

## Sample Newsletter Article #2

### You Can Prevent Chronic Illness

Together, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke account for two of every three deaths in the United States, accounting for approximately 1.5 million American lives lost each year. But more and more research finds that lifestyle changes can help lower the risk for developing these chronic illnesses. And the basic steps you must take to prevent these diseases are the same: don't smoke, get regular exercise, make healthy food choices to maintain a healthy weight and see a doctor for routine screenings.

It sounds simple, but if people followed this advice there wouldn't be so many premature deaths from disease each year. Why does this happen? Sometimes people don't know how to eat right. Or they have trouble fitting exercise into their busy schedules. Or they just don't know where to begin.

To help overcome these obstacles, three of the nation's leading not-for-profit health organizations have come together to develop a single set of guidelines. The American Cancer Society (ACS), American Diabetes Association (ADA) and American Heart Association (AHA) have released unified health recommendations for the public and joint screening advice for health care providers. The goal of this effort is to underscore that individuals have the power to make everyday choices for a healthier life.

### The Power of Prevention and Screening

Studies have shown that losing moderate amounts of weight (5-7 percent of body weight) and exercising regularly (at least 30 minutes per day five days a week) can substantially lower the risk of developing diabetes, even for people who are at high risk. Research has also shown a strong association between weight loss and exercise and a reduced risk of heart disease, stroke and some kinds of cancer. If you are overweight, one of the most important things you can do to improve your health is to start and stick with an exercise and weight loss program. There are benefits to staying physically active independent of weight loss – a fitness program should be part of your life even if you are not overweight.

Through research and from experience we also know that early detection can save lives. Whether it's cancer, diabetes or the early warning signs of heart disease and stroke, the same advice holds true – the sooner you and your doctor detect a problem, the better your chances of halting its progression.

Here are some helpful screening guidelines:

#### Men and Women

- **Blood Pressure.** Starting at age 20, this should be measured during every regular healthcare visit, at least every two years.
- **Body Mass Index.** Starting at age 20, it should be measured at every regular healthcare visit.
- **Blood Cholesterol Test.** Starting at age 20, it should be measured at least every five years.
- **Blood Glucose (Sugar) Test.** Unless you have other major risk factors for diabetes, you should be tested every three years, starting at age 45.
- **Colorectal Screening.** Starting at age 50, this test should be performed every 1-10 years, depending upon the test your doctor uses.

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- **Clinical Breast Exam.** Starting at age 20, it should be done every three years, and every year starting at age 40.
- **Mammography.** It should be done yearly starting at age 40.
- **Pap Test.** This should be done every year starting at age 20. After age 30, it should be done every one to three years, depending upon the test your doctor uses and your past results.

### Men

- **Prostate Specific Antigen Test and Digital Rectal Exam.** Starting at age 50, discuss testing with your doctor.

Getting tested is not a guarantee that you can prevent these serious illnesses. But, should they develop, catching and treating them early on is the best possible way to maximize your chances of living a long and healthy life.