

What every woman needs to know about cancer

A new survey shows too many of us believe a dangerous myth.

Messages about the role genes play in your cancer risk have been getting through to women loud and clear—but maybe too much so: A new survey by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists found that **almost two thirds of women mistakenly believe that if no one in their family has cancer, they won't get it either.** The fact is, most cancers occur in people with no family history of the disease.

(Seventy to 80 percent of women who get breast cancer, for example, don't have a relative who's had it.) That doesn't mean cancer is totally random and unavoidable: There are things you can do to reduce your overall risk, says Christy Russell, M.D., codirector of the breast cancer center at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

•**Don't smoke.** It's the most important move you can make, and it slashes your chance of getting lung, throat—and



even cervical—malignancies. One third of all cancer deaths are directly attributable to smoking, says Dr. Russell.

•**Eat right and exercise.** Being active and adding more fruits, vegetables and whole grains to your diet can reduce your risk for nearly all cancers, including breast cancer.

•**Get screened.** Regular Pap smears, periodic skin checks (even for women of color) and annual mammograms after age 40 are a must. —JASON HIDALGO

HEALTH ANSWERS, PLEASE!

FROM JOANN E. MANSON, M.D.



Lens case or germ lab?

Q I sleep in my contacts. How bad is that, really?

A: Pretty bad, especially if you do it regularly. Will you go blind? Probably not. Could you get painful abrasions or infections that may harm your eyesight? Absolutely. While you're awake, your eyes make tears that wash bacteria away, and oxygen is reaching your cornea. But when you're asleep and your eyelids are closed, germs, fungus and debris can fester.

Q: That goes for *all* lenses?

A: "Extended wear" ones are much less likely to cause problems, but even those aren't risk-free. It's important to note that other habits can hurt your eyes too. One survey found that 79 percent of patients regularly skirt their eye doctor's instructions by doing things such as wearing lenses for too long—and 17 percent never replace their lens case, which you're supposed to do every three to six months.

Q: How will I know if something is wrong?

A: If your eyes are red, tender or swollen, make an appointment with your eye doctor ASAP.



Glamour contributing editor JoAnn E. Manson, M.D., is chief of the division of preventive medicine at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and a lead researcher on the Harvard Nurses' Health Study.

Calorie math

<p>YOU COULD EAT THIS</p> <p>One cup baby carrots with ¼ cup ranch dressing 350 CALORIES, 31 GRAMS FAT</p> 	<p>OR ALL THIS</p> <p>One cup baby carrots with ¼ cup hummus; 1 ounce goat cheese with 3 whole-grain crackers; a small apple and 10 pistachios 350 CALORIES, 16 GRAMS FAT</p> 
<p>THE LESSON: Ranch dressing is calorie central. Swap it for hummus and you can load up on snacks. —JACKIE NEWGENT, R.D.</p>	

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DEBORAH JAFFE; AIMEE BARRYCHKO; HEATH ROBBINS; LUCAS WISSER; STYLIST: BRETT KURZWEIL. HEALTH QUICKIE: RESEARCH PRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING

▶ **HEALTH QUICKIE** Talking on a cell for more than an hour a day may hurt hearing, research suggests. Y not txt?