

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

OCTOBER IS Breast **CANCER** AWARENESS MONTH

Each year during the month of October, women everywhere are reminded of how to practice breast self-care. This includes being aware of family history and risks, knowing how and how often to do self-exams and when to get recommended screenings.

Screenings are important because they can help doctors catch breast cancer early, when it is most treatable. Early treatment can increase a woman's chance of beating breast cancer by 25–30%.

Breast cancer risk factors

A variety of factors can play into whether someone will develop breast cancer during their life. Some include:

- Getting older
- Obesity
- Starting your period before the age of 11 years
- Not giving birth or having your first child over age 35

years when you have your first child

- Drinking alcohol (recommended alcohol intake for women is 1 or fewer drinks per day)
- Having the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation, which puts a woman at high risk

Based on these factors, it's important to get the appropriate screenings regularly.

All about screenings

Breast self-exam

Starting at age 20 years, do a breast self-exam each month after your period ends. This will help you get used to what your breast tissue "normally" looks and feels like so you'll be able to feel any new lumps or notice any subtle changes.

Breast exam by a doctor

During this exam, your doctor will examine the breast tissue and also feel the lymph nodes under your arm.

Mammogram

Unless you have a history of breast cancer in your family, get a mammogram yearly beginning at age 40. If you're not sure whether you're at higher risk, ask your doctor for their recommendation.

A mammogram is a low-dose X-ray that takes images of the breast tissue from a side-to-side view and a top-to-bottom view. Today, most mammograms are digital, allowing radiologists to enlarge certain sections of the film image to examine them more closely on a computer. These images can show changes that are too small for you and your doctor to feel.

Once your mammogram is complete, it's read by a radiologist, who is skilled at identifying differences between normal tissue and what might be a tumor.

The mammogram also takes images to show what the breast looks like on the inside—called breast tissue. Two common types of breast tissue that may show up are non-dense, fatty breast tissue and dense breast tissue which is a normal and common finding on a mammogram.

Resources: webmd.com; mayoclinic.org; acog.org; cancer.org; and cancer.gov.

10 Ways To Be Safe With Prescription Medication

1. Take medications regularly as directed by your doctor.
2. Keep a list of medications and review with the doctor at each visit.
3. Share with your doctor over-the-counter

4. medications, vitamins, supplements and herbs that you take regularly.
4. Do not change medication dose or frequency without discussing with your doctor.
5. Know your medications side effects, what to do and when to call your doctor.
6. Do not take expired medications.
7. Do not crush or break pills unless directed by your doctor.

8. Keep medications out of the reach of children.
9. Dispose of medications by mixing with a little water and cat litter or coffee grounds, placing in a sealable plastic bag or bottle and putting in the trash.
10. Do NOT flush medications down the toilet.

Resources: webmd.com; fda.gov; and cdc.gov.

Spiced Pumpkin Cookies

The deep flavors of molasses, cinnamon, ginger, allspice and nutmeg make these wholesome pumpkin cookies delicious without the addition of butter—and they lend themselves beautifully to the inclusion of whole-wheat flour.

Ingredients:

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground allspice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup canned unseasoned pumpkin puree
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canola oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dark molasses
- 1 cup raisins

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 3 baking sheets with cooking spray.
2. Whisk whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger, allspice and nutmeg in a large bowl. Whisk eggs, brown sugar, pumpkin, oil and molasses in a second bowl until well combined. Stir the wet ingredients and raisins into the dry ingredients until

- thoroughly combined.
3. Drop the batter by level tablespoonful onto the prepared baking sheets, spacing the cookies $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart.
4. Bake the cookies until firm to the touch and lightly golden on top, switching the pans back to front and top to bottom halfway through, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Nutrition:

Serving size: 1 cookie. Per serving: 72 calories; 2 g fat(0 g sat); 1 g fiber; 13 g carbohydrates; 1 g protein; 9 mcg folate; 10 mg cholesterol; 9 g sugars; 7 g added sugars; 810 IU vitamin A; 0 mg vitamin C; 22 mg calcium; 0 mg iron; 70 mg sodium; 87 mg potassium.

Recipe courtesy of eatingwell.com

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