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In This Issue: • Horseback Riding • Low-fat Substitutes for Mayonnaise • Easy-to-Read Health Information

HealthyLiving

Ovarian and Prostate Cancers: What to Ask the Doctor at a Routine Visit

September is both National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. It's a good time to remember to ask your doctor about specific symptoms that could be linked to these cancers. Finding cancer early gives you a better chance of treating it successfully.

Ovarian Cancer:

Sometimes, bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, trouble eating as much as you're used to, and having to urinate more often are associated with ovarian cancer. But usually, women who have these symptoms do not have cancer. The doctor can help you figure out what might be causing these symptoms.

Ask the doctor about your risk for ovarian cancer. Women with a mother, sister, or daughter who has had ovarian cancer have a higher risk. So do women with a gene mutation called BRCA1 or BRCA2. Other factors include obesity, using fertility drugs for longer than 1 year, using estrogen replacement therapy after menopause, and having had breast cancer.

If you have any of these risk factors or symptoms, ask the doctor if you should get special testing to check for ovarian cancer. Women without symptoms or risk factors are not usually tested for ovarian cancer.

Prostate Cancer:

Blood in the urine, pain or difficulty urinating, and trouble having an erection can be symptoms of prostate cancer. But they can also be caused by something else that has nothing to do with cancer. If you have these symptoms, you will need to be tested to know what is causing them.

If you don't have symptoms, you should talk to your doctor about whether screening for prostate cancer is right for you. If you're African American or have family members with prostate cancer, you should find out about screening when you're 40 or 45, and decide whether to have it done. Other men should find out about screening at age 50.

Ask the doctor to explain what the test can and can't tell you, and what choices you will have to make after you get the results. This information can help you figure out whether you want to be tested.



CLICK HERE for a brochure about prostate cancer testing.

Making Health Information Easier to Understand



A lot of information you get about your health needs may be hard to understand. The names of drugs and diseases are often long and confusing. Instructions on prescription labels and from health insurance companies are sometimes complicated. And advice from doctors, medical Web sites, and other media can be hard to follow.

According to the US Department of Education, most English-speaking adults in the United States have trouble understanding and using the everyday health information they need. A lot of this health information is in writing, and that puts people who don't read well at a disadvantage. Studies show that people who have trouble understanding health information may get sick more often, may go to the hospital more often, and may get fewer tests to check for cancer and other serious diseases.

A lot of government and private groups are working together on a plan to make health information easier to use. One result is that many health and medical groups now have materials designed especially for people who want information that's easier to read. Here is a list of just some of the Web sites designed to be easy to read, or that have easy-to-read sections, starting with our own American Cancer Society pages.

- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [FamilyDoctor, the Web site of the American Academy of Family Physicians](#)
- [US Food and Drug Administration](#)
- [Healthfinder, from the US Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [MedlinePlus, from the National Institutes of Health and the National Library of Medicine](#)
- [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#)
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#)



[CLICK HERE](#) for easy-to-read cancer information from the American Cancer Society or visit cancer.org/easyreading.

Add Resistance for a Well-rounded Workout

Strength training is an important part of a healthy exercise program. It provides stress to the muscles, making them stronger over time. But that doesn't mean you have to reach for the heavy barbells. You can improve your strength with just two or three 20- to 30-minute sessions a week without expensive equipment. For example:

- Use your own body weight. Do push-ups, pull-ups, abdominal crunches, and leg squats.
- Fill a plastic bottle with water or sand to make a hand-held weight.
- Try resistance tubes or bands, which are inexpensive and easy to find.

A regular strength-training program can help you replace the muscle mass that everybody loses with age. Other benefits include:

- Making bones stronger and reducing your risk of osteoporosis
- Helping your body burn calories better, which helps you lose weight
- Improving your balance, to protect you from falls
- Easing symptoms from some chronic conditions like arthritis, back pain, depression, and diabetes
- Giving you more energy

It's always a good idea to talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program, especially if you have any health conditions. Begin slowly and increase weight and repetitions gradually.



[CLICK HERE](#) for more tips on getting active.

Get a Healthy Start to Your Morning!

How many times have you heard it? Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. You need nourishment for energy and you need to replenish fluids that you've lost over the night's sleep. And even though mornings can be hectic with getting ready for a busy day, it's important that the first meal of the day be a healthy one. There are lots of ideas for quick and easy foods to get your family's day started off right:

- Try a smoothie: Blend your favorite fruit with milk or yogurt. You can pour it into to-go cups if time's really tight.
- Fresh berries, yogurt, granola: Get low-fat yogurt (non-fat often has more sugar) or soy yogurt, cut up some berries or other fruits, and add some healthy cereal.
- Hot oatmeal or another hot whole-grain cereal
- Cold whole-grain cereal: Pick options that are high in fiber and low in sugar.
- A tortilla filled with vegetables, salsa, and low-fat shredded cheese
- A whole-grain waffle with peanut butter
- Omelet with vegetables: Use more egg whites than yolk.
- Prepare a casserole the night before: Pop it into the microwave when you wake up and it will be ready to go when you are.
- If you don't like breakfast foods, change it up: Try a lean-meat sandwich or bowl of soup.



[CLICK HERE](#) to take our nutrition and activity quiz.

Instead of Mayo, Try ...



Looking for ways to cut back on fat calories? Focus on how much mayonnaise

you use. Mayonnaise has about 90 calories per tablespoon, with most of the calories from fat. Of course you can use less, or switch to low-fat or light mayo. But there are other tricks, too.

Add herbs and fresh-squeezed lemon juice to mayonnaise for a zestier flavor, or try a commercial brand made with olive oil, wasabi, or garlic. The calorie count is usually the same as regular mayonnaise, but the stronger flavors mean you can be satisfied with less.

On your sandwiches, slather mustard or low-fat salad dressing on one slice of your

Giddy-up!

Horseback riding is a sport the whole family can enjoy. It may look like the horse is doing all the work, but it's actually great exercise for the rider, too. Riding combines a cardiovascular workout with core strengthening, while also improving flexibility and balance. Guiding a horse requires learning to carefully control your balance and position as the horse moves, and to use different muscle groups independently without tensing up.

Beyond the physical benefits, riding also develops patience and mental focus. And because you can choose from many different riding disciplines and advance at your own pace, it's a sport you can begin at any age. There are even programs across the country that help adults and children with disabilities benefit from riding and other horse-assisted activities.

Ready to get started? You can find a certified instructor in your area at the American Riding Instructors Association Web site. Before signing up, ask to visit the farm and observe a lesson. A good instructor will use humane training methods, and will be respectful of both students and horses. Remember to stay safe by always wearing appropriate footwear and a helmet while riding.

bread. For creaminess, substitute pureed low-fat cottage cheese for mayo. You can also combine mayo with light or low-fat sour cream, which usually has fewer calories.

If you want to go exotic, try tzatziki, a garlic and cucumber sauce made with thick Greek-style yogurt (low-fat, of course!). It has a fraction of the calories of mayonnaise, but lots of flavor. And that's your goal: fewer calories, more flavor!



[CLICK HERE](#) for more tips on cutting fat and calories.



Sweet Potatoes with Apples

4 large sweet potatoes or yams, peeled and quartered
½ cup light brown sugar, packed
¼ cup fresh orange juice
2 teaspoons orange rind, grated
½ teaspoon cinnamon
2 large tart cooking apples, unpeeled, sliced
2 tablespoons corn oil margarine, chilled and cut into small pieces



Apple Season

There is something joyful about biting into a crisp, juicy apple. While apples are available year-round, fall is truly apple season, when the fruit is freshest. Americans, on average, eat an apple every week. The top apple-producing states are Washington, New York, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. There are about 2,500 kinds of apples grown in the United States.

Apples contain vitamins and fiber that are healthy for you. They can be added to salads; made into applesauce, juice, and salsas; and baked into a wide variety of entrees, side dishes, and desserts.

This recipe from *The American Cancer Society's Healthy Eating Cookbook* pairs apples with another fall classic, sweet potatoes.

Steam sweet potatoes in a steamer over medium heat for 15 minutes or just until tender. Allow potatoes to cool slightly and cut into ½-inch slices. Combine brown sugar, orange juice, orange rind, and cinnamon in a small bowl and mix well. Preheat oven to 350°. Layer sweet potatoes, apples, and brown sugar mixture one-third at a time in a baking dish and dot with margarine. Bake for 30 minutes or until apples are tender.

Serves 8.



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



In the Next Issue: • How Exercise May Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk • Healthier Halloween Treats • Benefits of Drinking Tea

Articles contributed by: Kirsten Eidsmoe, Beverly Greene, Stacy Simon, and Lesley Wood.

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