



# Women Veterans News Letter



 **OCTOBER**

VOLUME 3 - ISSUE 5 - FALL 2004

## *Diet and Breast Cancer*

There are many risk factors for most types of cancer. Diet is a common area looked at in regards to relation of food to cancer. The 2 main areas of interest for breast cancer are *alcohol* and *obesity/high fat intake*.



Alcohol: women who drink more than 2 servings daily have a 1 ½ times increase risk than those who have 1 serving or less. Alcohol is related to cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus.



What is a serving?

12 ounces or beer, 1 ½ ounces of liquor or 4 ounces of wine.

Obesity/high fat diet: Fat tissue can change some hormones into estrogen in addition to what your ovaries make. The more fat you have, the greater possible increase in estrogen.

The role of dietary fat has been conflicting. Many studies have found less breast cancer in countries where fat intake is low. Studies in the United States have not produced that link. What is clear is that excess fat intake usually leads to obesity. Excess body fat can produce more estrogen from other hormones.

General guidelines for healthier meals include increasing fruit and vegetable intakes, choosing lower fat dairy products and limiting high fat meats.



**American Cancer Society Website:**

<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp>

# Urinary Incontinence

12 million Americans suffer from urinary incontinence. 15-30% of women over 60 years old have this problem. It is twice as common among women than among men. One woman in three suffers at least occasional urinary incontinence, but embarrassment has long kept most of them from acknowledging the problem.

Women who suffer from it often become socially isolated. They may stop traveling or decline social invitations. Some women give up physical activities, may gain weight and perceive themselves as old and disabled. Fortunately, it doesn't have to be this way.

Fluid management: avoid fluids before bedtime.

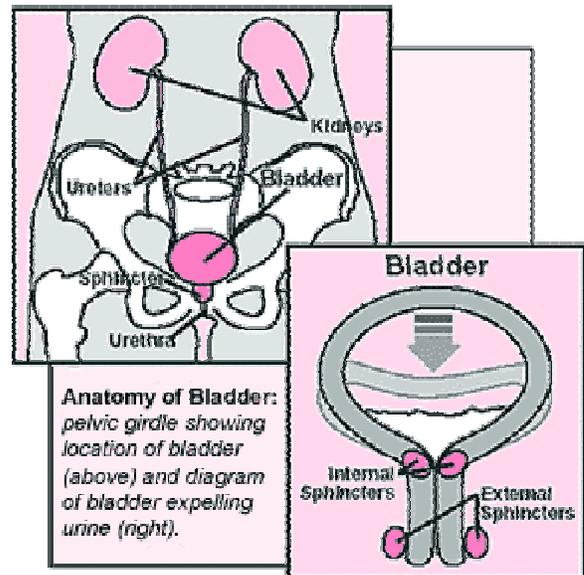
Irritants: avoid bladder irritants such as soda, caffeine and alcohol.

Behavioral therapy: special exercises and training programs to strengthen the pelvic muscles are effective in improving bladder control.

Medications: medications relax the bladder or tighten the sphincter muscles to control incontinence.

Surgery: may be an option to restore the support of your pelvic muscle.

*If you are experiencing urinary incontinence, discuss your concerns with your primary care provider.*



## Calling all Women Veterans

The VA cares about you and your wellness. We offer preventative health care to all Women: Pap smears, mammograms, bone density, contraceptive management, hormone replacement, gynecological consultation, and maternity care. Discuss your personal needs with your Primary Care Provider and/ or

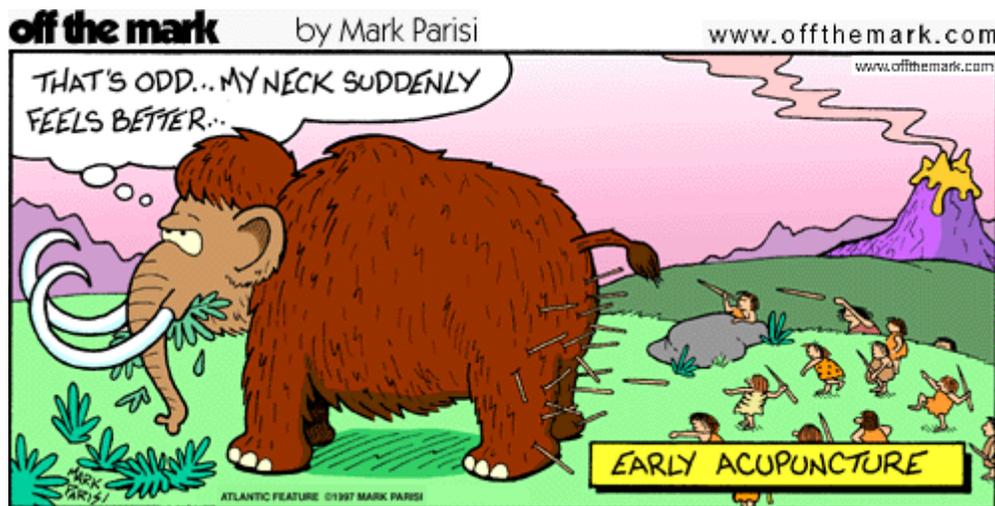
It is important to let your provider know if you have had a pap smear or mammogram or other tests from an outside provider. Please provide your provider with copies of your tests at your next visit.

Appointments in Women's Clinics are readily available. Please call for an appointment. Help us help you keep well.

# Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use has increased. The amount of out of the pocket dollars in 1997 was between \$36 billion and \$47 billion. The data was from the 2002 National Health Interview survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics.

The report is based on 31,044 interviews of adults of 18 years and older.



The results showed that 62% of adults used some form of CAM over a 12 month period. Complementary and alternative medicine is defined as a group of diverse medical and health systems, therapies, and products that are not presently considered conventional medicine. Prayer was included in CAM therapy. The 10 most common CAM therapies were: 43% used prayer specifically for one's own health, 24% used prayer by others for one's own health, 19% natural products, 12% deep breathing exercises, 10% participation in a prayer group, 8% meditation, 8% chiropractic care, 5% yoga, 5% massage, and diet based therapies.



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***The Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Center Committee on Cancer  
and the Women Veterans Committee  
joins the American Cancer Society to  
present:***

## ***Breast Cancer Awareness***

***Wednesday, October 27, 2004  
Second Floor Recreation Room  
2:00 p.m.***

***Louise Guszick, CRNP***

***All are invited!***

