



CARE FOR THE WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE

Want to care for the women in your life ... your sister, mother, friend, daughter, niece, and so on? Help them care for themselves. Here are five ways to support women you love in their health journeys.

Urge her to see the doctor. Make sure the women in your life are getting regular check-ups, including screenings such as pap smears, mammograms, heart checks, and diabetes tests.

Encourage her hobbies and passions. The impact of mental health on overall health cannot be overstated, and helping your female friends and loved ones engage in things that make them happy will help them to be mentally strong.

Support a healthy diet. Healthy food is the foundation for a healthy life. Encourage the women in your life to eat well, and make it even easier by joining them in a more nutritious diet. That way everyone wins.

Get active with her. Most people find it easier to exercise with others. Be that other, urging females you care about to get active in whatever way – and at whatever level – works for them.

Help her stop smoking. While smoking among women has declined, one in 10 women smoke, and the rates are higher in some ethnic and social groups. Help a woman you love get healthier by helping her stop smoking and vaping.

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Smart Facts

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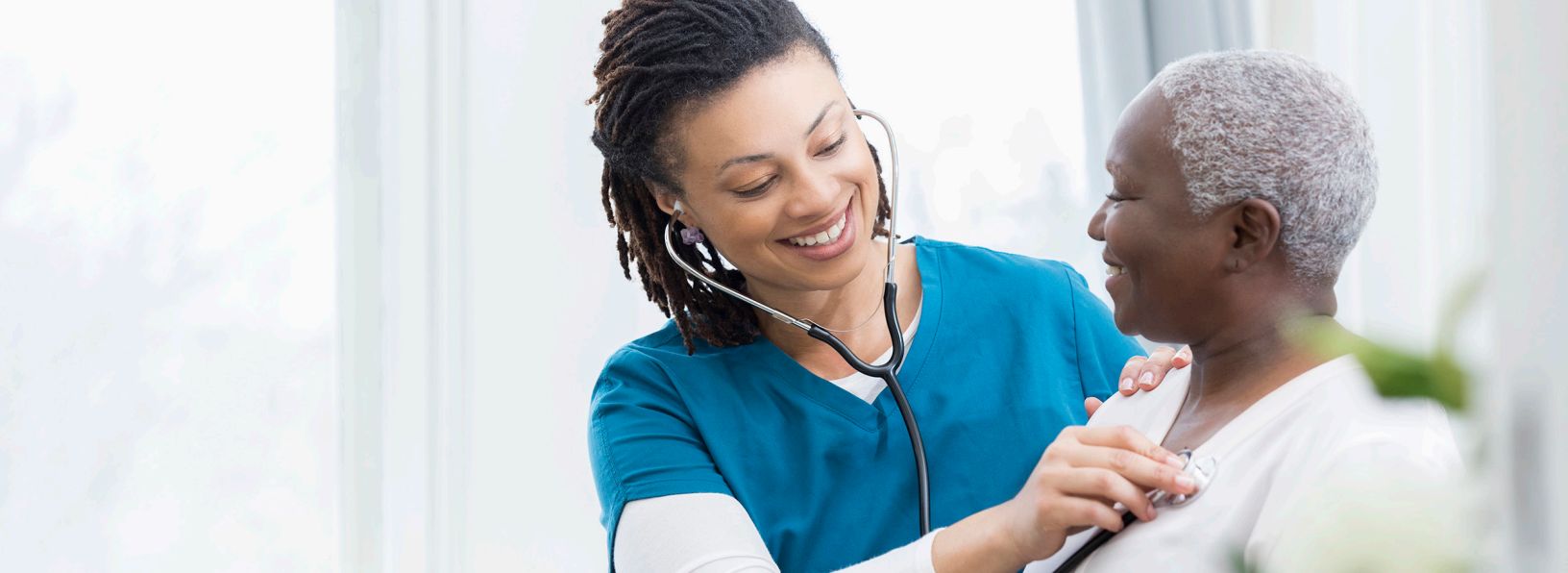
years is the recent decline in women's life expectancy.

76%

of women aged 50-64 had a mammogram in the past two years.

4 MILLION

women alive today have survived breast cancer.



WOMEN'S HEALTH: TOP CONCERNS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Being a woman carries a number of health risks. Some are shared with men, but even then they usually have a unique impact on women. Below we share a list of top women's health concerns and insights on how to address them.

Before we offer that list, though, we first should acknowledge a risk to women's health that isn't health-related: medical professionals' views of women's health concerns.

A [2019 Today Show](#) story noted that women's concerns often are dismissed, in part because women are viewed as being more anxious than men. "The evidence shows that being male or female has profound effects on your health," said Dr. Janine Austin Clayton, director of the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health.

With that as context, it seems the most important action a woman can take for her health would be to advocate for herself, ensuring that her concerns are taken seriously – especially when addressing the following health issues.

Heart disease. The No. 1 cause of death among women, heart disease has many causes, from diet to genetics to unrelated medical issues. The best defense? Healthy living, for one, but also regular screenings that allow for early detection and treatment. [Learn more.](#)

Stroke. Strokes affect thousands more women than men each year. Fortunately, 80% of strokes are avoidable through healthy living and timely reactions to early warning signs. [Learn more.](#)

Breast cancer. The most common cancer among women, breast cancer kills thousands of people each year. By the same token, millions of breast cancer survivors are alive today thanks to advances in detection and treatment. The bottom line: Self-checks and mammograms save lives every day. [Learn more.](#)

Maternal health issues. An unacceptably high number of American women die each year as a result of issues related to childbirth. Better preconception care and healthcare during pregnancy, especially for women of color, would make a big difference. [Learn more.](#)

Mental health issues. Untreated depression and anxiety can absolutely wreck a woman's life, physically, socially, emotionally, and more. While some symptoms and issues can be managed personally, it's essential that women seek professional help if typical stress or sadness becomes too much to handle. [Learn more.](#)

Osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a risk for nearly 30 million women, threatening to leave them frail, hunched over, and in pain. Fortunately, it often can be avoided through healthy choices, most notably diet and exercise. [Learn more.](#)



"The evidence shows that being male or female has profound effects on your health."

QUALIFYING LIFE EVENTS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

If you're facing big changes in your life, you should consider whether they also warrant changes to your health benefits.

Typically you can't sign up for or make changes to your employer-sponsored health benefits until the annual open enrollment season. However, if you've experienced what's known as a Qualifying Life Event – major changes in your life – you might have a chance to make changes at other times of the year.

Commonly referred to simply as a "QLE," a Qualifying Life Event is exactly what it sounds like: a life event important enough to qualify you to make benefits changes.

QLEs might differ slightly from one benefits provider to another, but generally, they include life events that substantially change your benefits status. These include things such as:

- Involuntary loss of health coverage, such as a spouse losing benefits that cover you or a plan being discontinued.
- A change in eligibility (turning 26 and losing parental coverage, for example, or increasing or decreasing your income).
- A change in employment status, such as getting a new job or altering your employment terms (reducing your hours to part-time, for example).
- A change in family status as a result of a marriage, divorce, separation, adding a dependent, or losing a family member.
- A long-distance relocation.

If you have experienced a Qualifying Life Event, you likely are eligible for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP), a window of time when you can make changes to your benefits enrollment.

This apparently happens more often than we think: A University of Minnesota study suggests that as many as 8 million to 10 million Americans might be eligible for special enrollment periods each year, and an Urban Institute study estimated that fewer than 15 percent of consumers who are eligible for SEPs actually take advantage of the opportunity.

So, what should you do if you experience a QLE? First, decide whether you need to make changes to your benefits. Then contact your HR representative or your benefits provider and tell them what's going on. You might be asked to offer proof of the QLE, but usually notifying them and filling out paperwork is all it takes to open up a Special Enrollment Period. Then you can assess your options and choose the best benefits plan for your new situation.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Every two minutes, someone is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States, and it is estimated that nearly 44,000 people die from breast cancer each year. The good news is that the mortality rate from breast cancer declined by 43% from 1989 to 2020. What's driving that good news? Early detection and treatment. Caught early, breast cancer can be survivable – which is why regular screenings are essential. [Learn more.](#)

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: SQUASH

Whether you're talking about acorn, butternut, spaghetti, delicata, or pumpkins, Americans have made squash a mealtime star. The U.S. imports more of it than any other country, with the vast majority coming from Mexico, where squash was first domesticated as a crop some 10,000 years ago.

Of course, one reason for squash's broad appeal might be the fact that the word "squash" refers to such a wide variety of fruits (yes: squash is technically a fruit). Even with all of the different types, though, you'll typically find squash grouped into two categories: summer squash and winter squash.

As you might suspect, this time of year the winter varieties are more popular, including pumpkins, butternut, acorn, and spaghetti squash. Each has its own characteristics – and flavors – but they do share commonalities, including the best way to choose and store them.

To pick the best winter squash, check for good, sturdy fruits, with few soft spots, bruises, or mold, and ones that feel heavy for their size



and that yield a pleasant aroma. Once you have found a good one, store it in a cool, dark, and dry space until you're ready to prepare it. You'll find endless receipts for squash, which easily can either be used as a meal's star attraction or in a supporting role. Either way, given its popularity, you're sure to find a welcoming audience.



Recipe: Roasted Acorn Squash with Brown Butter and Parmesan

Ingredients:

3 pounds acorn squash (about two small ones)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
½ to 1 teaspoon crushed red chili flakes, to taste
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon honey
¼ cup fresh Italian parsley leaves
2 green onions, thinly sliced

Directions:

Place oven rack in the lower half of oven and preheat to 425°. Use a large heavy knife to slice off the stem and bottom ends of the squash. Slice squash in half and scoop out the seeds. Slice squash into 1-inch-wide slices. Toss the slices with the olive oil, 1½ teaspoons salt, and chili flakes. Arrange cut-side down on a large rimmed baking sheet without crowding (use 2 sheets if necessary). Roast 25 minutes, or until squash is tender and golden brown on the edges. Remove from oven and immediately sprinkle cheese over the squash. Heat a small skillet over medium heat. Add butter, letting it melt and bubble as you swirl the pan. When butter begins to foam, turn up the heat to medium-high and cook until the butter turns amber and smells nutty (this should take just a few minutes). Remove from heat and stir in honey. Transfer the squash to a serving platter, using a spatula to grab all the cheesy bits. Top with parsley and green onions and then cover with hot honey butter and serve.

Nutrition Information (6 servings):

CALORIES: 161; SUGARS: 1G FAT: 6G; CARBOHYDRATES: 26G; FIBER: 4G; PROTEIN: 3G; SODIUM: 95MG

Sources: Accessed September 6th, 2023

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