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HealthyLiving

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month



For the past 20 years, more people have been surviving colon cancer, and fewer people have been dying from it. This is thanks to improvements in colon cancer screening and treatment. Screening can find growths called polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. And screening can find the disease earlier, when it's easier to treat. The American Cancer Society wants to make sure you know how you can lower your chances of getting colon cancer.

Most people who are diagnosed with colon cancer are older than 50. But some people have certain risk factors that may make them more likely to develop it and at an earlier age. This may mean they should get a screening test earlier, or have the test more often than other people.

One risk factor is family history. As many as 1 in 5 people who develop colon cancer have other family members – especially parents, brothers and sisters, or children – who've had it. Family history of other colon problems can also increase risk. They include pre-cancerous polyps, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, and hereditary syndromes called familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer (HNPCC).

If you have had any of these colon problems, colon cancer, or Type 2 diabetes, you may be more likely to develop colon cancer.

Diet, weight, and exercise also affect the risk for colon cancer. You can help lower your risk by eating more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, and less red meat (beef, lamb, or pork) and less processed meat (hot dogs and some luncheon meat). You can also help lower your risk for colon cancer by getting more exercise and staying at a healthy weight. Men should limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks a day, and women to no more than 1 drink a day. Smoking also increases the risk, so try to kick the habit.



CLICK HERE for help in organizing your family colon health history.

Breast-feeding Best for Mother and Baby

Breast milk is the perfect food for babies. It's always available in just the right amount, at just the right temperature, and at just the right price – free! In fact, the US Surgeon General's office estimates that mothers who breast-feed can save as much as \$1,500 on formula in the baby's first year.

Breast milk is also rich in nutrients and antibodies. It contains the ideal amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein, and changes as the baby grows and develops.

In addition, babies who are breast-fed get fewer ear and respiratory infections, are less likely to get asthma, and may be protected from sudden infant death syndrome, according to the Surgeon General. Mother and baby also lower their chances of ever developing Type 2 diabetes. Nursing mothers may lower their risk for breast and ovarian cancer.

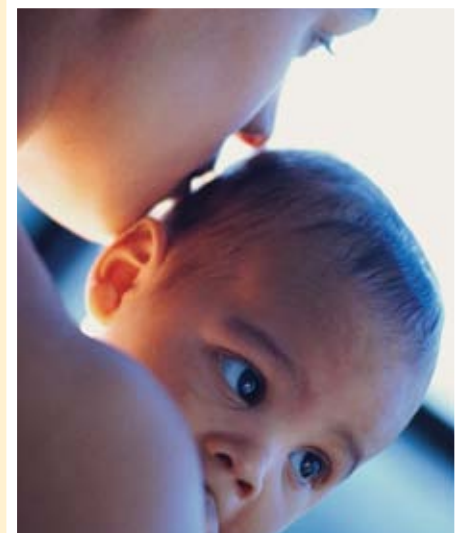
And babies who are breast-fed for at least 6 months are less likely to become obese.

Three out of four mothers in the US start out breast-feeding, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But after 6 months, less than half are still breast-feeding, and only 13% are feeding their babies only breast milk.

Several prominent organizations of health professionals recommend that infants be breast-fed for at least 12 months. And in the first 6 months, be given no foods or liquids other than breast milk, not even water.

The Surgeon General is calling for communities and health care systems to provide more support programs for nursing mothers, for employers to expand programs for women to feed their babies or pump their breast milk during work hours, and for families

to give new mothers the support and encouragement they need to breast-feed.



[CLICK HERE](#) for an easy-to-read guide to breast-feeding from the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Shooting to Get Fit? Try Basketball



If your closest brush with basketball is picking brackets for March Madness, it may be time to get a little more hands-on with this calorie-burning game.

Whether you choose to play with a team on a court or with the family on

the driveway, basketball requires little equipment beyond a basketball and a hoop. A 160-pound person can burn about 600 calories during a 1-hour game, but the key is to stay active the entire time. Even if you're not personally dribbling the ball toward the hoop, try to keep moving and stay near the ball – either to accept a pass or help block the opposing team from stealing the ball, or to steal it for your own team.

While basketball offers an action-packed workout, it is also an injury-prone sport – primarily because it involves quick spurts of intense activity such as sprinting and jumping, which could lead to torn or sprained ligaments. It's important to warm up and stretch before and after games, and to play on an even, solid surface. As always, before starting any

new exercise routine, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor about whether it's the right workout for you.

While we have you thinking about basketball, it seems like a good time to talk about the Coaches vs. Cancer program. This nationwide effort unites basketball coaches, their teams, and communities around the country in the common cause to end cancer. Since the program began, participants have raised millions through year-round educational efforts and fundraising events.



[CLICK HERE](#) to find out how you can get involved with Coaches vs. Cancer.

Make Meals Bright to Eat Right

Liven up your meals and get lots of varied vitamins and nutrients by including colorful fruits and vegetables. American Cancer Society guidelines recommend that you eat at least 2 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day. You can achieve this easily, without even measuring, if you just remember to make half your plate fruits and vegetables every time you eat a meal or snack. Here's a rainbow of options to get you started from the American Dietetic Association:



- Green fruits and vegetables often contain antioxidants and may help promote healthy vision and reduce cancer risk. Try avocados, kiwis, limes, artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, green beans, green peppers, and dark, leafy greens such as spinach.
- Orange and deep yellow foods contain nutrients that promote healthy vision and immunity, and reduce the risk of some cancers. They include apricots, cantaloupes, grapefruits, mangos, papayas, carrots, yellow peppers, and sweet potatoes.
- Purple and blue foods may have antioxidant and anti-aging benefits and may help with memory, urinary tract health, and reduced cancer risks. This group includes blackberries, blueberries, plums, raisins, eggplants, and purple cabbage.
- Red foods may help maintain a healthy heart, vision and immunity, and may reduce cancer risks. Good choices include cherries, cranberries, pomegranates, red grapes, watermelon, beets, red peppers, rhubarb, and tomatoes.
- White and brown fruits and veggies may contain nutrients that promote heart health and reduce cancer risks. Try bananas, brown pears, dates, cauliflower, parsnips, and turnips.

 [CLICK HERE](#) for recipes that use many of these healthy foods.

Reap Benefits with Yard Work

Spring gardening now pays off with a beautiful yard later; and it's good exercise, too.

Raking leaves, pushing a mower, and bagging grass clippings and leaves can all get your heart pumping. So can hauling bags of soil or fertilizer and shoveling and tilling your garden plot. Spreading mulch or pine straw can be a great workout for your arms *and* legs. And your shoulders may feel the burn from planting seeds or trimming shrubs.

Just remember to warm up beforehand as you would with any exercise and check with your doctor, especially if you're not used to exertion. And follow these safety tips:

- Protect yourself from injury with long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and sturdy shoes.
- Protect yourself from sunburn with sunscreen and a broad-brimmed hat.
- Drink lots of water.
- Before using power equipment, pick up loose objects that could get caught and cause injury.
- When using power equipment, wear eye protectors and no loose clothing or jewelry that could get caught.
- Do not allow young children to use power equipment. Teenagers should be supervised by an adult.

If you planted daffodils in the fall, they may begin blooming soon. Daffodils are the first flower of spring, and also the American Cancer Society's symbol of hope for a world free of cancer.

 [CLICK HERE](#) to make someone's day by sending daffodils.

Coping with Illness during Natural Disasters


The federal government declared about 100 major disasters in 2011 because of floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and fires. Thousands of people had to evacuate their homes to stay safe. For people with cancer and other serious illnesses, this can be especially challenging.

If you or a loved one is being treated for an illness and must leave your home or treatment center, you may have trouble getting the help you need. The experts at the American Cancer Society have thought about this, and put together some tips to help you.

- If you have to evacuate your home, take your medications, proof of insurance, and the names and phone numbers of your doctor and treatment center.
- If you go to a temporary shelter and there are health care professionals on site, meet with them right away to tell them about your condition and any help you need.
- If no health care professionals are on site, ask someone in charge to call a local hospital. If you have cancer, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345.
- If you are taking medications and have

them with you, keep taking them. If you don't have your medications, or don't know how to take them, get in touch with a pharmacy or doctor. If you don't have them with you, write down anything you remember about them.

- As soon as you can, contact your doctor and insurance company to tell them where you're staying.

 [CLICK HERE](#) for more information on how to cope with cancer after a natural disaster.

Yummy Yogurt

Yogurt is made from milk, when living organisms (a kind of good bacteria) convert the milk's sugar into lactic acid. That gives yogurt its unique flavor and texture. Look for yogurt marked with the "live and active cultures" seal. Those good bacteria can help strengthen your immune system.

Strengthening your immune system can be delicious! Just try our recipes for fruit and yogurt smoothies from the American Cancer Society's *The Great American Eat-Right Cookbook*. Each recipe makes 2 servings.



[CLICK HERE](#) to order this and other great books from the American Cancer Society bookstore.

Strawberry-Banana Smoothie

- 1 small banana
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 (6-ounce) container nonfat plain or vanilla yogurt
- ½ cup apple or orange juice

In a blender, combine banana, strawberries, yogurt, and juice. Process until smooth.



Raspberry-Peach Yogurt Smoothie

- 1 cup frozen raspberries
- 1 cup frozen peaches
- 1 (6-ounce) container nonfat plain or vanilla yogurt
- ¾ cup apple juice

In a blender, combine raspberries, peaches, yogurt, and juice. Process until smooth.



Blueberry-Peach-Pomegranate Smoothie

- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- 1 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup pomegranate or pomegranate-blueberry juice
- ½ cup frozen peaches

In a blender, combine blueberries, yogurt, juice, and peaches. Process until smooth.



In the Next Issue: • Meet Your Non-Physician Providers: NPs, CNMs, and PAs • Tips for a Healthier Easter Basket • Can Coffee Help Fight Cancer?

Articles contributed by Stacy Simon.

To sign up for this e-newsletter, please [CLICK HERE](#). To learn more about American Cancer Society programs, services, and upcoming events, please call 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.



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