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HealthyLiving

The Pros and Cons of Prostate Cancer Screening

Finding and treating prostate cancer early may seem like a no-brainer, but the issue is actually very complicated.

Early prostate cancer is typically found using a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test and a digital rectal exam (DRE). There are limits to both methods, but the main issue is that even when these tests find a cancer, they often can’t tell how dangerous the cancer is. Some prostate cancers grow slowly and may never cause a man any problems, while others are more aggressive.

Doctors can’t be sure which men need treatment and which would be fine without any. And men who are told they have prostate cancer may have a hard time just doing nothing, even if the cancer is unlikely to cause them harm. Unfortunately, treatments for prostate cancer can have a lot of unpleasant side effects like incontinence and impotence that can really affect the quality of a man’s life.

Because of these complex issues, the American Cancer Society recommends that men have candid discussions with their doctors about the uncertainties, benefits, and risks of prostate cancer testing before they decide whether to be tested.

The American Cancer Society recommends that men with no symptoms of prostate cancer who are in relatively good health and can expect to live at least 10 more years start these talks at age 50.

Men at high risk – African American men and men who have a father, brother, or son diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65 – should begin those conversations earlier, at age 45. Men at higher risk – those with multiple family members affected by the disease before age 65 – should start even earlier, at age 40.
Experts agree that eating a balanced diet and engaging in regular exercise are two very important ways you can help reduce your risk of cancer. To help you make those often-recommended habits a reality, the American Cancer Society has introduced eatrightgetactive.org, a Web site where you set and save personalized health goals and get the information and motivation you need to truly make positive changes for your health.

The site’s interactive dashboard features three main tools: a food journal where you can record your food choices and eating patterns, a meter to track how much activity you engage in each week, and a chart that demonstrates how your Body Mass Index (BMI) changes as you make positive choices. Input your information, and the site shows your progress and pinpoints areas where you could be doing even better.

Designed for people of any weight or fitness level, this site can help you learn how to live a healthier life and stay well while reducing your risk of cancer. To get started, visit eatrightgetactive.org.

Guide to Fitness Tech

Whether you’re a fitness fanatic or need some coaxing off the couch, these gadgets and gizmos can help you get a better handle on your exercise routine.

**Multifunction sports watches:** Curious about how hard you’re actually working? Consider a multifunction watch. Feature-packed with built-in tools such as altimeters and digital compasses, many also come with ancillary components such as heart-rate transmitter belts that can help you get more out of your workouts.

**Pedometers and heart-rate monitors:** No need for GPS or an altimeter? Instead of buying a feature-packed multifunction watch, consider a heart-rate monitor, a pedometer, or some combination of the two. Check out offerings from Polar, Nike, GoPhysical, and Highgear, among others.

**MP3 Players:** There’s nothing like music to rev up a workout. Check out MP3 players that are specifically designed to take to the gym or on a trail. Look for built-in features such as calorie counters, stopwatches, pedometers, and of course, it has to be waterproof!

**Downloadable trainers:** Rather than fuss with a notebook at the gym, why not download a fitness program to your handheld, phone, or MP3 player and organize all your data on the device? Just like your workout regimen, you can go with a program that’s simple or comprehensive. Many also offer all kinds of automated tools: calorie calculators, workout plans, progress charts, and more.

Controlling Your Cholesterol

High cholesterol? There’s no doubt it can be hazardous to your health. Raised cholesterol levels can put you at serious risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. Making some positive lifestyle changes, however, can help you take control of your cholesterol — and can help reduce your risk for cancer and diabetes as well. If you have high cholesterol, take these recommendations to heart:

**Drop excess weight.** Extra pounds mean an extra risk for the negative effects of cholesterol. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight and avoid foods high in cholesterol and saturated fat.

**Get regular exercise.** Staying active can help boost your levels of “good” cholesterol and reduce the high levels of triglycerides associated with coronary artery disease.

**Stop smoking.** Although it may seem tough to quit, the health benefits are dramatic. Make a commitment to stop using tobacco for good.

Living a healthier lifestyle can help improve your overall cholesterol levels, but some people may need medication as well. Talk to your doctor about all the ways to keep your cholesterol in check.
Getting the Most Out of Your Next OBGYN Visit

For many women, a visit to the gynecologist is simply a routine part of their yearly health regimen. But if you’re on autopilot at your annual exam, you may be missing the chance to talk with your doctor about a disease that affects thousands of women each year: ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer tends to impact women over 60 and Caucasian women more often than other groups. This disease may cause symptoms including bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, trouble eating or feeling full quickly, and having to urinate often or always feeling like you need to go. These symptoms are also commonly caused by non-cancerous diseases, but if they seem unusual for you or if you have these symptoms almost daily for more than a few weeks, it’s a good idea to talk to your gynecologist.

Many women think that when they get their Pap test they are being checked for ovarian cancer. This is not correct. The Pap test checks for cervical cancer. A pelvic exam is important along with discussing any of the above symptoms with your doctor.

Remember, finding cancer early means there’s a much greater chance for successful treatment, so at your next exam, talk with your doctor about ovarian cancer.

Introducing the New Cancer.org

When the American Cancer Society first launched our Web site – cancer.org – in 1996, we developed it as a tool to help people get information about cancer. Most of our 23 million visitors each year come searching for information because they or someone they know has received a cancer diagnosis.

Now we are introducing a new cancer.org, complete with improved search-engine technology, an updated look and feel, and easy-to-use navigation, designed to help you get to know all aspects of the Society, from our volunteer opportunities to support programs and services.

You still have access to trusted cancer information from Society experts, but now it’s organized to help you better find what you’re looking for quickly, whether you are interested in cancer prevention and early detection, diagnosis and treatment, survivorship, or getting involved in the fight against cancer.

CLICK HERE to learn more about ovarian cancer.

CLICK HERE to visit the new cancer.org today!
Squash: A Very Versatile Veggie

Few foods are equally desirable both in the dog days of summer and in the crisp, cool air of autumn. However, with so many different varieties available, squash is one vegetable that can be on the menu from now until Thanksgiving.

Summer squashes, such as zucchini and yellow squash, are thin-skinned types that are harvested when they are relatively immature. Since there’s no need to peel or seed them, they are easy to prepare, and they work well with quick cooking methods such as sautéing and grilling. Heartier winter squashes, such as acorn and hubbard, are harvested when they are more mature and then left to cure, giving them a tougher outer shell. These varieties need a longer cooking time to become tender, but they are delicious baked, steamed, or cooked in soups or stews.

Like most fruits and vegetables, squash is naturally low in sodium and has no cholesterol, and many types of squash offer rich doses of vitamins A and C as well.

Sautéed with a bit of garlic or peeled, seeded, and roasted, squash is a sensible choice, no matter the weather.

In a large stockpot over medium heat, add oil. Sauté the garlic, onion, and bell pepper for 8 to 10 minutes, or until softened. Add chili powder, cumin, and oregano and stir to combine.

Add squash, broth, and tomatoes and their juice and bring to a boil, stirring to combine. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add corn and beans and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes, or until the squash is tender, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper.

Serves 6.
190 calories, 4.0 g fat per serving.

Black Bean and Butternut Squash Chili

Loaded with nutritious and fiber-full veggies and beans, this comforting chili fills you up without weighing you down.

1 tablespoon canola oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 onion, chopped
1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
2 tablespoons chili powder
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon dried oregano
5 cups, peeled, seeded butternut squash, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 (14 ½-ounce) can vegetable broth or reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes with chiles, such as Ro*Tel
1 (15-ounce) can no-salt added corn, drained
1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

In the Next Issue: • Healthy One-pot Meals • Alternatives to Halloween Candy • Mammography: The Importance of Getting Screened

Articles contributed by: Amanda Dobbs and Rebecca V. Snowden.

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.