



# TENDING TO YOURSELF IS GOOD HEALTH.

Spend some time focusing on you—staying active, eating healthy, managing your stress, and doing things you enjoy. By taking care of yourself, you can be there for others.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH

A woman's health isn't just about her. If she's a mother, sister, wife, daughter, or friend, her health affects the lives of everyone around her. It's important to make time for regular health screenings and learn what you can do to prevent some common health conditions and stay healthy.

### Help prevent heart disease.

If you think heart disease is a man's problem, think again. According to the American Heart Association, heart disease is the number one killer of women too. The good news is that you can take several steps to

reduce your risk. For one, if you smoke, quit—and the sooner the better. Smoking is a woman's single biggest preventable risk factor for heart disease. Getting regular exercise, eating well, reducing stress, and controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol levels also play important roles in preventing heart disease. Make sure you get regular checkups, and ask your doctor to assess your risk factors.

### Screen for breast cancer.

A combination of mammograms and clinical breast exams provides your best chance of early detection.

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A mammogram can detect small lumps and changes in breast tissue—changes that may indicate the earliest stages of cancer. Ask your doctor when you should get your first mammogram and how often you should be screened after that. Women who have a risk factor such as a personal or family history of breast cancer, an abnormal biopsy result, or a blood relative who has been found to have a clinically significant change in a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene may need more frequent or earlier screenings. Talk to your doctor about what's right for you.

### Screen for cervical cancer.

A routine Pap test for cervical cancer not only can find cancer at an early stage, it also can detect precancerous cells. Since the human papillomavirus (HPV) increases your risk for cervical cancer, your doctor may also recommend an HPV test when you get your Pap test. Talk to your doctor about when to have an initial Pap test and how often to be screened after that. Women who have not had three normal Pap tests in a row, or who have added risk factors such as a weakened immune system due to HIV infection, an organ transplant, chemotherapy, or chronic steroid use, may need Pap tests more frequently. The screening is quick, so don't put it off—your well-being is too important.

### Help prevent osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones lose their strength and density, making them more likely to fracture. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, 80 percent of Americans with osteoporosis are women. One reason that women have a higher risk for osteoporosis is the hormonal changes that occur during menopause. Caucasian and Asian women have a higher risk of developing

osteoporosis. Talk to your doctor about if and when you may need a bone mineral density test. The earlier you work to prevent osteoporosis, the better. Here's how:

- **Get plenty of calcium and vitamin D.**

Women need 1,000 to 1,300 mg of calcium and 1,000 to 2,000 IU of vitamin D per day. Good sources of calcium include milk, yogurt, cheese, dark green vegetables, calcium-set tofu, and dried beans. Vitamin D can be found in fortified milk, soy milk, juices, or cereals; in oily fish (such as salmon, tuna, and sardines), liver, and egg yolk; and is also absorbed by the skin during exposure to the sun. It's very difficult to get enough calcium or vitamin D through diet or sun exposure alone, however, so it's a good idea to take a supplement. Many supplements combine calcium and vitamin D in one.

- **Do weight-bearing exercises regularly.**

These exercises, such as walking or weight training, build bones and strengthen the muscles that help bones resist fracture. Exercise can also improve your balance and coordination, which will help you avoid falls.

- **Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all.**

Alcohol (and to a lesser degree, caffeine and salt) can reduce bone strength by causing calcium to be lost in the urine. In order to prevent osteoporosis, women should drink no more than one alcoholic beverage each day.

- **If you smoke, quit.** Smokers may absorb less calcium from their diets.

### Learn more.

Visit [kp.org/womenshealth](http://kp.org/womenshealth) to learn more ways to tend to yourself.

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