Screening for HPV can help detect cervical cancer

Doctors now believe that human papillomavirus, HPV, is the most common cause of cervical cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year 21,000 HPV-related cancers can be caught and treated early with proper testing. While HPV can cause cervical cancer, it can also create cancer cells in other areas of the male and female genitals.

Other risk factors include:

- Family history
- Smoking
- Immunosuppression, such as that which occurs with HIV or AIDS
- Chlamydia
- Diet low in fruits and vegetables
- Being overweight
- Long-term use of birth control pills and intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- Being pregnant before age 17

Cervical cancer is most treatable when caught early, in a stage doctors call “pre-cancer.” This stage shows that there are cancer cells in the cervix but they have not invaded the surface, which can cause the cancer to spread to other parts of the body.

The great news is that testing is much improved, which means early detection and prevention is better than ever! The best way to prevent cervical cancer is to get tested regularly, especially if you are sexually active.

Your doctor may perform a traditional Pap smear alone or in combination with an HPV test.

- A Pap smear is a test where doctors take a small bit of tissue from the cervix and have it tested in a lab for signs of cancerous cells.
- An HPV test can be done using the sample doctors collect from a Pap smear.
Complete your personal health assessment
Eligible employees and spouses covered under the NDPERS health plan can earn up to $250 per year by using the wellness benefits.

Are you a member of a health club?
Each employee and spouse (18 and older covered under an NDPERS health plan) can earn up to $20 each month if he/she uses a participating health club 12 days or more per month. The health club reports participation and credit is received the following month.

To get started, complete the Health Assessment on HealthyBlue by following the steps listed below:

• Go to a participating NIHCA* club and complete an enrollment form. Be sure to bring your BCBSND member ID card.
• Exercise at least 12 days per month. Make sure the club records each visit.
• Notify the club of any changes in health insurance coverage.

* NICHA (National Independent Health Club Association) is an independent company assisting in the administration of BCBSND’s health and wellness program. BCBSND is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

Not a member of a health club but exercise on your own?
Each employee and spouse (18 and older covered under the NDPERS health plan) can earn rewards for using the HealthyBlue online wellness tool. HealthyBlue creates a confidential, personalized wellness plan, tailored to each person’s lifestyle and wellness goals. Based on individual preferences, HealthyBlue will provide resources to execute a plan and track success. You can earn $20 just for completing the personal Health Assessment on HealthyBlue.

To get started:

• Go to www.ndpersHealthyBlue.com
• Click on “Not registered? Sign Up Now”
• Register and record your username and password
• Complete the Health Assessment

Goal setting: Be SMART
Many people make New Year’s resolutions, only to have them fall away after a few weeks or months. When you set your goals in January, it’s important to have a SMART strategy.

Keep your goals Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and have a Timeline.

Ask yourself what your goal is and how are you going to achieve it. The littlest details will help your goal be more attainable.

For example, if you want to lose 10 pounds, your SMART goal could be to lose 10 pounds by March 5 and to do that by adding 30 minutes of cardio exercise five days a week and reducing your daily calorie intake by 200 calories. The timeline for this weight loss to happen is realistic and attainable without hindering health in anyway. Specific goals with timelines will help to keep you motivated. Weighing in on a scale and logging food and exercise are ways you can measure your goal’s success and keep you on track.
Healthy recipes
Grilled chicken with raspberry glaze

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

Description
This sweet and tart dish uses only five ingredients and is super-simple to put together. You can have it on the table in less than 30 minutes.

Ingredients
Cooking spray
3/4 cup all-fruit seedless red raspberry spread
2 tablespoons honey mustard (lowest sodium available)
1/4 teaspoon cayenne
4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 4 ounces each), all visible fat discarded, pounded to 1/2-inch thickness
6 ounces fresh raspberries (about 1 1/3 cups)

Cooking instructions
Lightly spray the grill rack with cooking spray. Preheat the grill on medium high. In a small bowl, stir together the raspberry spread, honey mustard, and cayenne. Spoon 1/4 cup of the mixture into another small bowl and set aside. Lightly brush both sides of each chicken breast with the remaining raspberry spread mixture. Grill the chicken for 8 to 10 minutes on each side, or until no longer pink in the center. Meanwhile, add the fresh raspberries to the reserved raspberry spread mixture, stirring gently to coat. Serve spooned over the chicken.

Cook’s tip
On Pounding Chicken: Because pounded chicken breasts are more uniform in thickness, they cook more evenly. They also cook faster—and so are less likely to dry out—and are tenderer.

Cook’s Tip on Honey Mustard: Be sure to check the labels on honey mustard from different manufacturers. The amount of sodium varies widely.

Nutrition Facts

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<th>Nutritional Analysis</th>
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Dietary Exchanges
1 1/2 starch
Reduce your salt intake

Did you know you can lower your risk for high blood pressure and heart disease by reducing salt intake?

The average American consumes about 3,400 milligrams of sodium a day, more than double the 1,500 milligrams recommended by the American Heart Association.

Experts recommend that you consume less salt or sodium. That’s not an easy thing to do because most of the salt you consume comes from packaged, processed, store-bought or restaurant foods.

Fresh foods are much lower in sodium than processed foods. Potassium-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, help your body assimilate sodium. When eating out, ask for food with no or low salt.

For more resources on reducing sodium, see the American Heart Association website.