

Great Expectations[®]

FOR HEALTH

A BlueChoice HealthPlan newsletter for women

Spring 2010

Women's Health Newsletter

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Surviving Stress

Stress can have a negative impact on your health and life, keeping you from being your best. Learning to manage stress can give you a more positive outlook and make you a happier person.

To manage stress, try to:

- Recognize your limits
- Figure out what is really important to do
- Keep a record of things that cause you stress
- Do something that relaxes you
- Form friendships and community connections

How effectively you handle stress can make the difference between having a good day and a great day; a pleasant moment and an awesome moment!

Women Rock!

We all know that women tend to be the caregivers in the family and make many of the health-related decisions. Well, listen up! You can't take care of everyone else unless YOU stay healthy. This year as you nurture, guide, support and encourage everyone else in your life, make sure you take extra-special care of yourself!



No one can be as good to you as you can be to yourself. After you are good to yourself, then you can be their rock!

Your Breast Health

Last year, new breast cancer screening guidelines were released that attracted a flood of media publicity.

Are you confused? Don't be!

While some organizations are now saying that women do not need mammograms between the ages of 40 and 50, BlueChoice HealthPlan is still following the guidelines set by the American Cancer Society.

American Cancer Society Guidelines for Breast Cancer Screening

Women aged 40-49, every 1-2 years
Women 50 and above, every year

Mammograms are covered at 100 percent for most members (check your Schedule of Benefits). No prior authorization is needed, but you will need a referral from your personal physician or gynecologist to a contracting mammography facility. For more information, call Member Services at the number on the back of your ID card.

The American Cancer Society also recommends that women perform a monthly self breast exam. At BlueChoiceSC.com, click on **Health & Wellness** and then **Women's Health** to learn how.

Source: cancer.org

Pregnancy: The Last Few Weeks



Recently, more pregnant women have been asking their doctors to induce labor or schedule a C-section before their estimated due dates. However, it is important that your baby stays in the womb for at least 39 weeks. Experts are learning that anything less could potentially cause problems for you and your baby.

Here's why your baby should be born full-term, if possible:

- Important organs, like the brain, lungs and liver, continue to develop. The more time in the womb, the stronger these organs will be.
- Babies should be able to suck, swallow and stay awake long enough to eat after they are born. Babies born early may not be able to do these things.
- Your baby has more time to gain weight naturally. Babies born at a healthy weight have an easier time staying warm than babies born too small.

- Your baby is less likely to have vision and hearing problems after birth.

If your pregnancy is healthy and you choose to schedule your baby's delivery, remember it's best to stay pregnant at least 39 weeks.

There are many reasons to schedule your baby's birth. Talk with your doctor to discuss what's best for you and your baby!

Source: marchofdimes.com

Talk to Men about Prostate Cancer

As women, we have a great deal of influence over the men in our lives. We encourage, support, urge and some even say we nag. But when it comes to getting screened for prostate cancer, make sure the men in your life get screened!

Prostate cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in men. Some men may have very noticeable symptoms of the disease while others have no symptoms at all. That's why it's important to urge the men you care about to get screened for prostate cancer – to look for the cancer before it causes symptoms.

Some symptoms of prostate cancer are:

- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Weak or interrupted urine flow
- Pain or burning during urination
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Pain in the back, hips or pelvis that doesn't go away
- Painful ejaculation

Is it time for your husband's, father's, brother's or son's next screening? If so, encourage, support, urge or nag. Do whatever it takes to get the men in your life screened. A little nagging never hurt anyone – but failure to catch prostate cancer early can.

Source: cdc.gov

Recommendation

Men over 50 should get screened for prostate cancer every year.

Talk to a doctor about the benefits and risks of prostate screening.






Walk Your Way to Fitness

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Almost everyone can gain the health benefits of physical activity, regardless of age, ethnicity, shape and size.

Aerobic activity, like brisk walking, is generally safe for most people. Walking outdoors is a great opportunity to enjoy the sunlight and take in the world around you. Walking inside, like on a treadmill, is very convenient and helps you keep your routine, even when the weather is bad. Whether you go outside or stay in, walking is one of the simplest things you can do to improve your health. Walking and other forms of physical activity can help:

- Control your weight
- Improve the quality of your sleep and overall mental health
- Reduce your risk of developing some cancers, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes
- Increase your chances of living longer

It doesn't take hours to get the benefits of regular exercise. Here is a routine that can be done in just 30 minutes a day:

Beginner Walking Program						
Monday 30 min. brisk walk 	Tuesday 30 min. brisk walk 	Wednesday 30 min. brisk walk 	Thursday Optional Day Off	Friday 30 min. brisk walk 	Saturday 30 min. brisk walk 	Sunday Optional Day Off

Join the millions of Americans who use walking as their primary method of exercise. With a regular exercise routine, you can find yourself more fit and healthier. Talk with your doctor to make sure it is safe for you to be physically active.

Source: cdc.gov

Back Care

“Oh, my aching back!”

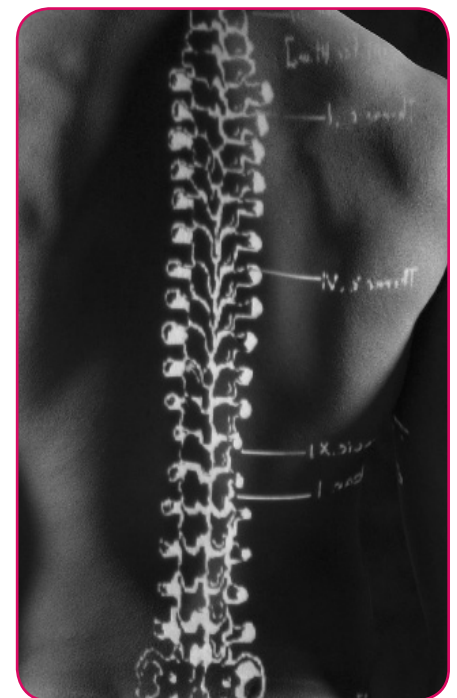
Does that sound familiar? If so, you are not the only one who has uttered those words recently. In fact, more than 80 percent of Americans will experience back pain at some point in their lives. It's most common in adults aged 30 to 50 and can be caused by the aging process. Poor posture, being overweight and/or lifting heavy objects are also common causes of back pain.

As the old adage goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So here are some tips that can help you prevent back pain before it starts:

- Sit up straight in a chair with good lower back support or use a pillow behind the small of your back.
- Don't slouch when sitting or walking.

- Wear comfortable low-heeled shoes.
 - Don't try to lift objects that are too heavy for you.
 - When you have to lift something heavy, lift with your knees. Pull in your stomach muscles. Keep your head down and in line with your straight back.
 - Watch your weight. Extra weight, especially around your middle, can put additional strain on your low back.
 - Stay active. Regular, low-impact exercises like walking, cycling and yoga can help stretch and strengthen muscles.
- A strong, healthy back is core to a healthy, active life. Take care of it. It's worth the effort.

Source: ninds.nih.gov/disorders/backpain





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Do you have questions about your BlueChoice HealthPlan coverage? Try our Web site at BlueChoiceSC.com. We're open 24 hours a day here!

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