

# Protect yourself from HIV/AIDS and other STIs

You can catch a lot of illnesses through sex. These are called sexually transmitted infections, STIs, or STDs. They include HIV/AIDS.

- More than half of all people will have an STI during their life.
- Half of all sexually active people will get an STI by age 25.
- It is two times easier for a woman to get HIV/AIDS from a man than the other way around. That's because of the difference between men's and women's bodies.
- Many STIs have few or no symptoms at first, especially in women. This includes HIV/AIDS.

## Lower Your Risk

- Don't have sex. Or have sex with only one faithful partner who does **not** have HIV/AIDS.
- Use latex barriers (condoms or dental dams) for sex.
- Limit drinking alcohol so you can use good judgment about having sex.
- Don't share needles or syringes with others.

## Get Tested Early and Often

- See your doctor for regular checkups.
- If you **or** your partner have had sex with other people, get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STIs.
- Tell your doctor right away if you have any of these signs:
  - *It hurts to pee.*
  - *You have a strange discharge from your vagina.*
  - *You find sores, warts, or blisters on or near your vagina.*

Sources: American Sexual Health Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



# Take charge of your health!

- Read all you can about health, safety, and preventing disease. Hospitals, universities, and government agencies have good information.
- Keep a self-care book and a first-aid book at home. They can help you take care of minor illnesses and injuries. And they can help you know when to call the doctor.
  - Remember that you are the boss. Your doctor works for **you**.
  - *Find a doctor who really listens.*
  - *Take a list of questions to every doctor visit. Insist on getting the answers and services you need.*
  - *Ask for copies of letters and lab tests for your home health file.*
  - *Get a second opinion before any major treatment or surgery.*

SAMPLE

Weight:	_____ / _____	_____ / _____
My Goal Weight	Date	Weight
	Date	Weight
Blood Pressure (Every 2 years):	_____ / _____	_____ / _____
Goal less than 120/80	Date	BP
	Date	BP
LDL Cholesterol (At least every 5 years):	_____ / _____	_____ / _____
Goal less than 100	Date	LDL
	Date	LDL
Mammogram (Every year after age 40):	_____	_____
	Date	Date
Pap Test & Pelvic Exam*	_____	_____
*Ask your doctor how often	Date	Date

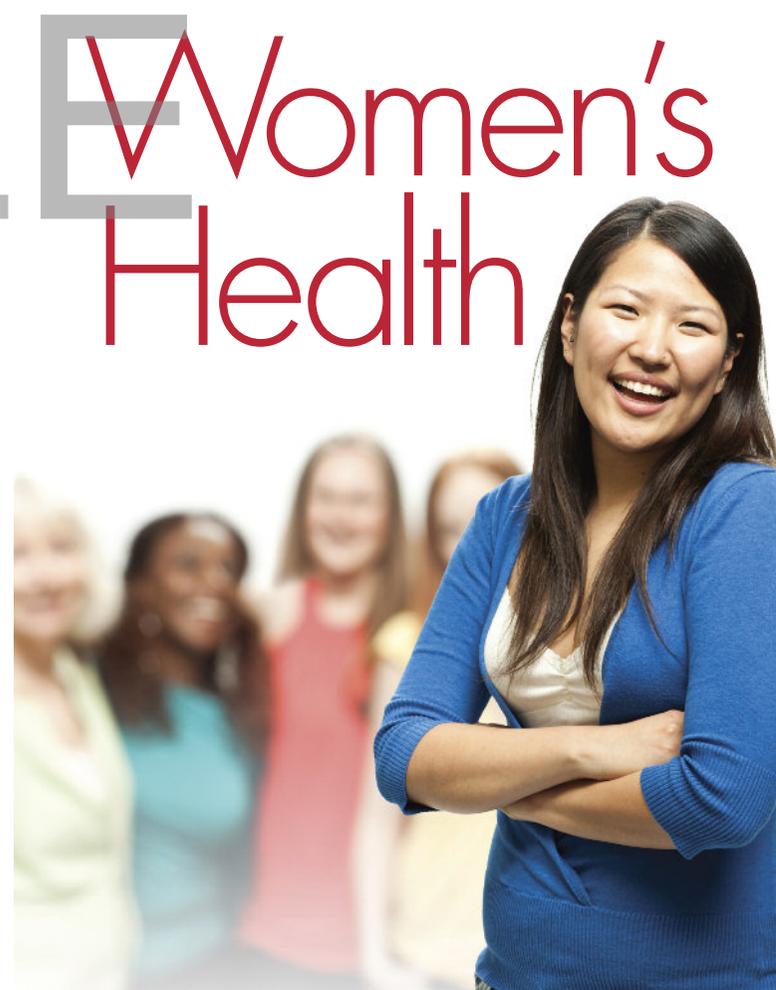


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# Women's Health

# 10 Tips to prevent heart disease

1. Don't smoke. Avoid secondhand smoke.
2. Get your blood pressure checked every 2 years. Keep it below 120/80. Here's how:
  - Lose weight if you need to.
  - Cut down or cut out drinking alcohol.
  - Eat less salt.
  - Take any blood pressure medicine your doctor prescribes.
3. Watch your cholesterol (*kuh-LES-tuh-rall*). An LDL ("bad" cholesterol) score less than 100 is best. Get your blood cholesterol checked every 5 years — more often if your doctor says so.
4. Exercise at least 30 minutes most days of the week. You can do just 10 minutes at a time, if you want. (*Exercise an hour a day if you need to lose weight.*)
5. Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
6. Eat less fat. One-fourth or less of your daily calories should come from fat.
7. Ask your doctor about taking low-dose aspirin daily. Ask if you should take folic acid, too.
8. Learn how to manage stress.
9. Prevent diabetes (*dye-uh-BEE-teez*). If you already have diabetes, ask your doctor how to control it.
10. Decide if you should stop taking birth control pills. These 4 things together raise your risk of heart disease:
  - taking the pill
  - smoking
  - high blood pressure
  - being older than 35

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services

*“When it comes to eating right and exercising, there is no ‘I’ll start tomorrow.’ Tomorrow is disease.”*

— Terri Guillemets

# Know the signs of a heart attack

Women's heart attacks don't always show the classic signs, such as chest pain. Watch for these signs:

- shortness of breath
- feeling like you might throw up (nausea)
- dizziness
- back and jaw pain
- heartburn that won't go away

Source: American Heart Association

# Lower your cancer risk

- Don't smoke. Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Drink less alcohol or none at all.
- Stay out of the sun and use sunscreen. Any tan is a sign of skin damage.
- Check your skin once every month. See your doctor if a mole changes in size or color.
- Eat right. Choose mostly plant foods, beans, whole grains, fruits, and veggies.
- Get screening checkups when your doctor says you should. (*Examples: Pap tests, mammograms, colon cancer exams*)

# Keep your bones strong

Women are more likely than men to get brittle bone disease, or osteoporosis (AH-stee-oh-puh-ROH-sis). Here's how to prevent it:

- Get plenty of calcium (*KAL-see-yum*) and vitamin D. See the chart below.
- Don't smoke.
- Drink less wine, beer, and hard liquor.
- Exercise often on your feet. Try walking, jogging, dancing, playing tennis, or lifting weights.
- Ask your doctor about medicines to help your bones.

## How Much Calcium Do Girls and Women Need?

 = 1 glass of milk, or about 300mg of calcium

Your Age	Every Day You Need
10 – 18 years old	
19 – 50 years old	
Over 50 years old	

*Note:* Our bodies need vitamin D to help take in calcium and strengthen bones. Look for foods with added vitamin D, like milk, orange juice, or cereal. You can also get vitamin D from the sun or a vitamin pill. Source: National Osteoporosis Foundation



# Feel better with or without PMS

Up to 2 weeks before your period, you may get symptoms of PMS (*premenstrual syndrome*):

- mood swings, feeling cranky or distracted
- headache
- cravings for sweets and salt
- bloating, tender breasts
- feeling tired or trouble sleeping

Follow these tips to feel better:

1. Eat less sugar, white bread, salt, and fatty foods.
2. Eat more vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts, beans, soy, and whole grains.
3. Eat many small meals instead of 3 big meals.
4. Don't drink alcohol or caffeine.
5. Take time to relax and exercise every day.
6. If your PMS is very bad, you may want to ask your doctor about antidepressants or hormones.