FAIRFAX FAMILY
PRACTICE CENTERS

Health Maintenance Reminders

PREVENTION

- **Exercise**
  Aerobic exercise (walking, bike riding, swimming, running, aerobics) has been proven to reduce stress, help with sleep and reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, hypertension, cancer (specifically colon and breast cancer) and greatly reduce overall mortality. Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise most days or 150 minutes of exercise per week. In addition, two sessions per week of weight-bearing exercise (strength or resistance exercises) can reduce the risk of osteoporosis (brittle bones) and improve strength and fitness.

- **Smoking Cessation**
  If you use tobacco, either smoking or dipping/chewing, quitting would significantly reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, hypertension, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and cancer (especially lung, throat, bladder and cervical). Smoking while pregnant can cause complications such as low birth weight. Children in smoking households have more ear and lung infections and are more likely to smoke themselves. Infants in smoking households are at a higher risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). We can offer information, advice, techniques and medication if you are interested in quitting.

- **Healthy Diet**
  Scientific studies have repeatedly shown the importance of a healthy diet in providing protection from heart disease, stroke, hypertension and many cancers. Reduction in red meats and fatty foods can help control cholesterol. Five to nine servings per day of fruits and vegetables have been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers including colon, breast and prostate. Diets high in natural fiber have been associated with lower rates of heart disease and colon cancer. Eating fish high in Omega 3 fatty acids (salmon, tuna) may reduce risk of heart disease. A healthy diet is essential in any successful weight loss program.

- **Alcohol**
  If you drink, alcohol should be used in moderation. Some studies have suggested that having one drink three to seven days per week may reduce risk of heart disease. Men should have no more than two drinks per day and women no more than one drink per day. Many studies have shown that drinking more than two drinks per day on a regular basis can increase risk of cancer and liver disease. Drinking alcohol while pregnant can cause fetal alcohol syndrome in infants, which could result in a physical or neurological problem.

- **Calcium and Vitamin D**
  Calcium is essential to develop and maintain strong bones. This can be taken in foods or as pill supplements. Vitamin D is needed to absorb calcium. Adults need at least 800 IU of Vitamin D daily. This can be obtained in vitamin supplements or by a few minutes of sun exposure every day (20 minutes to 20% of your skin).
  The following foods each contain about 300 mg of calcium:
  - 2 oz. cheese
  - 8 oz. milk or yogurt
  - 1 cup cooked broccoli, spinach, collards or kale

  The following amounts of calcium are recommended:
  - 1000 mg. per day for men and pre-menopausal women
  - 1200 mg. per day for pregnant and nursing women
  - 1500 mg. per day for post-menopausal women or those with osteoporosis

- **Folic Acid**
  250-1000 mcg (micrograms) daily of Folic acid is recommended for all women of childbearing age to reduce the risk of birth defects.

- **Eye Exam**
  Examination of the eyes by a professional should be done every one to two years.

- **Dental Exam**
  Preventive dental exams should be done at least once a year.

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CANCER SCREENING TESTS

- **Breast Cancer:** Mammograms are recommended every one to two years after age 50. Women between 40 and 49 should discuss the need for routine mammograms with their physician.

- **Cervical Cancer:** Pap smears should be done on a regular basis in women who still have a uterus and are between the ages of 21 and 65. Some women may still need Pap smears if they had a hysterectomy or are over 65 if they are at increased risk for cervical cancer. Pelvic exams may still be recommended by your doctor to screen for other pelvic cancers.

- **Colon Cancer:** Everyone between the ages of 50 to 75 should have periodic screening tests for colon cancer. Examples of these tests are the hemoccult or FIT test, which tests the stool for microscopic blood, barium enemas and colonoscopy. Anyone with increased risk factors for colon cancer may need earlier or more prolonged screening. Ask your doctor what tests are best for you.

- **Skin Cancer:** Risk of skin cancer may be reduced by regular use of sun screen (at least SPF 30) when outdoors, using hats or clothing to minimize sun exposure to the skin, avoiding tanning booths and avoiding sun exposure during peak sun times (11 AM to 3 PM). This will also prevent premature aging and wrinkling of the skin. Monitor moles for asymmetry, irregular borders, color variability or those with larger diameter (> 6 mm) and have them checked regularly.

- **Prostate Cancer:** Ask your doctor about the possible risks and benefits of screening for prostate cancer. This is usually done between the ages of 50 - 75 (earlier for African-Americans or those with family history).

SAFETY

- **Seat Belts** should be used by everyone in a car. Children under 12 are safest in the back seat. Age appropriate car seats should be installed and used consistently. Car seats are required for all children under age six. Seats should be rear facing for infants less than 20 lbs. and may face forward for those between 20 and 40 lbs. Booster seats should be used until a child is over 4 feet 9 inches tall.

- **Smoke Detectors** should be on all floors of the house, have battery backup if connected to the electrical system and should have the batteries replaced every six months (when you change the clocks in Spring and Fall).

- **Helmets** and other protective gear should be used for biking, tricycling, skateboarding and roller blading. Helmets and full protective clothing should always be worn while riding motorcycles.

- **Guns** should be stored in a secure locked location, separate from the ammunition. They are best stored unloaded and with safety locks.

- **Immunizations** should be checked and updated regularly. Ask your doctor if you have any questions.

MPC™

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