WOMEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

COMMUNITY HEALTH COALITION

Improving the Health of Durham & NC Communities since 1989

Dr. Avis Artis, MD

Happy Women's Health Awareness Month! This month is all about women!

Before we "tip into" women's health let us know how we're doing by taking this brief survey. Please use the following link below to be directed, THANKS!

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In this article, we will talk about some very important stages in every woman's life as well as tips on preventative care and ways to stay healthy/ have the best quality of life!

First, let's talk about a few facts pertaining to African American women:

-Black women are **three to four times** more likely to experience a pregnancy-related death than white women.
-Black women are **more likely** to die from preventable maternal death than other women.
-Black women display signs of *preeclampsia **earlier** than other women.
-Black women are **three times** as likely to have *fibroids than other women.

*What is preeclampsia? Preeclampsia is a condition where blood pressure significantly increases during pregnancy, this can also lead to complications over the duration of the pregnancy.
*What are Fibroids? Fibroids are noncancerous tumors that develop on the uterus during childbearing years.

Reproductive years: 18-39
-Establish a healthy lifestyle, which includes diet, sleep and exercise.
-Due to low iron and vitamin D levels being common among the youth, it is advised to test for these deficiencies.
- Get a cardiovascular risk assessment every 3-5 years. Most risk factors are reversible: smoking, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension.
-If you are sexually active, always use protection until you're ready to start a family. If you're not using protection, it's recommended to have a regular sexually transmitted infection screening.
-Self breast exams should be completed monthly. Check with your healthcare provider when to have a mammogram.
-Have a conversation with your healthcare provider about reproductive health.

Premenopausal Years: 40-55
-During this period, health screenings should become annual and more focused.
-Based on your health and family history, talk to your healthcare provider about when you should have your colonoscopy.
-Make sure to have a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods low in saturated fat (unhealthy fats like butter/ red meats).
-Avoid excessive sun and wear sunscreen.
-Staying physically and mentally active is key to your overall well-being.

Post-menopausal Years: 55 - Beyond
-Maintain a healthy lifestyle with additional focus on increasing both physical and mental activity.
-Include 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercises 5 days a week and 10 minutes of stretching/ weight bearing training daily to improve balance and prevent falls.
-Decrease alcohol intake and avoid nicotine use.
-Screen for hearing loss, bone loss, vision changes, incontinence and memory changes and/or loss.

ABC's To Staying Healthy
-**A**lways be an advocate for yourself. Always get your annual health exams!
-**B**reast self-exam. Early detection for your protection.
-**C**ardiovascular screening. Cardiovascular disease/ heart disease is the #1 killer of African American women, keep your blood pressure in check!

TIP: Taking care of your body and your health means taking care of your feet. It is our foundation, but as women we often forget. For more information, please contact: Millicent Brown, Podiatrist at (919) 471-1002 or visit www.myfootmyankle.com

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