November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Each year, more people die of lung cancer than colon, prostate, ovarian and breast cancers combined, according to the Mayo Clinic. Many people are surprised to learn that lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S., among both men and women.

Your risk of lung cancer is greater if you use tobacco. The length of time and amount of cigarettes you have smoked affect your risk. The good news is that if you quit smoking — whether you’ve smoked for a few years or decades — your chances of developing lung cancer will drop. See the American Cancer Society’s list of benefits your body reaps when you quit smoking.

The American Cancer Society website lists three main types of lung cancer:

- **Non-small cell lung cancer.** Represents 85 percent of lung cancers. Squamous cell carcinoma, adenocarcinoma, and large cell carcinoma fall under this category.
- **Small cell lung cancer.** Represents 10 percent to 15 percent of lung cancers. Also known as oat cell cancer, this type of cancer spreads quickly.
- **Lung carcinoid tumor.** These tumors make up fewer than 5 percent of lung cancers. Most of these tumors grow slowly and rarely spread.

Planning to quit

November is a great time to make a plan to stop using tobacco. Thursday, Nov. 20, marks the American Cancer Society’s 39th annual Great American Smokeout.

Here are some tips to help if you want to quit:

- See a physician or your workplace health representative.
- Check out the NDPERS Smoking Cessation program. This program helps state employees and their dependents age 18 and older quit smoking or chewing tobacco. Funded through a grant, it pays for approved counseling, medications and health care provider visits and co-pays.

Once you have quit, here are some tips to help you with your journey.

- When you stop buying tobacco, start setting aside at least a portion of that money and earmark it for a vacation or shopping spree.
- Focus on being totally free to work, play, live, travel and spend time with your friends and family — not the hassle of stepping outside to smoke and missing opportunities.
- Switch to water or other unsweetened beverages instead of alcohol or coffee. Use sugarless gum, hard candy, raw vegetables or sunflower seeds. Take a brisk walk.
If someone you know is planning to quit tobacco, here’s how to offer support:

- Listen to their plans, struggles and achievements.
- Don’t minimize their urges.
- Encourage them to spend time with non- and ex-smokers.
- Offer to and take late-night or early morning phone calls or text messages; respond with support.
- Help them plan things in smoke-free settings.

For more resources, visit [http://und.edu/health-wellness/student-health/tobacco-cessation.cfm](http://und.edu/health-wellness/student-health/tobacco-cessation.cfm).

**Depression affects women and men**

Everyone feels sad, hopeless and low from time to time. Yes, even men. The difference with men and depression is that they may experience different feelings and behaviors than women with depression. While women may cry and sleep more, men who are depressed may lose sleep and have issues controlling their tempers. Sadly, for one reason or another, many men don’t accept depression as a common and treatable illness.

Men with depression may go undiagnosed for many reasons, including just being unaware of the possibility they could have the condition.

According to the Mayo Clinic, other reasons men go undiagnosed include:

- **Not wanting to talk about it.** It’s not manly to cry, or so many people think. It’s even less manly to acknowledge feeling sad or depressed. Contrary to this popular assumption, men suffer from depression just as much as women do. Depression doesn’t make a man any less masculine.
- **Not needing help.** Men often ignore health issues, especially when it comes to emotions. "It will go away on its own," is a common assumption about depression. But nobody needs to live that way. Help is available. The first step is admitting feelings of depression that are powerful enough to interfere with daily life.

The National Institute of Mental Health lists these symptoms of depression in men:

- Feeling sad or “empty”
- Feeling hopeless, irritable, anxious or angry
- Loss of interest in work, family or once pleasurable activities, including sex
- Feeling very tired
- Not being able to concentrate or remember details
- Not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much
- Overeating, or not wanting to eat at all
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems
- Inability to meet the responsibilities of work, caring for family or other important activities

As with women, for men experiencing depression, a combination of medication, therapy and lifestyle changes is often enough to make a difference and get people back to enjoying life. These may include one or all of the following:

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, or SSRIs, a class of antidepressant prescription drugs that work to increase certain chemicals in the brain that boost mood
- Psychotherapy, or talk therapy
- Exercise
Remember, depression is a real disorder. Just like people with diabetes maintain blood sugar levels for ideal health, people with depression rely on medications, lifestyle habits and relaxation techniques to cope with their illness. While depression doesn’t often last a lifetime, many doctors consider it a chronic condition if patients complain of mental health issues for two or more weeks at a time.

**Healthy recipes**

**Savory Sweet Potato Fries**

This recipe is brought to you by the American Heart Association’s Patient Education program.

**Description**

Savory seasonings provide zesty flavor to vibrantly colored, nutrition-rich oven-fried sweet potatoes.

**Ingredients**

- Cooking spray
- 2 small sweet potatoes (about 1 pound total)
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne

**Cooking instructions**

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Lightly spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.

Cut the sweet potatoes in strips about 4x1/4x1/4 inches. Put the sweet potatoes in a medium bowl.

In a small bowl, stir together the remaining ingredients. Sprinkle over the sweet potatoes. Stir gently to coat. Spread the sweet potatoes in a single layer on the baking sheet. Lightly spray the tops with cooking spray.

Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until golden brown on the outside and tender on the inside, turning once with a spatula halfway through.

**Nutrition Facts**

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**Dietary Exchanges**

1 1/2 starch