



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

MEDDAC Bavaria Preventive Medicine Newsletter

October 2021

For all current and updated COVID-19 limitations visit: www.7atc.army.mil and the [U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Facebook Page](#)

What is happening in October:

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Healthy Lung Month
- Liver Awareness Month
- Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 3-9)
- World Mental Health Day (October 10)
- Global Handwashing Day (October 15)

take your BEST SHOT!

Protect yourself and your loved ones. Get vaccinated against COVID-19 & INFLUENZA



Every 2 minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States.

That's a dreadful statistic. Over time, we've learned one thing to be true – breast cancer doesn't discriminate. In fact, as of 2021, it became the most common cancer *globally*. In the United States alone, roughly 330,480 new cases of breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in women *this* year and an estimated 43,600 women are expected to die. Here are the hard facts: 1 in 8 women will be *diagnosed* with invasive breast cancer in their lifetime, and 1 in 39 women will *lose* their battle with breast cancer. Roughly 85% of breast cancer occur in women who, in fact, have no family history of breast cancer.

Lower your risk - While there is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, there are always steps you can take to help lower your risk. Here are some tips:

Make time for yearly screenings: Early breast cancer is usually diagnosed through a mammogram because it often causes no signs or symptoms, which is why yearly screenings are so important. It is the most effective technology to help find and diagnose breast cancer early on when chances of survival are still high. Not only does early diagnosis reduce the risk of death, but it also increases options for treatment.

Perform a self-exam on a monthly basis:

- ♥ **Step 1:** Check to make sure your breasts are their usual size, shape, and color. Also, make sure they are evenly shaped without noticeable deformation or swelling. If you see any of the following changes, contact your healthcare provider immediately: dimpling or bulging of the skin, nipple abnormalities such as inverted nipples, redness, soreness, or rash.
- ♥ **Step 2:** Raise your arms and look for those same changes.
- ♥ **Step 3:** While in the mirror, look for any signs of discharge coming out of one or both of your nipples.
- ♥ **Step 4:** Feel your breasts while laying down, and use your hands to massage firmly, feeling for any lumps.
- ♥ **Step 5:** Feel your breasts again, this time standing up or sitting down.

Stay at a healthy weight: adults who have increased body weight have a higher risk of breast cancer after menopause.

Eat a balanced diet: studies show that a diet high in vegetables, fruit, and calcium-rich dairy could lower your risk of breast cancer, along with limited consumption of red and processed meat.

Staying active: many studies show that moderate or vigorous exercise is linked with a lower risk of breast cancer and many other cancers. It's recommended to get 150 to 300 minutes of exercise a week – ideally 300.

Avoid or limit alcohol: alcohol, even minimal consumption, increases the risk of breast cancer. It's ideal to avoid alcohol entirely or to drink in moderation – no more than one alcoholic beverage per day (12oz beer, 5oz wine, 1.5oz liquor).

Breastfeeding, if able: breastfeeding for at least several months, ideally, the first year, is an added benefit of reducing the risk of breast cancer.

Sources: www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer; www.breastcancer.org; www.nationalbreastcancer.org; www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast

Healthy Ears = Ready Force

AUDIOLOGY AWARENESS

MHS Military Health System
health.mil HEARING.HEALTH.MIL

- More than 36 million American adults have some degree of hearing loss and over half of them are younger than age 65.
- Hearing loss is invisible and not noticeable to the individual in the early stages. Annual hearing checks will help you maintain your hearing health.
- Audiologists can help prevent, evaluate, diagnose, treat and manage hearing loss and balance disorders.
- Service members can prevent hearing loss by wearing protective gear like ear plugs, noise muffs, noise-attenuating helmets other approved devices.
- Many service members work with loud engines machinery, or in environments with potentially hazardous noise exposure. These create an increased risk of noise-induced hearing loss.
- Check with your Hearing Conservation Program or military treatment facility about which protective device is best for your job and environment: <https://hearing.health.mil/Prevention/Hearing-Protection-Devices>
- Service members have many hearing protection device choices to guard their hearing from noise exposure in different work and recreational environments. Find out which device is right for you: <https://hearing.health.mil/Prevention/Evaluated-Hearing-Protection-Devices>

World Lung Day 2021
Saturday 25th September

Care for your Lungs!

Taking care of our lungs is now more important than ever. How to do that?

Say no to tobacco - Tobacco causes 8 million deaths every year and is the main cause of many lung diseases. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, many of which are toxic and can cause cancer. Stopping smoking is the best way to improve your lung health and overall health. Quitting tobacco has the potential to reverse some of the damage done by tobacco smoke to the lungs, but not all. The benefits of quitting tobacco are almost immediate.

Say no to vaping - Vaping is the use of an electronic system to deliver inhaled drugs, most commonly nicotine. There is increasing evidence that inhaled nicotine from e-cigarettes damages lung tissue and lowers the body's natural resistance to infections and cancers.

Protect your lungs through vaccination - Vaccines save millions of lives each year. Vaccines work by training and preparing the body's natural defenses, the immune system, to recognize and fight off the viruses and bacteria they target. If the body is exposed to those germs later, the body is immediately ready to destroy them thereby preventing illness. Getting vaccinated can protect you from lots of different infectious diseases and help you keep your lungs healthy. Pneumococcal pneumonia, COVID-19, influenza and whooping cough are examples of respiratory infections that can be prevented by vaccination.

Breathe clean air - Air pollution kills an estimated 7 million people worldwide every year. WHO data shows that 9 out of 10 people breathe air containing high levels of pollutants. Air pollution has a negative impact on human health and exposure to it can affect 100% of the population, from unborn babies to the very elderly. The lungs are the first point of entry for air pollution into the body and are therefore the first affected organ. Air pollution affects everyone—rich and poor, developed and developing countries, but it hits the hardest where the exposure is greatest, low and middle-income countries.

Take regular physical activity - Regular physical activity and exercise improves quality of life, whether you are healthy or you have a lung condition. Many people associate keeping fit with maintaining a healthy heart, losing weight and reducing the risk of illnesses such as diabetes, but exercise also helps keep lungs healthy. When you exercise, your heart beats faster and your lungs work harder. Your body needs more oxygen to fuel your muscles. Your lungs step up their activity to deliver that oxygen while expelling additional carbon dioxide. In addition, your lungs expand during exercise compared to when not exercising, preventing compression of lower lung areas.

Sources: www.lung.org

Next Issue: November 2021: © MEDDACB Preventive Medicine

... Why hand-washing is an essential habit - even past the pandemic...

While some pandemic-era habits will likely fade as more people get vaccinated, routine hand-washing is one key behavior that we should hold on to, Jane Brody writes for the *New York Times* (7/12)

Why hand-washing is so important

To help reduce the spread of infectious disease, CDC recommends that - in addition to other precautions - you should routinely wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Handwashing compliance spiked in 2020.

(But the habit isn't sticking.)

Specifically, CDC recommends washing your hands often and especially after certain activities that could lead to the spread of germs, such as touching your face, using the restroom, handling a mask, or coughing or sneezing. Soap and water help break down the fat and protein layer around the coronavirus, which then allows the virus to be washed away. If soap and water are not available, you can use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol instead.

America's history of poor hand hygiene

Before the pandemic, Brody writes, most people didn't follow consistent hand-washing habits. For instance, a 2012 survey of 1,000 American adults found that only 71% of people washed their hands "regularly," while more than half had either seen someone leave a restroom without washing their hands or had not washed their hands after being on public transportation. Thirty-nine percent of respondents said they did not wash their hands after sneezing, coughing, or blowing their noses.

Even health care workers were not always diligent with their hand-washing habits, Brody writes. In one 2020 study, for instance, the authors said that, "as nurses, we are aware that hand-washing has not always been taken as seriously as it should, with compliance and adherence in clinical settings far from optimal over time." In fact, only 40% of nurses complied with hand-hygiene guidelines before the pandemic, according to multiple reports from different countries. The authors encouraged everyone—medical professionals and non-medical populations—to continue washing their hands "once the pandemic is over."

However, although people's hand-washing habits improved during the early months of the pandemic, many people have not kept up the habit consistently over time. A study published in April in *JAMA Internal Medicine* analyzed hand hygiene compliance at the **University of Chicago Medical Center** and found that while compliance peaked at 92.8% on March 29, 2020—near the start of the pandemic—it had dropped to 51.5% by August 15, 2020, just a few months later.

Additionally, a survey from **Bradley Corporation**, a commercial bathroom fixture company that frequently conducts surveys on hand-washing habits in the United States, found that in January only 57% of Americans said they washed their hands at least six times a day, down from 78% in April 2020.

How to wash your hands properly

The coronavirus, including the highly contagious delta variant, continues to spread, and people who remain unvaccinated are at an especially high risk of being infected. Protective measures, such as mask wearing, social distancing, and hand-washing, are all important in helping prevent the spread of the virus, according to public health authorities.

To wash your hands properly in everyday situations, the CDC recommends following these steps:

- 1) Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply plain soap;
- 2) Lather up your hands and then rub them together, making sure to get between your fingers;
- 3) Scrub for at least 20 seconds, counting or humming the "Happy Birthday" song twice to time yourself;
- 4) Rinse your hands before drying them on a clean towel or allowing them to air dry;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/12/well/live/hand-washing-pandemic-habit.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/why-handwashing.html>