

# HEALTH AND COMMUNITY NEWS

## Breast Cancer Prevention: A Matter of Lifestyle



**Carolyn Gilford**

Evidence based studies agree that the right eating habits, exercising regularly, along with caution in exposure to chemicals that promote disease, can reduce your risk of a diagnosis of breast cancer.

Cancer is a disease that develops over a period of time. Time plus exposure to chemicals, poor diet and the sedentary lifestyle.

Sure, there are risks we cannot control - age, gender, family genes, and the larger environment. However, there are preventive steps we can take for our health's sake.

These measures cannot provide a guarantee that you won't develop the disease, but, they will give you a great start toward breast cancer prevention.

Lifestyle choices as breast cancer prevention strategies. The easiest thing for us to control is our choices of foods and drinks, and next is our activity levels.

So, let's look at some strategies to decrease the risk of breast cancer:

- Limit alcohol. A strong link exists between alcohol consumption and breast cancer. The type of alcohol con-

- Summed — wine, beer or mixed drinks — seems to make no difference. To help protect against breast cancer, skip alcohol completely, in your day to life. Then permit yourself one or two guilt-free drinks during certain celebrations, your birthday, Thanksgiving, and New Years Eve. (Say 2 drinks, 3 times a year.)

- Sugar. Alcohol contains large amounts of sugar, refined carbohydrates, snacks and desserts all contain great amounts of sugar the body does not need, nor can use. But, the most important thing to know about sugar is that it feeds cancer cells. Look at how much sugar you are consuming. Maintain a healthy weight. There's a clear link between

obesity — being over weight, especially if you have gained the weight later in life, after menopause. Excess fat is a source of circulating estrogen. And breast cancer risk is linked to how much estrogen we're exposed to during our lifetime. There are also estrogens in the environment we need to be aware of, as well as estrogen stimulants.

- Stay physically active. Regular exercise can help us maintain healthy weight and, also helps in lowering the risk of breast cancer. Plan on at least 45 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. If you haven't been particularly active in the past, start your exercise program slowly and gradually work up. Include weight-bearing exercises such as walking, jogging or aerobics. These help to also keep the bones strong.

- Limit the fat in your diet. Results from the more and more studies show a definite correlation between dietary fat and breast cancer risk. By reducing the amount of animal fat and chemicalized fats, such as hydrogenated fats and trans-fats in our diet, we can

See **Breast Cancer**, pg.

## Memorial Health Earns Award for Excellence in Women's Care

Memorial Health received a 2009/2010 Women's Health Excellence award from HealthGrades, the leading independent healthcare ratings organization.

Only 169 hospitals received the award nationwide. According to HealthGrades, this places Memorial University Medical Center among the top 5 percent nationally for women's health.

Only two other hospitals in the entire state of Georgia received the award - Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, and Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta.

The award is based on patient outcomes in three major categories of women's health:

1. Women's Medicine,

including treatment for heart attack, congestive heart failure, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and stroke.

2. Women's Cardiovascular Procedures, including coronary artery bypass surgery, peripheral vascular bypass, coronary interventional procedures, resection/replacement of abdominal aortic aneurysm, carotid surgery, and valve replacement surgery.

3. Women's Bone and Joint Health, including total knee and hip replacement, spinal surgery, and hip fracture repair.

"So often, people think of women's health as only involving maternity care and childbirth. But at MUMC, we're proud to provide the highest levels of care for all aspects of a woman's health,

and throughout all phases of her life," said Ramon Meguiar, M.D., senior vice president and chief medical officer at Memorial Health.

To read the full report and methodology, visit [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com).

Memorial University Medical Center (MUMC) is a two-state healthcare organization serving a 35-county area in southeast Georgia and southern South Carolina.

The system includes its flagship hospital, a 530-bed academic medical center; Memorial primary and specialty care physician networks; a major medical education program; business and industry services; and NurseOne, a 24-hour call center. Visit our Web site at [www.memorialhealth.com](http://www.memorialhealth.com).

## Five Things Young African American Women Can Do To Cope with Breast Cancer

Learning that you have breast cancer can be one of the most shocking and life altering moments of your entire life. The initial diagnosis can bring on feelings of not only worry, but life's fragility. Your time becomes precious and your sense of purpose kicks into overdrive. Breast cancer is affecting more young African American women each year and the ages continue to get younger. But the diagnosis, the treatment, and the recovery do not have to be a grim experience.

What is more important than the initial shock and the treatment and even surgery, is the mental state of the woman after she learns that she has breast cancer.

For every woman who has recently been diagnosed and for every woman who knows another who has been diagnosed there are five rules that we must all follow in order to ensure that our lives and the lives of our loved ones will be fulfilled while we take this journey.

- 1) Focus on getting better. Spend very little time thinking about the disease itself, rather, spend time thinking about your life after you get better. A nurse admitted to me that people get sicker when they spend too much time worrying about their illness.

- 2) Avoid morbid, pessimistic people. Even people that you love and who love you can become a drain on your spirit when they treat you like your diagnosis is an automatic death sentence. Many people recover from cancer and go on to lead happy, healthy, and fulfilling



**Zekita**

lives.

- 3) Change your diet. Don't accept any of the soda, sweets, and other junk foods offered to you at your treatment center or anywhere else. A low/no dairy, low/no sugar, no alcohol, and junk free diet will help your body to fight against the tumor. Drink plenty of water, eat extra servings of fresh vegetables, and add extra fiber to your diet to cleanse your body.

- 4) Keep doing what you. The initial diagnosis will be a serious blow and the chemotherapy treatments and surgery will knock you off your feet for a while, but keep your eyes on the prize. Staying focused on your family life (esp. your children) helps you to maintain a positive and healthy mental state and will help your body to fight against the cancer and to recuperate from the toxicity of chemotherapy. The entire time that I have been going through treatments, I have been a single mother, a sociology student, and freelance writer and author. I never missed a beat (except when I was ill from the chemotherapy). I chose to continue living and thriving.

ing.

- 5) Pray, meditate, chant, or whatever it is that you do. Your mind needs to be cleansed when going through a battle with breast cancer. Your spirit should always be nurtured so that you may receive divine guidance. Spend little time sobbing and more time focused on what you want your outcome to be. Have faith that your will heal and trust that things will work out as they should.

As a breast cancer patient and self proclaimed 'survivor' of the disease, I know exactly what a woman goes through after she gets that call from her doctor. Some women choose to join support groups. There are other women who decide that the best way to deal with the disease and the forthcoming recovery, is to cope in solitude and in silence. As a breast cancer patient enduring the most toxic of chemotherapy treatments along with naturopathic treatments, I have learned that my immediate state of mind and well being contribute greatly to the way that my body has responded to the treatments and how well I am doing physically while on the road to recovery.

*Zekita is a freelance writer and the author of 'YourStory Book One'. Her articles have been published by many national and international publications and she has been featured by ABC World News and the Roland S. Martin radio show. To learn more please visit [www.zeniampublications.com](http://www.zeniampublications.com).*

## Step Up Savannah to Hold Annual Meeting

Mindy Hernandez, a senior researcher at Princeton University specializing in Behavioral Economics, will be the featured speaker at Step Up's annual meeting on Oct. 20. Learn more about

how individuals make decisions—from how much to spend on a cup of coffee to whether or not to save for retirement.

We're a lot more irrational, even impulsive than we like to imagine, relying

on unconscious biases that can drive our behaviors.

Whether you're a business owner, corporate manager, work in a non profit, or for government, join us from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. Oct. 20; take some time to think about how to better understand and work with your clients or customers. Just two hours on this Tuesday morning will captivate your imagination.

Our agenda includes a call to the community to commit to take actions to reduce poverty, a review of Step Up's accomplishments over the last year, and presentation of our first-ever Step Up Workplace Innovator Awards, plus recognition of the 2009 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence winners.

Sure it's early but breakfast will be served thanks to our partners at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. You can't afford to miss this meeting.

Call Shawnte Tyler, at (912) 232-6747, or e-mail her at [styler@stepupsavannah.org](mailto:styler@stepupsavannah.org) < by Oct. 13 to reserve a place at the table.

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