



## **National Women's Health Week**

### **Fact Sheet**

#### **What is National Women's Health Week?**

National Women's Health Week is a national effort by an alliance of organizations to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. The focus is on the importance of incorporating simple preventive and positive health behaviors into everyday life. It encourages awareness about key health issues among all women, including women with disabilities, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinas, and American Indian/Alaska Native women, since research has shown there are significant health disparities among these groups.

#### **When is National Women's Health Week?**

We will celebrate the 7th annual National Women's Health Week May 14-20, 2006. The week will start on Mother's Day and end on the following Saturday, a time when there is much attention already being focused on women.

#### **Where is National Women's Health Week?**

Across America — in communities, neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, the Internet, job sites, places of worship, recreation centers, and wherever people choose to celebrate the role of good health practices in the lives of women.

#### **Who participates in National Women's Health Week?**

National women's groups, local and national health organizations, disability-related organizations, businesses, social service agencies, and others will participate in a national education campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the week and its goals. In short, it will include anyone who wants to help make women's health a top priority. Founding partners of National Women's Health Week hope that each year it is celebrated, more groups will join in a groundswell of activity that will lead to healthier women and a healthier America.

#### **Why celebrate National Women's Health Week?**

When women take even the simplest steps to improve their health, the results can be significant. But women need to be able to choose the most effective steps for their individual lifestyles and circumstances. They need to be informed and take responsible actions to improve their own health. For example, heart disease is the number one killer among women, but cancer ranks first among Asian/Pacific Islander women. When it comes to lung cancer, however, white women have the highest mortality rate, while African American women have the highest mortality rate from heart disease. Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women, but it occurs at a higher rate among African American and Latina women. Women with disabilities often require additional technological and accessible features when seeking health care services; the lack of these features coupled with the lack of cultural competency among providers often prevents them from seeking and achieving proper health care. These differences show the importance of taking appropriate health actions based on individual backgrounds and risk factors.



## National Women's Check-Up Day Fact Sheet

### What is National Women's Check-Up Day?

National Women's Check-Up Day is a nationwide effort, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to encourage women to visit health care professionals to receive regular, preventive check-ups and screenings.

### When is National's Women's Check-Up Day?

The fourth annual National Women's Check-Up Day will be held on Monday, May 15, 2006, which is the day after Mother's Day, the start of National Women's Health Week.

### What is the purpose of National Women's Check-Up Day?

The purpose is to emphasize the importance of getting regular check-ups and asking a doctor about screenings for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Maintaining regular check-ups is one of five health habits that can contribute to the betterment of women's health along with exercise, a healthy diet, not smoking, and following general safety rules.

### Why is it important for women to participate in this effort?

Many of the leading causes of death among women, such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes, can be successfully prevented or treated if the warning signs are caught early enough.

- Heart disease is the number one killer of American women. Often thought of as a man's disease, more women die of heart disease each year than do men.
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death of American women. Lung cancer is the top cancer killer among American women, with an estimated 65,000 deaths in 2002, followed by breast cancer and colorectal cancer.
- Stroke is the number three killer of American women. Each year, 30,000 more women than men have strokes.
- Diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death in women. An estimated 17 million Americans have diabetes (8.1 million women), of which an estimated 6 million are undiagnosed.
- HIV and sexually transmitted diseases also have a major effect on women's health. There are an estimated 40,000 new HIV infections each year in the United States, with about 30 percent of reported infections occurring in women.

### How can women participate in this important event?

To participate in National Women's Check-Up Day, women should contact their existing health care providers or one of the participating health care providers to schedule check-ups and screening services that day. Screening tests, such as mammograms and Pap smears, can find diseases early, when they are easier to treat. Some women need certain screening tests earlier, or more often, than others. During their check-ups, women should discuss with their health care professionals which of the tests are right for them, when they should have them, and how often.

