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HEALTHY PRACTICES FOR WOMEN OF ALL AGES

In addition to your regular ob/gyn history, physical, cholesterol screening, pap smear, and other recommended cancer screening tests, we ask that you review this list of “healthy practices”. Modifying your daily activities according to these practices may improve your overall health and well-being. In the event of questions about this list, ask your doctor or health care provider. Consult our website www.rgoa.com for further information.

DIET AND EXERCISE

- Limit fat and cholesterol; emphasize fruits, grains and vegetables. (5 servings a day)
- Aim for 1200 mg calcium preferably in your diet but if necessary use supplements. Calcium is mostly in dairy products and leafy green vegetables.
- Vitamin D 1000-2000 IU a day from either diet supplement or sun exposure (only 6 weeks in summer!) is essential if you live in Rochester.
- Add folic acid supplementation 0.4 mg (or 400 micrograms, present in most daily multivitamins) at least two months before considering pregnancy to reduce the risks of birth defects.
- Participate in regular exercise for 30 minutes at least five times a week, and consider weight training.

INJURY PREVENTION

- Seat/lap belts should be worn while in a car.
- Helmets should be used when using motorcycles, bicycles, roller blades and ATVs or skiing.
- Place approved carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in your house. Replace the batteries twice a year.
- Guns and other firearms should be stored unloaded in a locked area. Trigger locks should be used as well.
- Consider CPR training for household members.
- Remove loose rugs and clutter to prevent falls and broken bones.

DENTAL HEALTH

- Schedule regular visits to the dentist.
- Floss and brush with fluoride toothpaste daily.

IMMUNIZATIONS

- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine is recommended for all adults in view of waning immunity to whooping cough especially if you are exposed to young children under the age of 8.
- An MMR vaccine is recommended for non-pregnant women born after 1956 without proof of immunity or documentation of previous immunization.
- Adults who are susceptible to varicella (chicken pox) should be vaccinated. (2 shots)
- Influenza vaccine is indicated yearly for women. All pregnant women should receive the flu vaccine as well.
- Pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine is indicated for age 65 and older once in your life.
- Hepatitis A and/or B vaccine are recommended for high-risk individuals.
- Gardasil (3 shots) for prevention of HPV is indicated for all men and women ages 9-26.
- Zostrix (shingles vaccine) is indicated for all adults over 60.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Stop smoking; do not use any other tobacco products either.
- Avoid alcohol use when driving, boating, swimming, or operating other machinery. Avoid excessive use of alcoholic beverages.
- Recreational drug use (marijuana, cocaine, etc.) is dangerous and can be habit-forming.



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SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- Be sure to use contraception if pregnancy is not desired
- Regular use of male or female condoms helps prevent sexually transmitted disease.

Risk factors for HIV exposure are:

- 1) You have had more than one sexual partner
- 2) Have had any STDs
- 3) Used intravenous drugs
- 4) Have a sexual partner with these risk factors
- 5) Your sexual partner has had male homosexual exposure
- 6) You received a blood transfusion during 1978-1985.
- 7) Multiple tattoos (also risk of Hepatitis B/C)

Current CDC/ACOG recommendation is for universal HIV testing for women 19-64.

BREAST HEALTH

- Breast self-examinations should be done monthly (after your period).
- A mammogram should be done at 40, then every 1-2 years based on risk factors. If there is a strong family history of premenopausal breast cancer, you should start with mammograms earlier based on consultation of your physician.

COLON CANCER SURVEILLANCE:

- Colonoscopy every 10 years starting between 50-60 or earlier based on risk factors.

FOR PERI AND POSTMENOPAUSAL WOMEN:

- Hormone therapy is appropriate for short-term treatment of menopausal symptoms. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.
- Bone Density Screening (DEXA Scan) at menopause or before with risk factors is helpful to identify osteoporosis.

HEALTH CARE PROXY

- All adults should have a health care proxy and consider a living will.