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PATIENT EDUCATION

NUTRITION: In general, most people should eat a diet with high fiber, low fat and low sodium. Avoid snacking, junk food and fast food. If you are overweight, lose pounds with a combination of diet and exercise.

EXERCISE: Current recommendations are to exercise most days of the week for at least 30 minutes. Walking briskly is great: “10k a day” (10,000 steps a day)! You will feel better both physically and emotionally.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION: Practice safe sex (condoms) to avoid sexually transmitted diseases. Be careful of body fluid contact (hepatitis and AIDS). Consider an annual influenza immunization (flu shot). If you are over age 65 or have chronic lung disease, get a pneumonia vaccine. You should receive a TDaP immunization every ten years.

BIRTH CONTROL: If you are trying to avoid getting pregnant, use an effective method. Consult your physician.

SMOKING: Cigarettes and tobacco products cause a variety of diseases and cancers. **STOP.** Many programs are available to help you if needed.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS: An occasional drink is acceptable. One drink per day for a female is considered moderate. Do not use illegal drugs. Do not abuse prescription drugs.

DENTAL AND EYES: Have regular checkups. After age 50, check for glaucoma and cataracts on a regular basis.

SUN EXPOSURE: Use sun block to protect against skin cancers and skin damage.

MENTAL HEALTH: Confer with a professional if you are having problems with stress, neglect, abuse, depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, family relationships, etc. Don't allow domestic violence.

INJURY PREVENTION: Always wear your seatbelt; check smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm batteries and lockup firearms. At work, protect yourself against loud noises, repetitive stress syndrome and back pain.

OSTEOPOROSIS: All females need adequate dietary calcium (milk products and leafy green vegetables) and may need supplements. Postmenopausal females need 1200 mgs of elemental calcium if on estrogen therapy (3000 mgs of calcium carbonate). Weight bearing exercise, vitamin D, and calcium will help prevent osteoporosis and its consequences of vertebral, hip and wrist fractures. Ask your physician about estrogen and alternative forms of medication. Your risk for fracture can be calculated by using a tool that can be found at:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/FRAX/>

FALL PREVENTION: If you are older, make sure you don't fall. Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but easy to fix. Remove rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so rugs won't slip; fix loose handrails on stairs and make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs; install handrails in bathrooms, put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower. Get balance training; adjust dosage of sedatives; minimize clutter; remove loose wires; light hallways, stairwells and entrances; wear sturdy, low-heeled shoes; and if you are predisposed to falling, wear hip protectors.

BREAST SELF-EXAM: Check your breasts once a month in the shower with soap on your fingers and lying down. Observe them in a mirror standing with your hands over your head and on your hips to look for contour changes. Have a physician exam every year. Have a mammogram every year after age 40.

STATE OF CA INFORMATION ON GYNECOLOGICAL CANCERS: Please review separate handout or find more information on the Internet at: <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/owh/pages/gcip.aspx>

CANCER PREVENTION, etc.: Stop smoking. Eat a healthful diet with at least five servings of vegetables and fruits every day, and include high-fiber foods. Use alcohol only in moderation. Use sunscreen. Exercise daily. Recognize occupational and environmental hazards. See your gynecologist annually. Colon cancer screening after age 50. Consider HPV vaccine for females up to age 26.

ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE (AHCD): In case of a terminal condition, in which you are unable to speak for yourself, make arrangements to have someone speak for you through an AHCD. You can find more information on filling out this important legal document on the Internet at http://oag.ca.gov/consumers/general/adv_hc_dir

MENOPAUSAL INFORMATION: An excellent source of information is: <http://menopause.acog.org/>