

FOR WOMEN ONLY

What You Need to Know for Your Health's Sake

Mothers and daughters. It's a special relationship. Your smile, your voice, the way you walk—you inherited some of those traits as sure as the sun shines. Unfortunately, you probably inherited a predisposition to certain medical conditions, too. Putting together a family medical history now will give you a preventive edge. That knowledge and the advancements in medicine will help you make healthier lifestyle choices—some that will literally add years to your life.

Osteoporosis and Bone Density

Your Prevention and Treatment Options

We've come a long way in understanding osteoporosis, the condition that causes bones to shrink and become brittle and susceptible to fracture. It affects millions of Americans, 80 percent of whom are women. Researchers estimate that osteoporosis is the culprit behind more than 1.5 million fractures annually. Yet, it's often called a "silent disease" because symptoms of bone fragility may not appear until a fracture points to its existence. If osteoporosis is caught in its early stages, however, lifestyle changes (diet and exercise) and medication may slow down or even arrest the bone loss before damage occurs.



Know Your Risk

Factors that make women vulnerable to osteoporosis include being Caucasian, having a thin frame, leading a sedentary lifestyle, having a family history of the disease, suffering a previous fracture not caused by trauma,

smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol. It's important to know that extensive use of corticosteroids, certain diuretics (water pills), blood thinners and too much thyroid hormone in the bloodstream also can sap bone strength.

Get Screened

Ask your doctor if you should get a bone-density test. Using bone densitometry, a safe and painless exam that detects early bone loss by measuring bone mineral density, can help guide a woman and her doctor to decide whether to begin a prevention or treatment program. In addition, our team of physicians, nutritionists, physical therapists, pharmacists and lab technicians can recommend

lifestyle changes and appropriate therapies for better bone health.

The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends the following women receive screenings:

- Postmenopausal women younger than age 65 with one or more risk factors
- All women older than 65, regardless of risk factors
- Postmenopausal women at age 50 who have a history of fractures after age 40



Exercise

Get moving. Exercise performed at least 30 minutes three times a week and weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, can improve bone density. Low-impact activities, like tai chi, promote better balance, flexibility and coordination. In addition, resistance training strengthens muscles in the upper spine and arms, improves posture and prevents fractures.

Get Your Vitamins and Minerals

Calcium supplements have been shown to significantly reduce nonvertebral fractures in elderly men and women. The recommended amount for postmenopausal women is 1,200 mg daily. Dietary sources of calcium include low-fat dairy products, collard greens, canned sardines and salmon with bones.

Vitamin D helps the body use and absorb calcium. Good sources include vitamin D–fortified skim milk, liver, eggs and fish. Fifteen minutes of sunlight exposure a day is another great way to help the body maintain adequate levels.

Ask your doctor how much calcium and vitamin D is best for you and if supplements can help you meet your daily needs.

Weight Management

Taking the Weight Off Without Putting Your Life on Hold

Nutrition and diets are an area that has seen a tremendous change from one generation to another. Where once we always came home to a home-cooked meal with smaller portions, we're now eating quick-fix dinners or fast food on the run. Healthy food options are available, but you need to know what to look for and what other changes to make to create a healthier you.

Northside's Weight Management Program is a multidisciplinary program involving a registered dietitian, exercise physiologists and a behavior therapist to help you lose weight by adopting a healthier lifestyle—for good. This multidisciplinary approach teaches you:

- How to lose weight eating real food—even restaurant food
- Why exercise is so important
- How reducing stress reduces overeating

Our experts will help you solve your weight problem by conquering the physical, intellectual and emotional factors that help feed it. The result: not just a smaller waistline and a more positive self-esteem, but your best defense against disease.

For more information about Northside Hospital's Weight Management Program, see our New Start, Weight Smart article on page 13.

Heart Disease

Women's Special Needs

Family history isn't destiny when it comes to heart disease. A few decades ago, a fatal heart attack was often the first sign of heart disease. Nearly twice as many women as men die within a year of a heart attack. Part of this has to do with the fact that women display different symptoms. Also,



some of the procedures used to detect heart disease are more specific for men than for women.

Know the Warning Signs

Since women often don't experience the classic symptom of chest pain with a heart attack, it's important to know what the warning signs are. Pay attention to the following:

- A feeling of heaviness or discomfort in the chest
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Unusual fatigue
- Dizziness or fainting
- A persistent feeling of heartburn or indigestion

At Northside Hospital, we know that the physical differences between men and women can affect the accuracy of tests used to evaluate heart health. So, we use only the very latest technology to help screen for heart disease—and to treat it. Our Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory, diagnostic tests and cardiac rehabilitation programs are all important tools in the fight against heart disease, particularly for women. For more information, call us at **(404) 851-8800** or talk to your healthcare provider.

Stroke

The Need for Speed

Treatments available today for strokes can make a life-saving difference if administered within three hours from the onset of symptoms.

Stroke's Warning Signs

To act promptly, be sure you know the signs of a stroke:

1. Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
2. Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
3. Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
4. Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
5. Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If you experience any of these warning signs, call **911** immediately.

Mini-Stroke, Major Warning

Sometimes the symptoms may last only a few minutes. You may be experiencing a mini-stroke, or transient ischemic attack (TIA), which produces similar symptoms. But don't take these signs any less seriously: A mini-stroke can be a predictor of severe stroke and needs to be treated immediately. Through screening, education, early diagnosis and access to a wide array of state-of-the-art treatment resources, the Stroke Center at Northside Hospital is making a difference in the lives of stroke patients in Georgia. For more information about the Northside Stroke Center, call **(404) 845-5265**.



Breast Care

Healthy Habits at Every Age

The good news is very good. Breast cancer has a 96 percent cure rate when detected early. For this reason alone, preventive measures and monitoring are paramount. Because early detection of breast cancer allows more treatment options, all women are encouraged to know their family history on *both* sides, have an annual clinical breast exam and perform a monthly self-exam. Women over 40 should add an annual mammogram to that list. Mammograms that are expertly interpreted by a board-certified, subspecialized radiologist are a powerful tool in the fight against breast cancer.

Providing Expert Care

Northside Hospital's Cancer Care Program has offered clinical excellence and personalized and compassionate care for nearly 40 years. Our Breast Imaging Services

now offer digital mammography at our outpatient imaging centers in Atlanta, Alpharetta, Canton, Cumming, Dawsonville, Johns Creek and Woodstock. In addition, computer-aided detection (CAD), when combined with digital or film screen mammography, can enhance a mammogram's efficacy by providing a "second set of eyes" for radiologists.

Northside also offers magnetic resonance imaging to detect ruptures in silicone gel-filled breast implants. The FDA recently approved the use of silicone gel-filled breast implants for breast reconstruction in women of all ages and breast augmentation in women ages 22 and older. In addition, they recommend that women with these implants receive regular screening MRI examinations over their lifetime to determine whether a silent rupture has occurred. A woman should have her first MRI three years after her initial implant surgery and every two years after that.

While it's true that Northside Hospital leads the state in the number of breast cancer surgeries performed,

including lumpectomy, mastectomy and the latest techniques for breast reconstruction, it's important to know that, at Northside, we treat more than a woman's cancer. We treat the whole woman. It's the reason we're considered the leader in women's health.

Hereditary Cancers

Helping You Know Your Risks

Hereditary cancer is caused by mutations (changes) in specific genes that are passed down from either parent. Genetically influenced cancers include breast, ovarian and colorectal cancer. If an alteration in the cancer-causing gene is identified within a family, there is a 50 percent chance that siblings and children will inherit that alteration.

If you have a strong personal or family history of cancer, genetic testing can help you reduce your risk of developing the disease and increase your chances of survival. This information can help you and your physician better formulate a health care plan to detect your cancer early ... or prevent it entirely.

Are You at Risk?

Nearly 7 percent of all breast cancers and 10 percent of all ovarian cancers are inherited. You should consider genetic testing if you:

- Are diagnosed with breast cancer before age 45
- Are diagnosed with ovarian cancer at any age
- Have a male relative with breast cancer
- Have a blood relative with the mutation
- Have two or more blood relatives—on either mother's or father's side—who had breast cancer before age 50 or ovarian cancer at any age
- Have Ashkenazi or Eastern European Jewish ancestry



A personal or family history of colorectal cancer and endometrial (uterine) cancer is an indicator of the hereditary cancer condition known as hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC). HNPCC is responsible for 3 percent to 5 percent of all colorectal cancers. Most HNPCC cancers are caused by inherited mutations in either of two specific genes—MLH1 and MSH2. Northside Hospital offers one of the most accurate tests available for identifying mutations in these genes. For more information, call **(404) 851-6284** or visit **www.northside.com**.

Mental Health

Keep It Simple

Every generation has had its demands, but with the advancement of technology comes an environment that is money-driven, computer-controlled and high-pressured. If you want peace of mind and greater fulfillment, consider these tips:

Tear up your schedule. Or, at least, plan on one to two totally unscheduled days a week. Stay home and look through photo albums. Relax with some music. Or just do nothing at all.

Plant something. Watching even a couple of tomato vines grow will instill patience and remind you of nature's power.

Acknowledge that you're not indispensable. Even CEOs can be replaced. So don't postpone a vacation because you're afraid things won't get done without you.

Be grateful. Reflect on what brings you real happiness. Be thankful for what you have—including those around you who can provide their medical expertise.

Think about the people who really matter to you. Spend time with friends and family members who make you feel comfortable and make you smile.

Clean out clutter. Clean closets and donate clothes or sell dust-collecting knickknacks at a garage sale. Paring down your physical surroundings can rid you of distractions and let you direct your attention toward more important things ... like your health!

Enhance Your Odds for Optimal Health

Lifestyle changes and other disease-fighting steps are effective at neutralizing your risks. Here are three things that can improve your odds for enjoying your best health:

1. Make lifestyle changes

- Don't smoke—if you do, quit.
- Eat a balanced diet, including antioxidant-rich vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- Exercise regularly for a healthy heart and blood vessels. Exercise also boosts your emotional health, wards off diabetes and strengthens your muscles, joints and bones, which can reduce arthritis pain.
- Lose weight. Losing even 10 percent of your weight can lower your disease risks and boost your self-esteem.

2. Get regular screenings

- Ask your physician how often you need important health screenings, such as blood pressure and cholesterol tests, mammograms, bone density scans and colorectal cancer screenings.

3. Recognize the signs and symptoms of diseases

- Learn the warning signs of illnesses for which you may be at risk.
- Report all unusual symptoms or pain to your physician.

As women, mothers and daughters share many of the same physical and emotional issues, as well as a strong genetic connection. It's clear that by understanding the very powerful mother/daughter bond you'll be able to understand your own health and create a lasting positive legacy of health and well-being for this generation and the next.

For more information about classes or counseling, call **(404) 845-5555** and press 2. Look for educational information in our *At Your Service* section on page 2.