You’ve taught your children about wearing a helmet for bicycle safety; teach them about sun safety as well. It is critical for preventing skin cancer later in life.

Five keys to skin cancer prevention: limit sun exposure, use sunscreen, wear protective clothing, avoid artificial tanning, and check your skin often.
There's still lots to do in the world 'cause I’m young and there’s a lot I need to learn.
Do ALL three breast screenings routinely: breast self-exam, clinical breast exam, and mammogram. One or two is not enough.

Go get your mammogram. Don't be afraid of it.
You CAN survive breast cancer and live a long, happy, and healthy life. The key is early detection.
I like to fool with flowers in my yard.

Women up to age 70 should be getting regular pelvic exams and Pap tests. Even if a woman has had a hysterectomy she should ask her doctor about screening for cervical cancer.
March 2006

Call 1-877-252-3324 to ask about free screening for eligible women.
You have only one life. It’s yours. Protect it. Your children will be happy too.

Eating 5 to 9 fruits and vegetables a day is a practice recommended for health protection. It may decrease your risk of colorectal cancer.
African Americans have the highest death rate from colon and rectum cancer of any racial or ethnic group in the United States. Listen for information this month during National Minority Cancer Awareness Week.
You may be at greater risk of contracting skin cancer if your skin burns easily and if you have blond or red hair or blue, green, or gray eyes.

I like to hear my grandfather laugh.
Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States—40 to 50 percent of Americans who live to age 65 will have skin cancer at least once. Check your skin regularly all over your body. Do it yourself and ask a health care provider to do it also.
I found it myself. It was something different. I’m glad I was doing regular monthly breast self-exam.
It takes only 15 minutes a month to do a quality breast self-exam. A key part of early detection is monthly breast self-examination, along with mammography and clinical breast exams.
A husband can encourage his wife to get regular checkups. A Pap smear is a screening test that may be done as part of a pelvic exam. This test can detect changes in the cells of the cervix early when treatment is most successful.
July 2006

Generations Touching

Some women with cervical cancer are treated in clinical trials. Patients who take part in a trial make a contribution to medical science and may have the first chance to benefit from improved treatment methods.
Your life is on the line. Colorectal cancer is more likely to occur as people get older. More than 90 percent of people with this disease are diagnosed after age 50.
People 50 and older should be screened for colorectal cancer. Ask your health care provider about the five different screening tests for this cancer.
It is very important to establish healthy habits at a young age. Protection from the sun is important for people at any age, but especially for children. While fair-skinned people are at greatest risk, skin cancer occurs in all ethnic and racial groups.
Many scientists believe there might be a link between childhood sunburns and malignant melanoma later in life. Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer.
You can still be cute and sassy.

When breast cancer is found early enough, the survival rate is 97 percent. A lumpectomy, which removes the small tumor and saves the breast, may be an option.
A regular clinical breast exam by a health care provider, along with mammography and breast self-exams, is a key part of early detection.
At first we cried together, but then we got on with the work of getting better.

Cervical cancer is one of the most treatable forms of cancer if found early. See your health care provider for regular screening exams such as the Pap smear.
At present, early detection and treatment of precancerous tissue remain the most effective ways of preventing cervical cancer.
Studies suggest that diets high in animal fat and low in calcium, folate, and fiber may increase the risk of colorectal cancer. Starting when your family is young, consider lowering your meat intake and adding more vegetables.

Taking care of our family’s health is one of the best gifts we can give each other.
Some risk factors for colorectal cancer cannot be changed. These include age, family history, genetics, and Crohn's disease. Poor diet and cigarette smoking are risk factors we can change.
What is cancer?
Cancer is a group of more than 100 different diseases. They all affect the body’s basic unit, the cell. Cells are the building blocks that make up tissues. Tissues make up the organs of the body. When cells grow old, they die, and new cells take their place. Normally, the new cells grow and divide only when they are needed. Cancer occurs when cells become abnormal and divide without control or order. If cells keep dividing when new ones are not needed, a mass of tissue forms. This is called a tumor. The tumor can be benign or malignant. Benign tumors are not cancer. They can usually be removed and, in most cases, they do not come back. They do not spread to other parts of the body. Malignant tumors are cancer. Cancer cells can invade and damage tissues and organs near the tumor. Cancer cells also can break away from a malignant tumor and enter the lymphatic system or the bloodstream and spread to other parts of the body.

Why is screening important?
When detected early, cancer treatment options are more flexible and less invasive. The best chance of survival is when cancer is found in its earliest stages. It is important, therefore, for everyone to adopt regular early detection and screening practices.

Skin
Skin cancer can occur anywhere on your body. Do an all-over-the-body check at home. Check everywhere, but pay particular attention to moles on your body. Don’t wait for the area to hurt — skin cancers seldom cause pain. During your annual visit to a health care provider, request that he or she conduct a visual scan of your entire body.

Cervical
The two key screening processes are pelvic exam and Pap test.
In a pelvic exam, the doctor checks the uterus, vagina, ovaries, Fallopian tubes, bladder, and rectum. The doctor feels these organs for any abnormality in shape or size.
The Pap test is a simple, painless test to detect abnormal cells in and around the cervix. A scraper or small brush is used to collect a sample of cells from the cervix and upper vagina. All women should begin cervical cancer screening about 3 years after they begin having vaginal intercourse but no later than when they are 21 years old. Screening should be done every year.
Beginning at age 30, women who have had three normal Pap test results in a row may get screened every 2 to 3 years. Your physician, however, may continue to recommend annual screenings.

Colorectal
People in their 50s and older should be screened regularly. People who are at higher than average risk of colorectal cancer might need to begin screening tests before age 50; they should talk with their health care provider.
Several types of screening tests are used:
- A digital rectal exam (DRE) is often part of a routine physical examination. The doctor can feel for abnormal areas in your rectum.
- The fecal occult blood test (FOBT) can find even tiny amounts of blood in the stool. Other follow-up tests can be used to find the source of the blood and to determine if it indicates cancer.
- During a sigmoidoscopy, the doctor checks inside the rectum and lower colon using a lighted tube.
- During a colonoscopy, the doctor examines the rectum and the entire colon using a longer lighted tube.
- A double-contrast barium enema involves the patient taking an enema with a barium solution. This allows the physician to see an outline of the colon and rectum on an x-ray and to check for any unusual growths in these parts of the body.
Breast
The best protection is early detection: do all three early detection screenings—mammography, clinical breast exam, and breast self-exam. This increases chances of finding breast cancer before there are symptoms.

What are the frequently used treatment options?
Two main categories of treatment are used for skin, breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer: local and systemic. Local therapy includes surgery and radiation therapy to remove or destroy cancer only at the treated area. Chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, and biological therapy are systemic treatments. They enter the bloodstream and destroy or control cancer throughout the body.

Guidelines for Breast Cancer Early Detection

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<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
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Mammography: A picture that can save a life

Lump sizes

Average size of lump found by getting regular mammograms (3 mm)

Average size of lump found by first mammogram (5 mm)

Average size of lump found by regular breast self exam (8 mm)

Average size of lump found by accident (25 mm)

Sources


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What You Need to Know About Cancer of the Cervix, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, NIH Publication No. 95-2047, Revised July 1994

What You Need to Know About Cancer of the Colon and Rectum, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, NIH Publication No. 03-1552, September 2003


Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Contact your local Alabama Cooperative Extension Office for more information on these four cancers. In addition to informational brochures, your Regional Extension Agent for Human Nutrition, Diet, and Health can help arrange programs for your organization or in your county.

Call the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program to see if you qualify for a free breast and cervical exam. It is for women 40 and older who are uninsured or underinsured and income eligible. The phone number is 1-877-252-3324.

The information in this calendar is not intended to provide advice on personal medical matters or to substitute for consultation with a physician or health care provider.

Models used in photos are not the persons quoted.