



# Wellness Buddy Wednesday Tip

October 2007

## National Breast Cancer Awareness Month



October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM). It is important for women to practice the elements of good breast care. It is suggested women 1) obtain regular mammography screening beginning at age 40, 2) obtain annual clinical breast exams, 3) perform monthly breast–self exams, and 4) obtain a risk assessment from a physician.

*Common to all women are daily lifestyle decisions that may affect breast cancer risk. These day-to-day choices involve factors such as poor diet, insufficient physical activity, alcohol use, and smoking. Besides possibly reducing breast cancer risk, lifestyle improvements, represent smart steps for a healthier life, since they can help prevent heart disease, diabetes, and many other chronic, life-threatening conditions.*

- **Decrease your daily fat intake—especially saturated or hydrogenated fats.** Eat leaner meats and limit red meat. Reducing your fat intake helps prevent other health problems such as heart disease and stroke and may reduce your chance of developing breast and colon cancers.
- **Increase fiber in your diet.** Fiber is found in whole grains, vegetables and fruits. This type of diet is beneficial to for your heart and can help prevent other cancers such as colon cancer.
- **Eat fresh fruits and vegetables.** In addition to their fiber content, fruits and vegetables have antioxidant properties and micronutrients that may help prevent some cancers.
- **Limit alcohol.** Evidence suggests that a small increase in risk exists for women who average two or more drinks per day (beer, wine, and distilled liquor).
- **Stay active.** The U.S. Surgeon General has recently reported that you can help prevent many health problems by engaging in a moderate amount of physical activity (such as taking a brisk, 30-minute walk) on most days of the week. Strive to maintain the body weight recommended by a health professional, since excess fat may stimulate estrogen production.
- **Don't smoke.** Although smoking doesn't cause breast cancer, it can increase the chance of blood clots, heart disease, and other cancers that may spread to the breast.