before they can turn cancerous)

- **Cervical cancer**- Pap tests are no longer needed if: 1) you have had a hysterectomy for reasons other than cancer; 2) you have had 3 normal paps in the past 10 years; 3) you have had 2 normal paps with negative HPV test in past 5 years

- **Skin cancer**- Wear a hat and sunscreen whenever in the sun; have 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 decrease the risk of cancer.

### 3. Chronic Lung Disease

- **Quit smoking.** Smoking causes earlier and more severe emphysema in women compared to men. It is never too late to stop ongoing lung damage. Ask about options to help you quit.

- Get treated if you have symptoms (shortness of breath, chronic cough, wheezing)

- Get a yearly flu shot and immunization against pneumonia

### 4. Hip fracture /accidents

- Minimize tripping hazards in your home

- Have a bone density test; consider medication if your risk of a hip fracture is over 3%- see [shef.ac.uk/FRAX/](http://shef.ac.uk/FRAX/)

- Get 1200mg/day of calcium and 800 units of Vitamin D each day through diet or supplements (take with food)

### 5. Depression and Suicide

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

### 6. Plan for the end of life

- Have a Living Will and/or Power of Attorney for Health

## 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
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. Know your medications- bring them to appointments. Check to see if your OTC meds and supplements are safe
7. Get enough sleep and avoid over the counter sleep aides
8. Beware of falls- get grab bars and handrails if needed
9. Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day. Ask for help if alcohol has become a problem for you.
10. Let us know if you feel depressed for more than 2 weeks or if you feel like not living anymore.

### Prevent problems now

#### Immunizations

- tetanus-pertussis – every 10 years
- flu shot- yearly
- pneumonia vaccine- one time at 65
- shingles vaccine – one time

#### Blood tests

- cholesterol- at least every 5 years
- blood sugar- if overweight or diabetes in family
- Hepatitis C test- one time for all baby boomers

#### Cancer screening

- Colonoscopy- every 10 yrs or as recommended
- Pap test (if haven't had 3 normal in past 10 years)
- Mammogram- every 2 years covered by Medicare

**Bone density test** – at 65 or sooner if at risk

# Our Goal... Your Good Health

Recommendations for Healthy Living  
from Your Family Physician

Women 65 and older

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