

The Office on Women's Health

2012 Calendar

Healthy body. Healthy mind. Healthy spirit.



800-994-9662 ★ TDD: 888-220-5446
www.womenshealth.gov



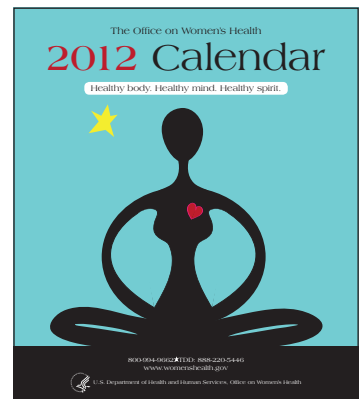
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health

About the cover

The cover art, “At Peace,” is the creation of April Lynn Showen. “At Peace” was the winning submission in the 2012 Calendar Cover Contest. Says Ms. Showen:

My inspiration for this piece of art was derived from many different things: My love for Henri Matisse’s work, a sculpture that my mother gave me, and the spirit that I share with all women. To be “At Peace” is a healthy place for a woman, and women work very hard to get there mentally and physically. I hope this art evokes that feeling of peace for all individuals who will view it.

The passion I have for art and the need to create is part of my soul. I am grateful to have supportive parents and a husband that embraces my creativity and continually encourages me. I am currently growing a small business that encompasses good design, focusing on interior and print design. My hope as an artist is to create art that shares emotion and meaning that any individual will be able to relate to.



Ms. Showen graduated from West Liberty University in 2001 and currently lives in Charleston, West Virginia. She created the artwork digitally with Adobe Illustrator Software.

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Office on Women's
Health in Action

About Us

What is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the federal agency responsible for protecting the health of all Americans. Its headquarters are based in Washington, D.C. HHS is the publisher of the 2012 Women's Health Calendar.

What is the Office on Women's Health?

Established in 1991, the Office on Women's Health (OWH) is part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health within HHS. OWH wrote and produced this calendar. Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of all U.S. women and girls. We lead and coordinate the efforts of all the HHS agencies and offices involved in women's health. We create and sponsor innovative programs that focus on the health of women and girls. We educate health professionals, such as physicians, dentists, researchers, therapists, and nurses. Our publications, websites, and special events reach out to you, the public. We work to educate and motivate people to live healthier lives by giving them trustworthy, accurate health information.

What information services does OWH provide?

We offer two award-winning comprehensive websites, www.womenshealth.gov and www.girlshealth.gov. These two websites provide reliable, accurate, commercial-free information on the health of women and girls. They cover more than 800 topics, on issues ranging from adolescent health to reproductive health to healthy aging. We also offer free assistance by phone through our information referral center, which is open Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. (ET). Call 800-994-9662, toll-free, and our trained Information Specialists can answer your calls in either English or Spanish. For individuals who are hearing impaired and use TDD, call 888-220-5446.

However you use our services, you'll get:

- Clear answers to frequently asked questions
- Links to thousands of health publications
- Statistics on women's health
- An online glossary of health terms
- Daily news on women's health
- A National Breastfeeding Helpline with trained peer counselors
- Health information in Spanish

How are womenshealth.gov and girlshealth.gov different from other websites on women's and girls' health?

Womenshealth.gov and girlshealth.gov exist to help you and your loved ones get the reliable and accurate health information you need to get, or stay, healthy.

Womenshealth.gov and girlshealth.gov are sponsored by the federal government with your tax dollars. We don't represent any special commercial interests. We don't allow advertisements on our sites. We don't try to sell you products, magazines, or anything else. We screen all health information for accuracy before it ever appears on our websites or in our publications. Our Information Specialists are trained to help you, whether it's referring you to the right organization, mailing you free information, or even coaching new moms on how to breastfeed their infants.



OWH works to educate and motivate people to live healthier lives by giving them trustworthy, accurate health information.

Only federal holidays and OWH-led awareness days are noted in the calendar. Other traditional, religious, and ethnic holidays observed in 2012 are listed on page 28.

January

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|--|---------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 New Year's Day observed | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 15 | 16 Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. | 17 | 18 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|----------|--------|----------|
| 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 |
| | | |

Health Highlights

National Birth Defects Prevention Month

See pages 46–47 to learn how to prepare for a healthy pregnancy.

Cervical Health Awareness Month

Pap tests can help protect you from cervical cancer. Find out how often you need one by using the chart that begins on page 34.



Have you made a healthy New Year's resolution?

Tell us on Facebook.com/HHSOWH or Twitter@womenshealth.gov and receive messages to motivate you to reach your goal.

December 2011

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

February

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| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | | | |

February

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| | | | 1 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 19 | 20 Washington's Birthday | 21 | 22 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|----------|--------|----------|
| 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 |
| | | |

Health Highlights

American Heart Month

A healthy lifestyle is a cornerstone of heart health. Learn the basics of good health, including food and fitness tips, starting on page 30.



How do you make time for fitness?

Join us on Facebook.com/HHSOWH or Twitter@womenshealth.gov to receive tips to fit physical activity into your busy schedule.

January

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| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

March

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| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

March



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|
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| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|----------|--------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day |
| 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 |

Health Highlights

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

You need to be screened for colorectal cancer if you are 50 or older. Learn about important screening tests on page 34.

National Nutrition Month

See page 30 to learn which foods you need and which to avoid for good health.



Share your tips for eating healthy on a budget.

Link with us on Facebook. com/HHSOWH or Twitter@ womenshealth.gov and we'll send you some recipes to try.

February

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|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | | | |

April

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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

March

April

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 29 | 30 | | |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 |
| | | |

Health Highlights

Alcohol Awareness Month

See page 32 to learn how much alcohol is too much for women.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Victims of sexual assault are never at fault. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (4673) for help.



Have you cut back on drinking?

Share your tips for success on [Facebook.com/HHSOWH](https://www.facebook.com/HHSOWH) or [Twitter@womenshealth.gov](https://twitter.com/womenshealth.gov).

April

March

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

May

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| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

May

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|---------------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| | | 1 | 2 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 13 | 14 National Women's Checkup Day | 15 | 16 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 27 | 28 Memorial Day | 29 | 30 |

Celebrate National Women's Health Week — May 13–19

Commit to a healthier you by taking these steps:

- Schedule an annual checkup or preventive screening test.
- Make healthy eating and regular physical activity a habit.
- Avoid risky behaviors, such as smoking and not wearing a seatbelt.
- Reduce stress and get enough sleep.
- Visit www.womenshealth.gov to learn more.

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 31 | | |

Health Highlights

Lupus Awareness Month

Lupus is a disease in which the body attacks its own healthy tissues and organs. It is much more common in women than in men. Find out more at www.couldihavelupus.gov.

Mental Health Month

Stress that builds up can take a toll on your physical and mental health. Learn ways to reduce stress on page 32.



How do you relax after a busy day?

Send us a message on Facebook.com/HHSOWH or Twitter@womenshealth.gov and stay tuned for our stress-busting tips.

April

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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

June

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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

May

June

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|
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| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 |

Health Highlights

National HIV Testing Day (June 27)

Did you know you can have HIV and still feel perfectly healthy? The only way to know your HIV status is to get tested. Visit www.hivtest.org to find a testing center near you.

Men's Health Week (June 11-17)

Learn about preventable health problems affecting men at www.cdc.gov/men/nmhw.



Have you been tested for HIV? What was it like?

Let us know on Facebook.com/HHSOWH or Twitter@womenshealth.gov.

May

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| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

July

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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

June

July

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Independence Day |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 5 | 6 | 7 |
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| 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 |
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Health Highlights

UV (Ultraviolet) Safety Month

Take steps to protect your skin and eyes from the sun's harmful rays. Learn how on page 32.



How do you take care of your skin?

Share your best skin-care tip with us on Facebook. com/HHSOWH or Twitter@ womenshealth.gov and be entered to receive a prize.

July

June

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

August

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| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

August

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Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 30 | 31 | |

Health Highlights

World Breastfeeding Week (August 1–7)

Breastfeeding provides health benefits to both mom and baby. See page 33 for resources to help you get started.

National Immunization Awareness Month

You are never too old to get immunized. Find out which vaccines adults need at www.vaccines.gov



How has social networking supported your choice to breastfeed?

Use the hashtag #WBW to join the conversation on Facebook.com/HHSOWH or Twitter@womenshealth.gov.

July

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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

September

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| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | | | | | | |

August

September

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|----------------|---------|-----------|
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| 2 | 3 Labor Day | 4 | 5 |
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| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 30 | | | |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 |

Health Highlights

National Cholesterol Education Month

High cholesterol is a risk factor for heart disease and diabetes. Use the screening charts that begin on page 34 to learn how often you need your cholesterol checked.



How do you control your cholesterol?

Join us on Facebook.com/HHSOWH or Twitter@womenshealth.gov to stay motivated.

August

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|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

October

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| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

September

October



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|-------------------|---------|-----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | 8 Columbus Day | 9 | 10 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|----------|--------|----------|
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Health Highlights

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Screening tests look for signs of breast cancer before a woman has symptoms. Find out what screening tests you might need and how often, starting on page 34.

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Violence against women is always wrong. If you are the victim of physical or mental abuse, see page 33 to get help.



Did a routine mammogram save your life?

Tell us your story on [Facebook.com/HHSOWH](https://www.facebook.com/HHSOWH) or [Twitter@womenshealth.gov](https://twitter.com/womenshealth.gov).

September

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| 30 | | | | | | |

November

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| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |

October

November



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| | | | |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11 | 12 Veterans Day observed | 13 | 14 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Thanksgiving Day | | |
| 29 | 30 | |

Health Highlights

Great American Smokeout (November 15)

Team up with other Americans and quit smoking. See page 58 for tips to help you quit for good.

American Diabetes Month

You can lower your risk of diabetes with a healthy lifestyle. Get tips on healthy eating and physical activity on page 31.



Were you once a smoker? What motivated you to quit?

Share your story with us on [Facebook.com/HHSOWH](https://www.facebook.com/HHSOWH) or [Twitter@womenshealth.gov](https://twitter.com/womenshealth.gov).

October

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| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

December

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| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

November

December



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|--------|--------|---------------|-----------|
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| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 30 | 31 | Christmas Day | |

Notes

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| | | 1 |
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| 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 |

Health Highlights

World AIDS Day (December 1)

See page 32 for tips on safer sex to help prevent the spread of HIV.



Share your tips for healthy eating during the holidays.

Join us on Facebook.com/HHSOWH or Twitter@womenshealth.gov, and we will send you our favorite healthy get-together recipes.

November

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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January 2013

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| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

December

2012 Holidays and Observances

Federal holidays are noted in the 2012 calendar. This list includes some religious, ethnic, and other traditional holidays observed in 2012.

Jan 1
New Year's Day

Jan 23
Chinese New Year

Feb 22
Ash Wednesday

Mar 11
Daylight Saving Time begins

Mar 17
St. Patrick's Day

Apr 6
Good Friday

Apr 7-14
Passover

Apr 8
Easter Sunday

Apr 17
Tax Day

Apr 22
Earth Day

May 13
Mother's Day

Jun 17
Father's Day

July 20-Aug 19
Ramadan

Aug 26
Women's Equality Day

Sep 17
Rosh Hashanah

Sep 26
Yom Kippur

Oct 26
Eid-al-Adha

Oct 31
Halloween

Nov 4
Daylight Saving Time ends

Nov 6
Election Day

Dec 9-16
Hanukkah

Dec 25
Christmas Day

Dec 26-Jan 1, 2013
Kwanzaa

Notes

2013 Calendar

| January | | | | | | |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
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| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

| February | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | | |

| March | | | | | | |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

| April | | | | | | |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| December | | | | | | |
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| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

How to Take Charge of Your Health

When it comes to your health and well-being, you need to think not only about your body but your mind and spirit too. Everything about you and your life matters and deserves your time and attention. Use your 2012 calendar and reminder stickers to schedule time for fitness, shopping for and preparing healthy meals, “down time” to relax and have fun, and a checkup with your doctor. Doing so will help you to balance your own health and wellness needs with your everyday commitments. Each month, you are invited to share tips and success stories about living healthy with others via Facebook and Twitter. Health observances important to women also are featured each month. You can learn more about these health topics, risk factors for disease, and ways to take charge of your health and wellness in the pages that follow.

Understanding risk factors

Part of learning how to take charge of your health involves understanding your risk factors for different diseases. Risk factors are things in your life that increase your chances of getting a condition or disease. Some risk factors are beyond your control, such as your age, sex, family history, race or ethnicity, or health problems you may have. Risk factors you can control include:

- What and how much you eat
- How much physical activity you get
- Whether you use tobacco
- How much alcohol you drink

- Whether you use illegal drugs
- Whether you have unprotected sex
- Whether you wear your seat belt
- Whether you use medicines as directed

You can have one risk factor for a disease or you can have many. For some diseases, the more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to get the disease. How do you find out what risk factors you have? Schedule a general checkup, and ask your doctor or nurse about your personal health risks and what you can do to lower your risks.

Steps to healthy living

Together, the powerful steps that follow will help you to take charge of your health and control many risk factors for disease.

Know your health care options

- If you have health insurance, learn about your benefits and preventive services.
- If you need health insurance, visit www.healthcare.gov to learn what options you have under the new health care reform law.

Get important tests and vaccines

- Ask your doctor or nurse what screening tests and vaccines you need and how often you need them. Screening tests can help find health problems early, such as high blood pressure, breast cancer, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer, and bone loss. Vaccines

can protect you from harmful infections, such as the flu and human papillomavirus (HPV).

- See the chart on page 34, which lists important screening tests for women. Find out what vaccines you might need at www.vaccines.gov.

Eat healthy

- Balance calories to manage body weight. If you are overweight, enjoy your food, but eat less and avoid oversized portions.
- Eat mainly:
 - Fruits and vegetables (make half your plate fruits and vegetables)
 - Grains (at least half of your grains should be whole grains, such as whole wheat, oatmeal, and brown rice)
 - Fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, cheese, yogurt, and other milk products
 - Lean sources of protein, including more fish, as well as beans and peas, unsalted nuts, eggs, skinless poultry, lean meat, and soy products
 - Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats
- Cut back on sodium. Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and choose the foods with lower numbers.
- Limit foods that contain saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, or added sugars.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks like soda and energy drinks.
- Choose foods that provide more potassium, dietary fiber, calcium, and vitamin D.
- Use food labels to make healthy food choices.
- Visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for tips to build a healthy plate at meal times and e

The National Prevention Strategy will help increase the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage of life. Learn more at: www.healthcare.gov/center/councils/nphpphc/strategy.

adopt healthy eating habits.

Get enough folic acid

- If you are planning to get pregnant, or are able to get pregnant, you need 400 to 800 micrograms (400 to 800 mcg or 0.4 to 0.8 mg) of folic acid every day, even if you are using birth control or not planning for pregnancy. You can make sure you get enough by taking a vitamin with folic acid every day. Use your calendar to help you make taking folic acid a daily habit.

Get moving

- Pick an aerobic activity that's easy to fit into your life. Aerobic activities make you breathe harder and your heart beat faster. If you choose activities at a moderate level, do at least 2 hours and 30 minutes a week. Walking fast, dancing, and raking leaves are examples of activities that take moderate effort. If you choose vigorous activities, do at least 1 hour and 15 minutes each week. Jogging, jumping rope, swimming laps, and riding a bike on hills are examples of vigorous activity. You can combine moderate and vigorous activities. Do aerobic activities for at least 10 minutes at a time.
- Do muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days each week. Include all major muscle groups.
- Start slowly if you have been inactive and do a little more as you are able. You can build

up by being active more often or longer or by increasing your effort.

- Talk to your doctor if you have a chronic health problem to find out what physical activities are good for you.
- Use your calendar to make physical activity a part of your weekly routine.

Quit smoking

- The minute you quit smoking, your health begins to improve and you begin to lower your long-term risk of many serious diseases. See page 58 for tips to help you quit smoking for good.

Keep your teeth and gums healthy

- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste at least twice daily.
- Floss your teeth daily.
- Get regular checkups. Ask your dentist how often you need a dental exam.

Limit alcohol

- If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. For women, that means no more than one drink per day. One drink equals:
 - 12 fluid ounces of regular beer
 - 5 fluid ounces of wine
 - 1.5 fluid ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits

Get enough sleep

- Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep every night.

Manage stress

- Set realistic standards and goals. Use your calendar to avoid taking on too much.
- Make time each day to relax and unwind, even if only for a few minutes.

- Reach out to people who encourage and support you. Ask for help when needed.
- Find outlets, such as a hobby or volunteer work.
- Learn healthy ways to cope with daily stress.
- Talk to your doctor if emotional problems interfere with daily living.
- If you are having thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255).

Practice safe sex

- Keep in mind that you cannot tell if a person has a sexually transmitted infection (STI) by the way he or she looks. Many STIs have no symptoms.
- Be faithful. Having sex with one uninfected partner who only has sex with you will lower your risk of getting an STI.
- Use a condom correctly and every time you have vaginal, anal, or oral sex to lower your risk of STIs. Most other birth control methods do not protect against STIs.
- Women 26 and younger can get the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which protects against the types of HPV that cause most cases of cervical cancer and genital warts.
- Ask your doctor if you should be tested for STIs and if and when you should be retested.

Know your HIV status

- If you have risk factors for HIV, get tested. Some risk factors are having unprotected sex with multiple partners or being treated for an STI. All pregnant women need to be tested for HIV.

Practice sun safety

- Apply sunscreen that is at least SPF15 and that blocks both UVA and UVB rays (broad spectrum).

- Avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Sunscreen isn't enough. Also wear a hat, protective clothing, and sunglasses to help block the sun's harmful rays.
- Tell your doctor about any new moles or mole changes you notice.

Stay safe

- If you are a victim of sexual assault or violence and abuse in your home, you are not alone — call for help. The following hotlines are available 24 hours a day:
 - **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
800-799-SAFE (7233)
TDD: 800-787-3224
 - **National Sexual Assault Hotline**
800-656-HOPE (4673)
- To learn more about these types of violence, as well as stalking, dating violence, and

more, visit www.womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women.

- If you find yourself in danger, try to find a safe place away from your attacker. Then call 911 or the police.
- Remember, the victim is never at fault.

Use medicines as directed

- Follow the label information carefully. Learn about drug labels on page 54.
- Use your prescription medicine only as directed. Do not stop taking your medicine until your doctor tells you it's okay to stop.
- Tell your doctor about all the over-the-counter and prescription medicines you use. Also, tell your doctor about any vitamins, diet supplements, and herbs you use. This is especially important if you are or are planning to become pregnant.

Breastfeed your baby

If you are a mother, one of the best things that only you can do for your baby is to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is more than a lifestyle choice — it is an important health choice. Breastfeeding is linked to a lower risk of many health problems for both baby and mother. It can be very convenient, and is a great bonding experience with your baby. It can also be challenging, but many people can offer support and help you:

- To speak with a trained breastfeeding peer counselor, call the Office on Women's Health at **800-994-9662** (TDD: 888-220-5446).
- Visit us online at www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding for information and tips.
- For hands-on help, contact a lactation consultant. To find one in your area, visit www.ilca.org.

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding explains why breastfeeding is a national public health priority and sets forth actionable steps that businesses, communities, health systems, and others can take to support nursing mothers. Learn more at www.surgeongeneral.gov. Under the Affordable Care Act (health care reform), more and more women will have access to breastfeeding support and workplace protections.

Screening Tests for Women

Check the guidelines listed here to find out about important screening tests for women. These guidelines are recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Keep in mind that these are guidelines only. Your doctor or nurse will personalize the timing of the screening tests you need based on many factors. Ask your doctor or nurse if you don't understand why a certain test is recommended for you. Check with your insurance plan to find out which tests are covered.

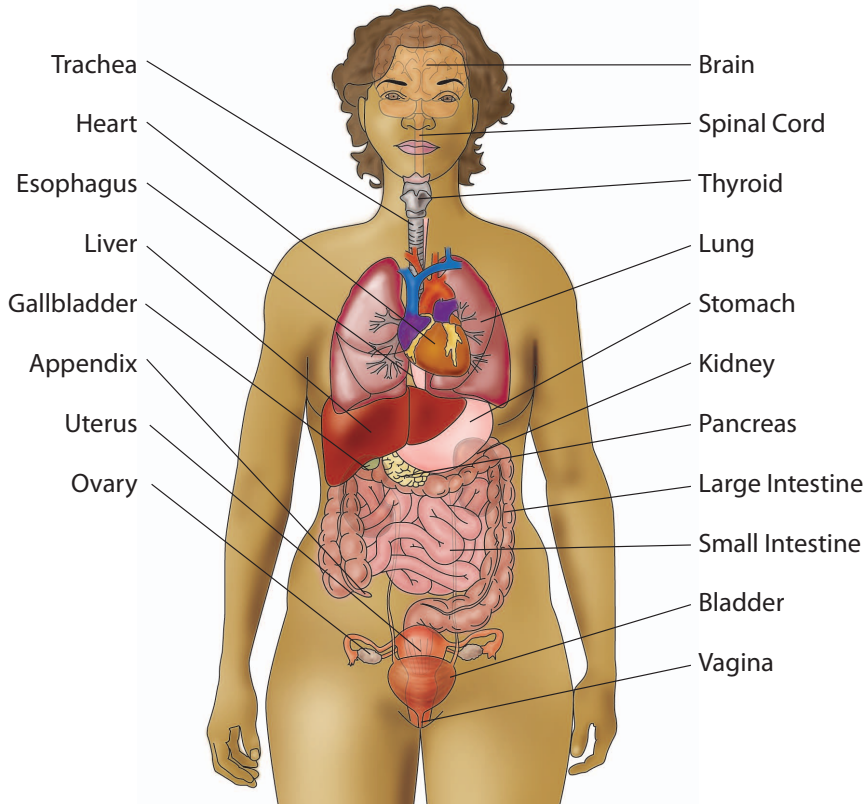
Screening Tests

| Screening tests | 18-39 | 40-49 | 50-64 | 65 and older |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Blood pressure test | Get tested at least every 2 years if you have normal blood pressure (lower than 120/80). Get tested once a year if you have blood pressure between 120/80 and 139/89. Discuss treatment with your doctor or nurse if you have blood pressure 140/90 or higher. | Get tested at least every 2 years if you have normal blood pressure (lower than 120/80). Get tested once a year if you have blood pressure between 120/80 and 139/89. Discuss treatment with your doctor or nurse if you have blood pressure 140/90 or higher. | Get tested at least every 2 years if you have normal blood pressure (lower than 120/80). Get tested once a year if you have blood pressure between 120/80 and 139/89. Discuss treatment with your doctor or nurse if you have blood pressure 140/90 or higher. | Get tested at least every 2 years if you have normal blood pressure (lower than 120/80). Get tested once a year if you have blood pressure between 120/80 and 139/89. Discuss treatment with your doctor or nurse if you have blood pressure 140/90 or higher. |
| Bone mineral density test (osteoporosis screening) | | | Discuss with your doctor or nurse if you are at risk of osteoporosis. | Get this test at least once at age 65 or older. Talk to your doctor or nurse about repeat testing. |
| Breast cancer screening (mammogram) | | Discuss with your doctor or nurse. | Starting at age 50, get screened every 2 years. | Get screened every 2 years through age 74. Age 75 and older, ask your doctor or nurse if you need to be screened. |
| Cervical cancer screening (Pap test)* | Get a Pap test every 3 years if you are 21 or older, have had vaginal sex, and have a cervix. | Get a Pap test every 3 years if you have had vaginal sex and have a cervix. | Get a Pap test every 3 years if you have had vaginal sex and have a cervix. | Ask your doctor or nurse if you need to get a Pap test. |

* Final U.S Preventive Services Task Force guidelines on cervical cancer screening can be found at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/uspscerv.htm.

| Screening tests | 18-39 | 40-49 | 50-64 | 65 and older |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Chlamydia test | Get tested for chlamydia yearly through age 24 if you are sexually active or pregnant. Age 25 and older, get tested for chlamydia if you are at increased risk, pregnant or not pregnant. | Get tested for chlamydia if you are sexually active and at increased risk, pregnant or not pregnant. | Get tested for chlamydia if you are sexually active and at increased risk. | Get tested for chlamydia if you are sexually active and at increased risk. |
| Cholesterol test | Starting at age 20, get a cholesterol test regularly if you are at increased risk for heart disease. Ask your doctor or nurse how often you need your cholesterol tested. | Get a cholesterol test regularly if you are at increased risk for heart disease. Ask your doctor or nurse how often you need your cholesterol tested. | Get a cholesterol test regularly if you are at increased risk for heart disease. Ask your doctor or nurse how often you need your cholesterol tested. | Get a cholesterol test regularly if you are at increased risk for heart disease. Ask your doctor or nurse how often you need your cholesterol tested. |
| Colorectal cancer screening (using fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy) | | | Starting at age 50, get screened for colorectal cancer. Talk to your doctor or nurse about which screening test is best for you and how often you need it. | Get screened for colorectal cancer through age 75. Talk to your doctor or nurse about which screening test is best for you and how often you need it. |
| Diabetes screening | Get screened for diabetes if your blood pressure is higher than 135/80 or if you take medicine for high blood pressure. | Get screened for diabetes if your blood pressure is higher than 135/80 or if you take medicine for high blood pressure. | Get screened for diabetes if your blood pressure is higher than 135/80 or if you take medicine for high blood pressure. | Get screened for diabetes if your blood pressure is higher than 135/80 or if you take medicine for high blood pressure. |
| Gonorrhea test | Get tested for gonorrhea if you are sexually active and at increased risk, pregnant or not pregnant. | Get tested for gonorrhea if you are sexually active and at increased risk, pregnant or not pregnant. | Get tested for gonorrhea if you are sexually active and at increased risk. | Get tested for gonorrhea if you are sexually active and at increased risk. |
| HIV test | Get tested if you are at increased risk for HIV. Discuss your risk with your doctor or nurse. All pregnant women need to be tested for HIV. | Get tested if you are at increased risk for HIV. Discuss your risk with your doctor or nurse. All pregnant women need to be tested for HIV. | Get tested if you are at increased risk for HIV. Discuss your risk with your doctor or nurse. | Get tested if you are at increased risk for HIV. Discuss your risk with your doctor or nurse. |
| Syphilis test | Get tested for syphilis if you are at increased risk or pregnant. | Get tested for syphilis if you are at increased risk or pregnant. | Get tested for syphilis if you are at increased risk. | Get tested for syphilis if you are at increased risk. |

The Female Body: System Diagrams

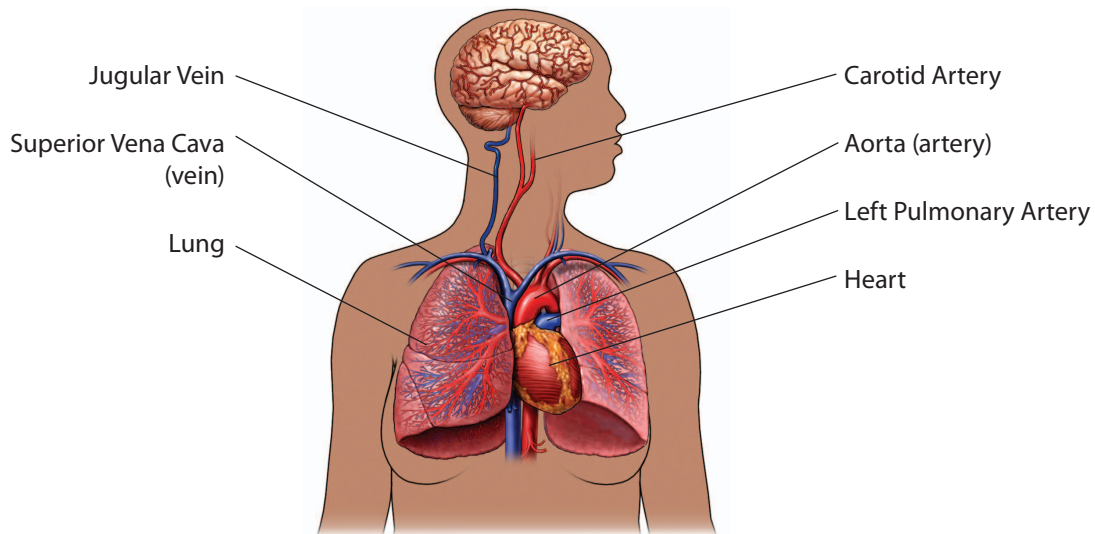


Women's Body Systems

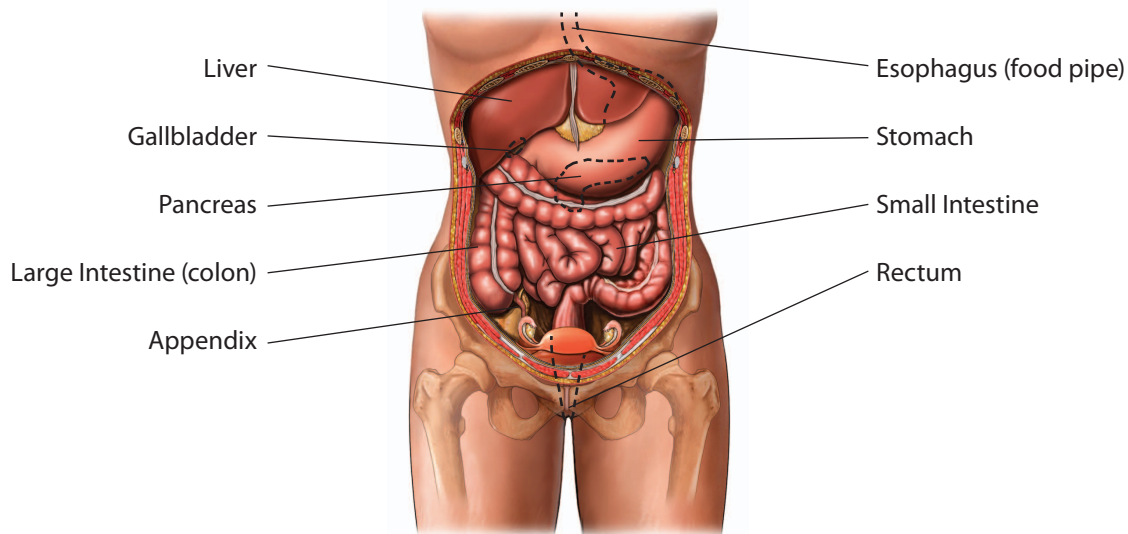
Cardiovascular and Circulatory
Digestive (gastrointestinal)
Endocrine
Nervous (neurologic) and Skeletal

Reproductive
Respiratory
Urinary (renal)

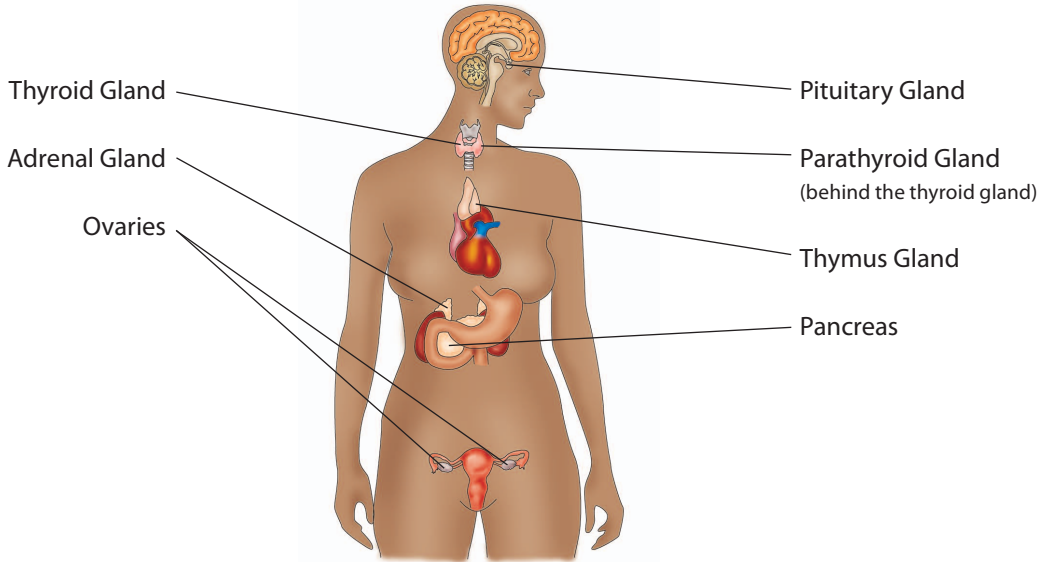
Cardiovascular and Circulatory Systems



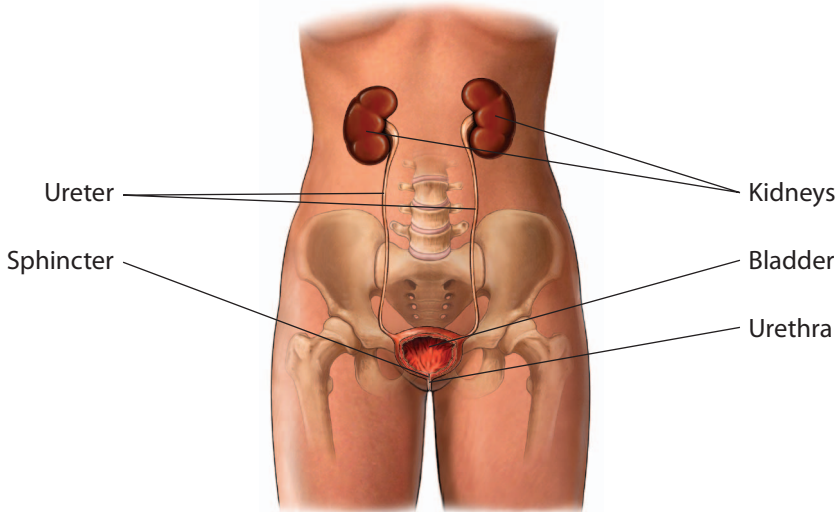
Digestive (gastrointestinal) System



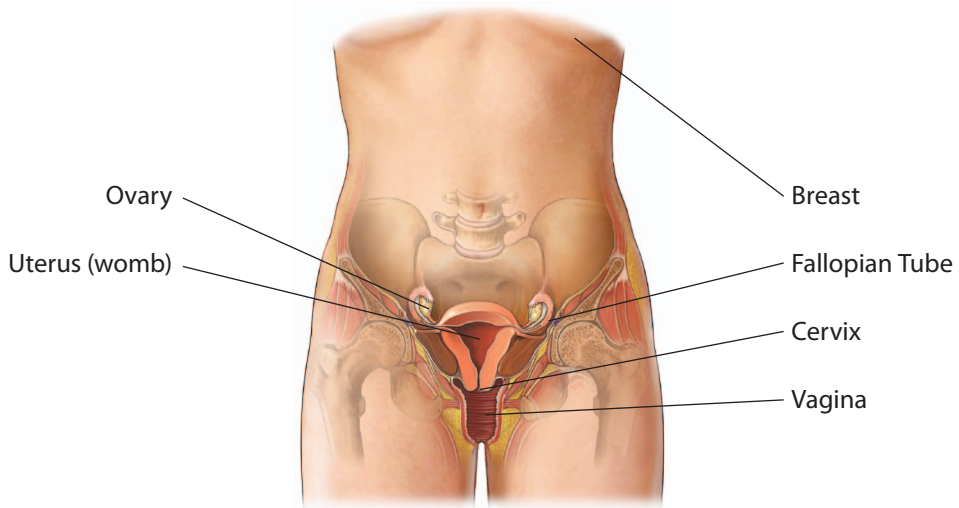
Endocrine System



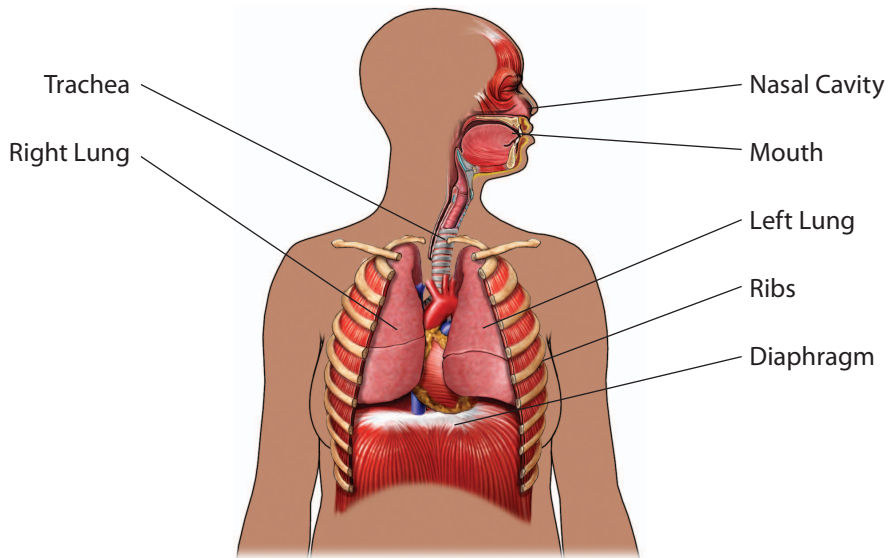
Urinary (renal) System



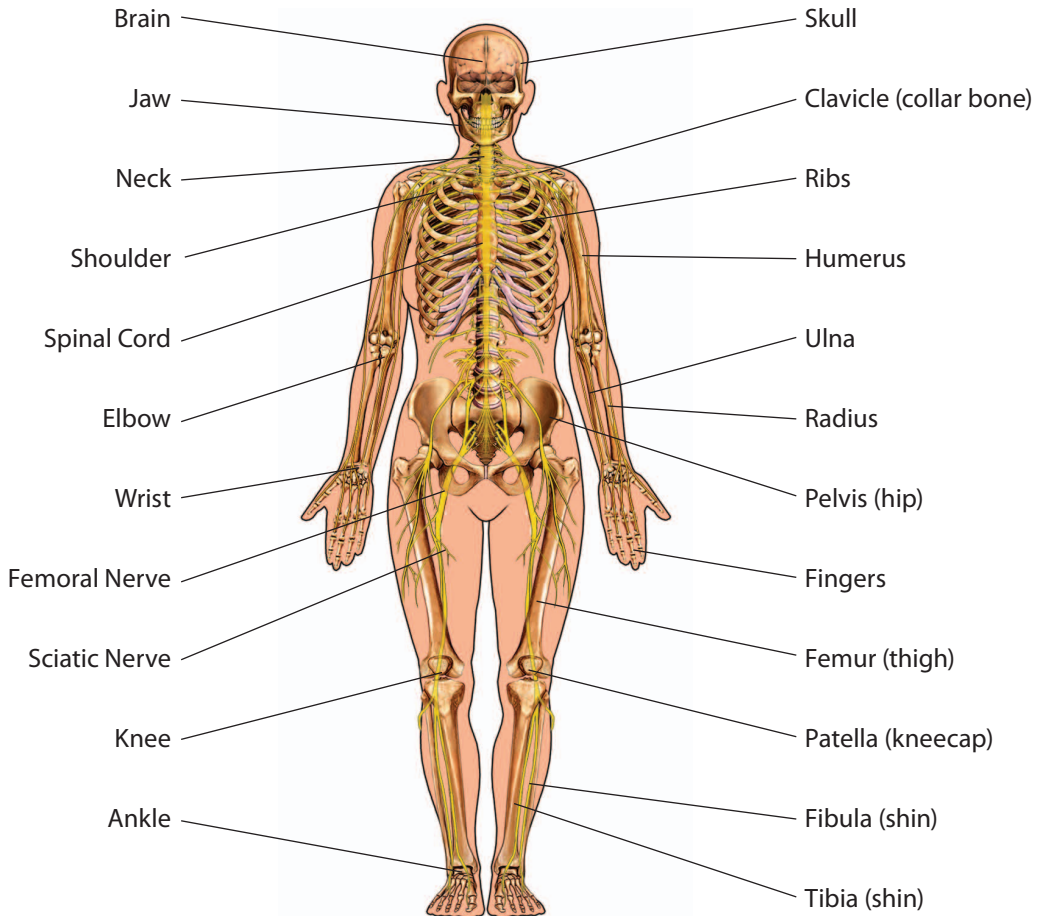
Reproductive System



Respiratory System



Nervous (neurologic) and Skeletal Systems



Pay Attention: Symptoms of Serious Health Problems

The symptoms on pages 41–43 could be signs of serious health problems and should be checked by a doctor or nurse. Be aware that you might have symptoms in one part of your body that could actually mean a problem in another part. Even if the symptoms don't seem related, they could be. Keep track of your symptoms. If you have any of these symptoms, schedule a checkup with your doctor or seek medical help right away if it's an emergency. Listen to what your body is telling you, and be sure to describe every symptom in detail to your doctor.

Symptoms of a heart attack



The most common sign of a heart attack is mild or strong pain or discomfort in the center of the chest. It can last more than a few minutes, or it can go away and come back.

Other common signs of a heart attack include:

- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Shortness of breath (feeling like you can't get enough air)
- Nausea or vomiting with a feeling of doom
- Feeling faint or woozy because of chest pain
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Extreme tiredness and feeling like you cannot exercise

Warning: Some women may feel very tired, sometimes for days or weeks before a heart attack occurs. Women may also have heartburn, a cough, heart flutters, or lose their appetite. Visit www.womenshealth.gov/heartattack.

Symptoms of a stroke



A stroke happens fast. Even if you have signs of a stroke that get better, call 911 right away. The most common signs of a stroke are sudden:

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- Confusion or trouble speaking or understanding
- Severe headache with no known cause

If you have any of these symptoms or see anyone with these symptoms, **call 911** right away. Don't let anyone tell you that you are overreacting or to wait and see. Treatment for heart attack and stroke should be started right away. It's better to be safe than sorry!

Symptoms of lung problems

- Coughing up blood or mucus
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- A cough that won't go away
- Uncomfortable or painful breathing
- A feeling of tightness in the chest



- Severe or painful bleeding with periods
- Moderate to severe pelvic or abdominal pain
- Unusual (for you) vaginal discharge of any type or color or with strong odor
- Pain or other problems while urinating or moving bowels

Symptoms of muscle or joint problems

- Muscle pains and body aches that don't go away, or that come and go often
- Numbness, tingling (pins-and-needles sensation), or discomfort in hands, feet, or limbs
- Pain, stiffness, swelling, or redness in or around joints



Symptoms of breast problems

- Hard lump or knot in or near the breast or in your underarm
- Dimpling, puckering, or ridges of the skin on the breast
- Change in the size or shape of your breast
- Clear or bloody fluid that leaks out of the nipple
- Itchy or scaly sore or rash on the nipple
- Unusual swelling, warmth, or redness



Symptoms of reproductive health problems

- Bleeding or spotting between periods
- Itching, burning, or irritation (including bumps, blisters, or sores) of the vagina or genital area
- Pain or discomfort during sex



Symptoms of mental health problems

- Anxiety and constant worry
- Depression (feeling empty, sad all the time, or worthless)
- Extreme fatigue, even when rested
- Extreme tension that can't be explained
- Flashbacks and nightmares about traumatic events



- No interest in getting out of bed or doing regular activities, including eating or sex
- Thoughts about suicide and death
- Seeing or hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Having trouble falling or staying asleep
- "Baby blues" that haven't gone away two weeks after giving birth and seem to get worse over time
- Thoughts about harming yourself or your child
- Desire to starve or vomit on purpose
- Desire to binge on food excessively
- Routinely consuming more than one alcoholic drink per day

Symptoms of stomach or digestive problems



- Bleeding from the rectum
- Blood or mucus in the stool (including diarrhea) or stools are not the normal brown color
- Change in bowel habits or not being able to control bowels
- Constipation, diarrhea, or both
- Heartburn or acid reflux (feels like burning in throat or mouth)
- Stomach pain or discomfort, such as bloating

- Nausea and vomiting
- Unexplained weight loss or weight gain

Symptoms of bladder problems



- Difficult or painful urination
- Frequent urination, intense urges to urinate, or loss of bladder control
- Urine that is bloody, cloudy, dark, or strong smelling
- Long-term pain in the back or sides

Symptoms of skin problems



- Changes in the skin, such as changes in existing moles or new growths
- Moles that are no longer round or have irregular borders
- Moles that change colors or change in size (usually get bigger)
- Frequent flushing (a sudden feeling of heat)
- Painful, crusting, scaling, or oozing sores that don't heal
- Skin burns easily or breaks out in rash from sun exposure

Fighting the Flu



“Flu” refers to sickness caused by influenza viruses, such as seasonal flu and H1N1. Most healthy people recover from the flu without problems. But certain people are at high risk of serious complications. Some people may even die from the flu.

Flu symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Coughing
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headache
- Body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue

Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

Annual outbreaks of flu usually occur during the late fall through early spring in the U.S. Flu is contagious, which means it spreads from person to person. The flu vaccine offers the best protection against getting sick with the flu.

Steps you can take to prevent flu:

- Get a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available. All people 6 months of age and older should get a yearly flu vaccine.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water often and especially after you cough or sneeze. You also can use alcohol-based hand cleansers.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue away.

If you get the flu:

- Ask your doctor if flu antivirals are right for you. These are prescription medicines that can make your flu symptoms milder and prevent flu complications. These drugs are not substitutes for getting the yearly flu vaccine.

- Stay home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100° F or 37.8° C and above) without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

What is a flu pandemic?

A pandemic is a global outbreak of a disease. A flu pandemic can happen when a new flu virus appears that people have little or no immunity (protection) against. This can happen when influenza viruses in pigs or birds cross over to humans. A new flu virus can spread quickly from person to person across the country and around the world in a very short time. The severity of pandemics can vary depending on the virus-causing illness. You can prepare for pandemic flu like you would prepare for an emergency or a time when you might need to stay home for one to two weeks. Take these steps and see page 56 for more on emergency planning:

- Gather supplies. Keep enough food, water, medicine, and other supplies to last two weeks.



- Make a plan, such as what to do if schools are closed or several family members are sick.
- Prevent the spread of germs.

For current information on flu and how to be prepared for pandemic flu, visit www.flu.gov. You can also call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hotline at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) or 888-232-6348 (TDD) 8 hours a day, 5 days a week.

Act Now: Get Healthy Before Pregnancy



A healthy pregnancy begins long before you even think about motherhood. If you are a woman of childbearing age, take a moment to learn what you can do now to make sure your body is prepared for any future pregnancies.

Folic acid

Folic acid is a B vitamin. It helps the body make healthy new cells. All people need folic acid. But folic acid is very important for women who are able to get pregnant. When a woman has enough folic acid in her body before and during pregnancy, it can prevent major birth defects of the brain and spine, including spina bifida.

All women able to get pregnant need 400 to 800 micrograms (400 to 800 mcg or 0.4 to 0.8 mg) of folic acid every day, even if they are not

planning to get pregnant or are using birth control. This is because birth defects of the brain and spine occur in the very early stages of pregnancy, often before a woman knows she is pregnant. By the time she finds out she is pregnant, it might be too late to prevent those birth defects.

Use your calendar to help you remember to take folic acid every day. "Forgetting" is the most common reason that women give for not taking folic acid on a daily basis. Taking a daily vitamin that contains 400 to 800 mcg (0.4 to 0.8 mg) of folic acid is the simplest way to be sure you get enough.

Preconception health

Getting enough folic acid is one important part of good preconception health. Preconception health is a woman's health before pregnancy. It involves knowing how health conditions and risk factors you have could affect you or your unborn baby if you get pregnant. For instance, some foods, habits, health problems, and medicines can harm your baby — even before he or she is conceived.

Every woman should be thinking about her health whether or not she is planning pregnancy. One reason is that half of all pregnancies are not planned. Another reason is that poor birth outcomes continue to be

a problem in the United States. In fact, 1 in 8 babies is born too early. By taking action on health issues and risks before pregnancy, you can lower your risk of problems that might affect you or your baby later. Ask your doctor about:

- Family planning and birth control.
- Taking folic acid.
- Vaccines and screenings you may need, such as a Pap test and screenings for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
- Managing health problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, thyroid disease, obesity, depression, eating disorders, and asthma. Find out how pregnancy may affect, or be affected by, health problems you have.
- Medicines you use, including over-the-counter, herbal, and prescription drugs and supplements.
- Ways to improve your overall health, such as reaching a healthy weight, making healthy food choices, being physically active, caring for your teeth and gums, reducing stress, quitting smoking, and avoiding alcohol.
- How to avoid illness.



- Hazards in your workplace or home that could harm you or your baby.
- Health problems that run in your or your partner's family.
- Problems you have had with prior pregnancies.
- Family concerns that could affect your health, such as domestic violence or lack of support.

Women and the Affordable Care Act

Health Care for You

Women have unique health care needs. The Affordable Care Act offers important benefits for women and their families. The law ensures that:

- **Insurance companies won't be able to deny coverage to women, just for being women. They also will not be able charge women more in premiums because of their gender.** Before the Affordable Care Act became law, insurance companies selling individual policies could deny coverage to women due to pre-existing conditions, such as cancer and having been pregnant. Women could also be charged more for individual insurance policies simply because of their gender. A 22-year-old woman could be charged 150% the premium that a 22-year-old man paid. In 2014, insurers will not be able to charge women higher premiums than they charge men. The law makes these practices illegal.
- **Insurance companies can no longer deny coverage to children with pre-existing conditions, and eventually all adults.** Under the law, insurance companies are already banned from denying coverage to children because of a pre-existing condition. By 2014, it will be illegal for insurance companies to discriminate against anyone with a pre-existing condition.
- **Women can receive preventive care without copays.** Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, all Americans joining a new health care plan can receive recommended preventive services, like mammograms, colon cancer screenings, and well-child visits, with no out-of-pocket costs.
- **Women have a choice of doctor.** Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, all Americans joining new health plans have the freedom to choose from any primary care provider in their plan's network; can see an

OB-GYN or pediatrician in their health plan's network without a referral; and will not face higher cost-sharing if they use an out-of-network emergency room.

Health Care and Your Family

Women often make health care decisions for their families, and the Affordable Care Act enhances their ability to make the best choices by:

- **Delivering new coverage options for Americans with pre-existing conditions.** Health plans that cover children can no longer exclude, limit or deny coverage to your child (under age 19) based on a pre-existing condition. In addition, the law created a new program called the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) to help provide coverage for uninsured people with pre-existing conditions until new insurance market rules that prohibit discriminating against anyone with a pre-existing condition go into effect in 2014. For more information about the PCIP plan available in your state, please visit www.pcip.gov.
- **Providing consumers with new rights and protections: The Patient's Bill of Rights.** The Affordable Care Act frees Americans from worrying about losing their insurance, or having it capped unexpectedly if someone is in an accident or becomes sick, giving you greater control over your health insurance and care. It also places tough restrictions on health insurance companies to make them more accountable to you.
- **Requiring plans to cover preventive services without out-of-pocket costs.** The law requires new health plans to cover recommended preventive services, including vaccinations, cost-free. Regular well-baby and well-child visits are also covered from birth through age 21. These services do not require a copay or co-insurance when offered by providers in your insurer's network.

- **Allowing kids under 26 to stay on their parents' plan.** If your plan covers children, you can now add or keep your children on your health insurance policy until they turn 26 (except, in some cases, when your child's employer offers health coverage). It doesn't matter whether your child is married, living with you, in school, or financially dependent on you.
- **Help for family members on Medicare.** If your parents or other loved ones are on Medicare, it's good to know the Affordable Care Act protects

current benefits, strengthens Medicare for the future, and offers new benefits that will help cut costs. The gap in drug coverage known as the "donut hole" is being closed, reducing seniors' out-of-pocket costs. In addition, people on Medicare may receive recommended preventive care like mammograms and colonoscopies for free.

To learn more about the law and your health insurance options, visit www.healthcare.gov.

Preventive services for women, including pregnant women, covered under the Affordable Care Act

If you have a new health plan, the following preventive services for women must be covered without you having to pay a copayment or coinsurance or meet your deductible. This applies only when these services are delivered by a network provider. Additional preventive services are covered for both women and men. You can learn more at: www.healthcare.gov/prevention.

- **Anemia** screening on a routine basis for pregnant women
- **Bacteriuria** urinary tract or other infection screening for pregnant women
- **BRCA** counseling about genetic testing for women at higher risk
- **Breast Cancer Mammography** screenings every 1 to 2 years for women over 40
- **Breast Cancer Chemoprevention** counseling for women at higher risk
- **Breastfeeding** interventions to support and promote breastfeeding
- **Cervical Cancer** screening for sexually active women
- **Chlamydia Infection** screening for younger women and other women at higher risk
- **Folic Acid** supplements for women who may become pregnant
- **Gonorrhea** screening for all women at higher risk
- **Hepatitis B** screening for pregnant women at their first prenatal visit
- **Osteoporosis** screening for women over age 60 depending on risk factors
- **Rh Incompatibility** screening for all pregnant women and follow-up testing for women at higher risk
- **Tobacco Use** screening and interventions for all women, and expanded counseling for pregnant tobacco users
- **Syphilis** screening for all pregnant women or other women at increased risk

Additional women's preventive services will phase in beginning in August 2012. These services include:

- Well-woman visits
- Gestational diabetes screening
- HPV DNA testing for women over the age of 30
- STI counseling, and HIV screening and counseling
- FDA-approved contraception methods and contraceptive counseling
- Breastfeeding support, supplies, and counseling
- Domestic violence screening and counseling

How to Talk to Your Doctor or Nurse

Waiting in your doctor's office can make you feel nervous, impatient, or even scared. You might worry about what's wrong with you. You might feel annoyed because you're not getting other things done. Then when you see your doctor or nurse, the visit seems to be so short. You might have only a few minutes to explain your symptoms and concerns. Later that day, you might remember something you forgot to ask. You wonder if your question and its answer matter. Knowing how to talk to your doctor, nurse, or other members of your health care team will help you get the information you need.

Tips: What to do

- **List your questions and concerns.** Before your appointment, make a list of what you want to ask. When you're in the waiting room, review your list and organize your thoughts. You can share the list with your doctor or nurse.
- **Describe your symptoms.** Say when these problems started. Say how they make you feel. If you know, say what sets them off or triggers them. Say what you've done to feel better.
- **Give your doctor a list of your medications or bring them to your checkup.** Tell what prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbal products, and other supplements you're using.
- **Be honest about your diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol or drug use, and sexual history.** Not sharing information with your doctor or nurse can be harmful!
- **Describe any allergies to drugs, foods, pollen, or other things.** Don't forget to mention if you are being treated by other doctors, including mental health professionals.
- **Talk about sensitive topics.** Your doctor or nurse has probably heard it before! Don't leave something out because you're worried about taking up too much time. Be sure to talk about all of your concerns before you leave. If you don't understand the answers your doctor gives you, ask again.



- **Ask questions about any tests and your test results.** Get instructions on what you need to do to get ready for the test(s). Ask if there are any dangers or side effects. Ask how you can learn the test results. Ask how long it will take to get the results.
- **Ask questions about your condition or illness.** When your illness is diagnosed, ask your doctor how you can learn more about it. What caused it? Is it permanent? What can you do to help yourself feel better? How can it be treated?
- **Tell your doctor or nurse if you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant.** Some medicines may not be safe for you or your baby. Other medicines should be used with caution if you are pregnant or about to become pregnant.
- **Ask your doctor about any treatments he or she recommends.** Be sure to ask about all of your options for treatment. Ask how long the treatment will last. Ask if it has any side effects. Ask how much it will cost. Ask if it is covered by your health insurance.
- **Ask your doctor about any medicines he or she prescribes for you.** Make sure you understand how to use your medicine. What should you do if you miss a dose? Are there any foods, drugs, or activities you should avoid when using the medicine? Is there a generic brand of the drug you can use? You can also ask your pharmacist if a generic drug is available for your medication.
- **Ask more questions if you don't understand something.** If you're not clear about what your doctor or nurse is asking you to do or why, ask to have it explained again.
- **Bring a family member or trusted friend with you.** That person can take notes, offer moral support, and help you remember what was discussed. You can have that person ask questions, too!
- **Call before your visit to tell them if you have special needs.** If you don't speak or understand English well, the office may need to find an interpreter. If you have a disability, ask if they can accommodate you.

How to Get a Second Opinion

Even though doctors may get similar medical training, they can have their own opinions and thoughts about how to practice medicine. They can have different ideas about how to diagnose and treat conditions or diseases. Some doctors take a more conservative, or traditional, approach to treating their patients. Other doctors are more aggressive and use the newest tests and therapies. It seems like we learn about new advances in medicine almost every day.

Many doctors specialize in one area of medicine, such as cardiology or obstetrics or psychiatry. Not every doctor can be skilled in using all the latest technology. Getting a second opinion from a different doctor might give you another viewpoint and new information. It could provide you with new options for treating your condition. Then you can make more informed choices. If you get similar opinions from two doctors, you can also talk with a third doctor.



Tips: What to do

- **Ask your doctor for a recommendation.** Ask for the name of another doctor or specialist, so you can get a second opinion. Don't worry about hurting your doctor's feelings. Most doctors welcome a second opinion, especially when surgery or long-term treatment is involved.
- **Ask someone you trust for a recommendation.** If you don't feel comfortable asking your doctor for a referral, then call another doctor you trust. You can also call university teaching hospitals and medical societies in your area for the names of doctors. Some of this information is also available on the Internet.
- **Check with your health insurance provider.** Call your insurance company before you get a second opinion. Ask if they will pay for this office visit. Many health insurance providers do. Ask if there are any special procedures you or your primary care doctor needs to follow.
- **Ask to have medical records sent to the second doctor.** Ask your primary care doctor to send your medical records to

the new doctor. You need to give written permission to your current doctor to send any records or test results to a new doctor. You can also ask for a copy of your own medical records for your files. Your new doctor can then examine these records before your office visit.

- **Learn as much as you can.** Ask your doctor for information you can read. Go to a local library. Search the Internet for reliable government and health organizations, such as womenshealth.gov, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Heart Association. Find a teaching hospital or university that has medical libraries open to the public. The information you find can be hard to understand, or just confusing. Make a list of your questions, and bring it with you when you see your new doctor.
- **Do not rely just on the Internet or a telephone conversation.** To get a second opinion, you need to be seen by a doctor. That doctor will perform a physical examination and perhaps other tests. The doctor will also thoroughly review your medical records, ask you questions, and address your concerns.

How to Read Drug Labels

Medicines, or drugs, come as either prescription or over-the-counter (OTC). Prescription drugs are used under a doctor's care. OTC drugs can be bought and used without a doctor's prescription, and you buy them at a drugstore or grocery store. When using any kind of drug, it's really important to read the label information.

Not following the information given can cause unwanted side effects or make the drug not work. Read the label each time you buy a drug, just in case the information has changed since the last time you used it. If you read the label and still have questions, call your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist for help. See the drug label below and on the next page to know what to look for.

Prescription Drug Label

Pharmacy name and address

Number used by the drugstore to identify this drug for your refills

Person who gets this drug

Instructions about how often and when to use this drug

Name of drug and strength of drug

Number of refills before certain date

Doctor's name

Drugstore phone number

Prescription refill date

Don't use this drug past this date

Local Pharmacy
123 MAIN STREET
ANYTOWN, USA 11111
800-555-5555

DR. C. JONES
DATE 06/23/11

NO 0060023-08291

JANE SMITH
456 MAIN STREET ANYTOWN, US 11111

TAKE ONE CAPSULE BY MOUTH THREE TIMES DAILY FOR 10 DAYS UNTIL ALL TAKEN

AMOXICILLIN 500MG CAPSULES

QTY MRG
NO REFILLS - DR. AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED

USE BEFORE 06/23/13
SLF/SLF

Rx ONLY

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicine Label

Drug Facts

Active ingredient (in each tablet) **Purpose**
 Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg Antihistamine

Uses temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies:

- sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes
- itchy throat

Warnings

Ask a doctor before use if you have

- glaucoma
- a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives

When using this product

- You may get drowsy ■ Avoid alcoholic drinks
- Alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- Be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- Excitability may occur, especially in children

If pregnant or breastfeeding, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

Directions

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Adults and children 12 years and over | Take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours |
| Children 6 years to under 12 years | Take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours |
| Children under 6 years | Ask a doctor |

Other information Store at 20–25° C (68–77° F)

- Protect from excessive moisture

Inactive ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

Therapeutic substance in drug

Product type

Symptoms or diseases the drug treats

When not to use this drug, when to stop using it, when to see a doctor, and possible side effects

More information on how to store the drug

Read carefully: how much to use, how often to use it, and when to stop using it

Other things in the drug, such as colors or flavorings

How to Be Prepared for Emergencies

When disaster strikes, you may not have much time to act. Take simple steps now to prepare your family for sudden emergencies or other disasters.

Three basic steps for disaster or emergency preparedness

1. Get a kit. Relief workers will most likely be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away. Pack a disaster supplies kit that your family can use at home or on the go. A basic kit includes these survival items:

- **Water.** Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person and pet. Each person and pet needs one gallon of water each day.
- **Food.** Store at least a three-day supply of food that will not spoil, such as canned meat, beans, vegetables, fruit, and juices; peanut butter or other high-energy food; and unsalted crackers. Include a nonelectric can opener. Stock up on canned pet food.
- **First aid kit.** Include all medicines you and your children are using, as well as a copy of the prescription (if you can). Include extra eye glasses, contact lens solution, and tampons or sanitary pads.
- **Infant care.** Store baby formula and water to prepare it if a child is not breastfed. Pack diapers and wipes and a hands-free infant carrier.

- **Household and sanitary supplies.** Include a whistle to signal for help, a battery-powered flashlight and radio with extra batteries, waterproof matches, moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties.
- **Other supplies.** Don't forget keys, credit cards and cash, cellphones, and important papers.

2. Make a plan. Complete the form on page 61 and give family members a copy. Talk about potential disasters or emergencies and how to respond to each. Choose a meeting place, other than your home, for family members to gather in case you can't go home. Identify a local and out-of-town emergency contact and teach your children the phone number for this person. Plan to bring your pet with you, because pets are unlikely to survive on their own.

3. Be informed. Know what natural or other disasters could occur where you live and how to prepare for them. Learn about emergency response plans where you live, such as evacuation routes and public shelter locations, as well as how you will be kept informed in an emergency. You can learn more about preparedness at www.ready.gov.

Gather important papers and family information. Keep all important family papers in a safety deposit box or other safe location. Make copies of papers you may need on hand in an emergency

and keep them together, in one place, in case you have to “grab and go” during an evacuation. Include:

- Identification for family and pets (for example, birth certificate, photo ID, driver’s license, passport, green card, pet license and vaccine record)
- Important personal papers, such as health insurance identification cards, immigration papers, children’s school records, and the style and serial number of medical devices, such as pacemakers
- List of family doctors
- Copy of emergency plan and contacts
- Local map

Breastfeeding during an emergency

When an emergency occurs, breastfeeding saves lives.

- Breastfeeding protects babies from the risks of a contaminated water supply.
- Breastfeeding helps protect against respiratory illnesses and diarrhea — diseases that can be fatal in populations displaced by disaster.

The basics of breastfeeding during an emergency are much the same as they are in normal times.

Continuing to breastfeed whenever the baby seems hungry maintains a mother’s milk supply and is calming to both mother and baby.

Visit www.lli.org for information on how to breastfeed in an emergency, even if you have been giving your baby formula.

Food and water safety during an emergency

Food may not be safe to eat during and after an emergency. Water may not be safe to drink, clean with, or bathe in after an emergency such as a hurricane or flood. This is because it may be dirtied with bacteria, sewage, agricultural or industrial waste, chemicals, and other things that can cause illness or death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has information about keeping your food and water safe at www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater.

Staying safe from violence during an emergency

After disasters, women are at greater risk of sexual assault or other violence. Visit www.womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women for safety tips.

Feel Great: Quit Smoking



Most women who smoke say they want to quit. So how do you move from wanting to quit to actually quitting? A first step is to find reasons to quit that are important to you. Consider the many good reasons to quit smoking:

- Your health begins to improve the minute you stop smoking, and you begin to lower your long-term risk of many smoking-related diseases, including lung disease, cancer, and heart disease.
- You will breathe more easily and have more energy.
- You will look and feel healthier overall.
- Your hair, breath, and clothes will smell better.
- You won't need to leave your workplace, your home, or other places to smoke.
- You won't need to worry about whether your smoke is bothering others or harming their health.
- The money you would have spent on cigarettes can be saved or used to buy other things.

- You become a role model to children and other smokers who want to quit.

Millions of people have given up smoking for good, and you can too! **To get started, pick a quit date and write it in your calendar.** Before that day, get rid of all cigarettes, ashtrays, and lighters everywhere you smoke. Do not allow anyone to smoke in your home.

Ask your doctor about medicines to help you quit, and seek counseling and support. Call:

- The National Cancer Institute at 877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848) to talk to a counselor
- 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669 or TDD: 800-332-8615) for help within your state

Also, visit www.women.smokefree.gov for more tips and resources to improve your chances of quitting for good. Freeing yourself of an expensive habit that threatens your health and the health of others will make you feel great!

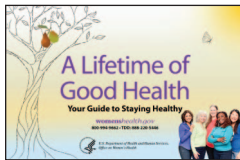
List the reasons why you want to quit here, so you can refer to them if you have an urge to light up. I am choosing to quit because ...

Office on Women's Health in Action

More publications from womenshealth.gov ...

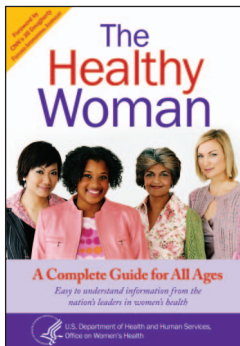
A Lifetime of Good Health: Your Guide to Staying Healthy

This free guide offers women a plan to stay healthy at all stages of life. It includes easy-to-follow steps to prevent or manage many common health problems affecting women. www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/lifetime-good-health



The Healthy Woman: A Complete Guide for All Ages

From the nation's leaders in women's health, this easy-to-use guide provides information on a wide range of issues in women's health at all stages of life. www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/the-healthy-woman



Your Guide to Breastfeeding

This easy-to-read publication provides women the how-to information and support needed to breastfeed successfully. It explains why breastfeeding is best for baby, mom, and society and how loved ones can support a mother's decision to breastfeed. Expert tips and illustrations help new moms learn how to breastfeed comfortably and how to overcome common challenges. The wisdom of real moms is shared in personal stories that reassure and encourage. www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/breastfeeding-guide



Health campaigns and programs ...

Best Bones Forever! is an awareness campaign to help girls ages 9 to 14 (and their parents) understand that now is the time to build strong bones for life. The campaign encourages girls and their BFFs (Best Friends Forever) to eat more foods with calcium and vitamin D and get lots of physical activity. www.bestbonesforever.gov

Office on Women's Health in Action

BodyWorks is a program to help parents and caregivers of adolescents improve family eating and activity habits. Available in English and Spanish, the program focuses on parents as role models and provides them with hands-on tools to make small, specific behavior changes to prevent obesity and help maintain a healthy weight. www.womenshealth.gov/bodyworks

Could I Have Lupus? is an awareness campaign to help women recognize the signs and symptoms of this common disease, which mainly affects women. An online forum lets women with lupus share their stories and support each other. www.couldihavelupus.gov

girlshealth.gov is a website to help girls ages 10 to 16 learn about health, growing up, and issues they may face. Girlshealth.gov promotes healthy and positive behaviors in girls, giving them reliable and useful health information in a fun, easy-to-understand way. The website also provides parents and educators with information to help them teach girls about healthy living. www.girlshealth.gov

Make the Call. Don't Miss a Beat is an awareness campaign to help women recognize the seven most common signs of a heart attack in women and to call 911 right away to get help when these symptoms occur. www.womenshealth.gov/heartattack

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is a nationwide observance that encourages people to take action in the fight against HIV/AIDS and raise awareness of its impact on women and girls. It is observed every year on March 10. www.womenshealth.gov/nwghaad

National Women's Checkup Day is a nationwide effort to promote routine wellness exams and preventive health screenings and immunizations and to remind women to schedule a yearly checkup or routine screening with their health care providers. www.womenshealth.gov/whw/check-up-day

Quick Health Data Online provides up-to-date, state- and county-level data for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories and possessions. Data are available by gender, race, and ethnicity and come from a variety of national and state sources. www.healthstatus2010.com/owh

Text4Baby is a free mobile information service that provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. Women who sign up get free text messages each week in English or Spanish, timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. Text BABY to 511411 to sign up or visit www.text4baby.org.

In an emergency ...

Family contact numbers

Name: _____

Cell phone: _____ Work/school number: _____

Name: _____

Cell phone: _____ Work/school number: _____

Name: _____

Cell phone: _____ Work/school number: _____

Name: _____

Cell phone: _____ Work/school number: _____

Out-of-state emergency contacts

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Local emergency contacts

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Family doctors

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Where to meet if you cannot return home

Place: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Office on Women's Health

womenshealth.gov

800-994-9662 • TDD: 888-220-5446

Scan this code using your smartphone to
go directly to [womenshealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov).

