

# WellNet Interactive's Healthy Newsletter

September 2011

## Guidelines for Early Detection of Cancer

### American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer

*The American Cancer Society recommends these screening guidelines for most adults:*

#### Breast cancer

- Yearly mammograms are recommended starting at age 40 and continuing for as long as a woman is in good health
- Clinical breast exam about every 3 years for women in their 20s and 30s and every year for women 40 and over
- Women should know how their breasts normally look and feel and report any breast change promptly to their health care provider. Breast self-exam is an option for women starting in their 20s.

#### Colorectal cancer and polyps

Beginning at age 50, both men and women should follow one of these testing schedules:

#### Tests that find polyps and cancer

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years\*, or
- Colonoscopy every 10 years, or
- Double-contrast barium enema every 5 years\*, or
- CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years\*

#### Cervical cancer

- All women should begin cervical cancer screening about 3 years after they begin having vaginal intercourse, but no later than 21 years old. Screening should be done every year with the regular Pap test or every 2 years using the newer liquid-based Pap test.
- Beginning at age 30, women who have had 3 normal Pap test results in a row may get screened every 2 to 3 years. Women older than 30 may also get screened every 3 years with either the conventional or liquid-based Pap test, plus the human papilloma virus (HPV) test.
- Women 70 years of age or older who have had 3 or more normal Pap tests in a row and no abnormal Pap test results in the last 10 years may choose to stop having Pap tests.
- Women who have had a total hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix) may also choose to stop having Pap tests, unless the surgery was done as a treatment for cervical cancer or pre-cancer. Women who have had a hysterectomy without removal of the cervix should continue to have Pap tests.

#### Prostate cancer

- The American Cancer Society recommends that men make an informed decision with their doctor about whether to be tested for prostate cancer. Research has not yet proven that the potential benefits of testing outweigh the harms of testing and treatment. The American Cancer Society believes that men should not be tested without learning about what we know and don't know about the risks and possible benefits of testing and treatment.
- Starting at age 50, talk to your doctor about the pros and cons of testing so you can decide if testing is the right choice for you. If you are African American or have a father or brother who had prostate cancer before age 65, you should have this talk with your doctor starting at age 45. If you decide to be tested, you should have the PSA blood test with or without a rectal exam. How often you are tested will depend on your PSA level. For more information, please see our document, [Prostate Cancer: Early Detection](#).

#### Take control of your health and reduce your cancer risk.

- Stay away from tobacco.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Get moving with regular physical activity.
- Eat healthy with plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink (if you drink at all).
- Protect your skin.
- Know yourself, your family history, and your risks.
- Have regular check-ups and cancer screening tests.

For information on how to reduce your cancer risk and other questions about cancer, please call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit us online at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).