

The Wellness News

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Take Action During Minority Health Month!

April is Minority Health Month and an important time to acknowledge the health inequalities among different ethnicities. Studies have identified specific health areas that show significant differences between ethnic groups. Although there is some relation between health and ethnicity, plenty of smart choices can be made to prevent disease and live a healthy and fulfilling life. Read on to learn about the different health conditions that have been linked to minorities and steps you can take to decrease your risk.

Diabetes & Heart Disease

Diabetes is a major health concern within the U.S. and there is a significant relationship between risk and ethnicity. For example, the risk of diabetes for Hispanics and Latinos is 50% higher than for Whites.

Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and takes a heavy toll on several minority populations as well. One factor that contributes to heart disease is obesity, where rates are climbing regardless of ethnicity. No matter your background, making healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating a nutritious diet and exercising, are effective ways to prevent these types of health conditions.

Cancer

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH), cancer is the second leading cause of death for most racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. For Asians and Pacific Islanders, it is the number one killer.

Breast Cancer

Screenings and self-checks are extremely important ways to stay on top of your health and detect health conditions, such as breast cancer, early. Many ethnic populations aren't diagnosed until later stages, leading to devastating results. Seek out services, such as the link provided, for free or low cost screenings for breast and/or cervical cancer:

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/screenings.htm>

Check out the American Cancer Society's *Guidelines on Nutrition and Physical Activity for Cancer Prevention*:

<http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/EatHealthyGetActive/ACSGuidelinesonNutritionPhysicalActivityforCancerPrevention/index>

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More...

More Cancer Facts

Tobacco-related cancer

All ethnicities are affected by tobacco-related disease. African American populations have the highest prevalence of smoking, development of lung cancer, and deaths related to tobacco use. One of the greatest and controllable ways to prevent cancer is to stop using tobacco products altogether.

Tobacco advertisers are known to target minorities at an early age. That is why it is so important to educate youth on the dangers of tobacco. Pressuring tobacco companies to stop targeting minorities and youth is another crucial step towards a healthier population. Remember, your children follow examples and can only benefit from tobacco-free role models.

Liver cancer

Liver cancer is another disease that impacts ethnic groups at different rates. A majority of liver cancer is attributed to the hepatitis B (HBV) and C (HCV) viruses, but transmission is preventable through vaccination. There is no vaccination against HCV yet, but it is largely preventable through public health safety and donor screenings. Alcohol consumption is another risk factor for liver cancer and disease, so alcohol should only be used in moderation or avoided.

Action Steps for Prevention

Knowledge is the first step in creating change. For many of these diseases, incidence rates decrease with increased education. Screening is also an important step in order to prevent and diagnosis a disease early. Seeing your primary care physician for an annual check-up is a smart way to stay healthy.

Focus on prevention with your children at an early age through a nutritious diet, regular exercise, limiting screen time on computers or TV, educating them on the dangers of tobacco and alcohol, and providing consistent social support. Health care is available for low-income families with children. Check out the following link: <http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/>



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-343-3822

Sources:

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/black-womens-health-and-happiness/201104/april-is-national-minority-health-month-who-knew-who-c>

<http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/about/OMHHE.pdf>

