Digital Mammograms Improve Breast Cancer Detection for Some Women

Breast cancer is the most common non-skin cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related death among women in the United States. The use of mammograms for breast cancer screening has been shown to reduce the risk of dying from breast cancer by 18 to 30 percent.

If you are a woman age 40 or older you should have a mammogram to screen for breast cancer every one to two years. Your doctor might want you to be screened more often if he or she determines that you are “at high risk” for developing breast cancer, or talk to your doctor about what screening frequency is best for you.

In the past few years a new technology for mammograms, digital mammography, has become available. The new digital mammogram machines differ from the traditional film mammogram machines much like digital cameras differ from traditional film cameras, capturing the image electronically instead of on film.

Digital mammograms have been shown to improve breast cancer detection for women who are:

• under the age of 50
• of any age who have very dense breasts
• of any age who are pre- or peri-menopausal

The digital image is an advantage that digital mammograms have over film mammograms, especially for women in rural areas. Digital images can be shared electronically, making it easier for your doctor to consult with other experts if the results from your screening are questionable. Also, the digital images can be stored on a computer and enhanced, magnified, or manipulated for further evaluation.

Digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet. Remember, digital mammograms are a newer technology so the costs to the patient are generally higher than for a film mammogram, and they may not be covered by all insurance plans yet.

The Southern Community Cohort Study newsletter is published yearly for study participants. It is not intended as a replacement for the medical advice of your personal physician; any specific questions about your health should be referred to your doctor.

To submit story suggestions, request additional copies of the newsletter, or report a change in address or telephone number, call us toll free at 1 (800) 734-5057.

Prominent Breast Cancer Foundation to Fund Study of Obesity in the SCCS

Data collected from the Southern Community Cohort Study is currently being used to study obesity and other breast cancer risk factors thanks in part to a grant from Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

The funding is being used by SCCS researchers to complete two projects. One project is looking at causes of obesity from both the lifestyle and genetic perspective. Obesity is viewed as one risk factor for breast cancer that we have the ability to change and is linked to a higher risk of breast cancer for women after menopause. We hope that learning more about the causes of obesity will help us better understand the relationship between obesity and breast cancer. The second project is looking for genetic markers that point toward an increased risk for developing breast cancer.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure funds research, education, screening, and treatment projects in the fight against breast cancer. For more information about the Foundation, you may visit its website at www.komen.org.

National Cancer Institute Provides Continued Funding to the SCCS

In a year when competition for research dollars is stiff and a shortage of government funding threatens the continuation of a number of cancer research studies, the SCCS has been approved for another five years of funding (the most that can be granted at any one time).

Over the past three years, the funding that the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has received from the federal government has barely kept pace with inflation. NCI’s decision to re-fund the SCCS while funding is so tight is a great tribute to the importance of this landmark study.

Over these next five years, you will see us finish enrolling participants into the study and then focus on re-contacting all SCCS participants to follow-up on their health.

Who Said Quitters Never Win?

Did you know that just one year after you quit smoking your risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker??

This is just one of the many health benefits you will get when you successfully quit smoking.

If you smoke and you would like assistance with quitting, the National Cancer Institute has a Smoking Quitline you can call at 1 (877) 44U.QUIT.
Recipe

Did you know that blueberries are one of the few truly blue foods on earth and are also one of the few fruits native to North America? These delicious treats are loaded with disease-fighting antioxidants and are a good source of fiber. Scientists are discovering that the health benefits of blueberries may be as far reaching as helping to prevent diseases like cancer, heart disease, and skin conditions. Eating blueberries may also help slow some effects of aging, particularly the loss of memory and motor skills. Compared to nearly 40 other fruits and vegetables, blueberries rank highest in disease-fighting antioxidants. Why not add some blueberries to your diet by trying this delicious blueberry breakfast recipe?

BLUE-CORNMEAL GRIDLE CAKES
Serves: 8

INGREDIENTS:
1/4 cup ground blue cornmeal (if you cannot find blue cornmeal you may substitute ground yellow cornmeal)
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 tbsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 cup skim milk
2 1/2 cup honey (divided)
2 tbsp canola oil
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries (or 1/4 cup dried blueberries)
Vegetable-oil cooking spray
Chili powder (optional)

PREPARATION:
1. Combine first 4 ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Whisk together milk, 1/3 cup honey, oil and eggs in a separate large bowl.
3. Fold in blueberries.
4. Heat nonstick skillet over medium heat.
5. Coat lightly with cooking spray and spoon 1/4 cup batter onto hot skillet.
6. Whisk together oil in hot skillet; add remaining batter and level the surface with a spatula. (If you are using a griddle, then you might already know how valuable your local community health center is to the health of your community.)
7. Sprinkle with chili powder, if desired.
8. Serve with a pat of butter or a dollop of honey and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

Enjoy!

Can Eating Fatty Foods Cause Cancer?
We wish to thank our study interviewers for their feedback on what are the common concerns that you (our study participants) have about the cause of cancer. In this article we address one of your concerns on the subject of diet. If there is a topic that you would like to see addressed in a future newsletter, please let us know! To submit a story idea call us toll free at 1 (800) 734-5057.

The study of diet and how it affects our health can be very complex. Scientists are still trying to piece together many questions about how the foods we eat and the nutrients in those foods affect our health. It is hard to study how a single nutrient in our diet affects our health because different amounts of a single nutrient can be found in many of the different foods we eat, and each food is also made up of a large mix of nutrients.

You might have heard a lot about different types of fats and how they affect the health of your heart and vascular system. Generally, including Omega 3, polyunsaturated fat, and monounsaturated fat in your diet has been shown to be good for your heart and vascular system, while eating too much saturated fat and trans-fat has been shown to have negative effects. (See the chart below for common sources of these fats in the diet.)

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There is less known about how the different types of fats in your diet affect your risk of getting cancer. So far, there is little evidence that any type of fat in your diet will reduce your risk of getting cancer. There is some evidence that eating animal fats (such as lard, butter, and fats found in meat and dairy) might increase your risk of getting cancer; however, more research needs to be done to understand whether it is the fat or some other aspect(s) of the foods or one’s overall lifestyle that causes the apparent increase in risk. To date, there is no substantial evidence that the amounts of fat you eat in your diet will affect your risk for cancer.

Studies like the Southern Community Cohort Study that ask a lot of questions about the foods you eat are designed to help researchers understand which parts of the diet might be linked with our risk for cancer. Until the relationship between specific foods and/or nutrients and cancer is better understood, the best thing you can do to reduce your cancer risk is to live a healthy lifestyle by being a healthy weight and exercising regularly. In fact, overweight and obesity are thought to increase your risk for several cancers including colon cancer, post-menopausal breast cancer, endometrial cancer, esophageal cancer, and kidney cancer, and may contribute to 14-20% of cancer related deaths in the United States. As a bonus, controlling your weight by eating a healthy diet and participating in a regular exercise program will not only help you to decrease your risk for some cancers, it will also help to reduce your risk of early death, heart disease, diabetes, breathing problems, arthritis, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Keep In Touch!
Being able to keep in touch with our participants is an important part of the Southern Community Cohort Study. In the future, we will have questions about how things like your diet and health may have changed. Being able to follow you over time provides the best information to understand how factors like genes, diet and lifestyle affect the risk of cancer and other diseases.

At some time in the future, study staff will be contacting you with a brief follow-up questionnaire. Until then, we ask that you please let us know if you move or change phone numbers. If you move or change your phone number, please let us know. You can call us toll free at 1 (800) 734-5057.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS PLAY VITAL ROLE IN THE FIGHT TO ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES
Did you know that African Americans have the highest death rates and shortest survival time of any racial group in the U.S. for most cancers? African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than white women despite the fact that they are less likely to develop breast cancer in the first place. In 2003, the death rate for all cancers combined was 35% higher for African American men than for white men and 18% higher for African American women than for white women.

In the research community we call these differences in health between different groups health disparities. Health disparities are not only found between groups of people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds. Health disparities can also be seen between groups of different income and education levels. And, for example, people who do not have health insurance are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at a later stage of the disease, are less likely to receive appropriate care, and are more likely to die from cancer than people who have health insurance. Health disparities can also be seen between groups of people from different geographic regions throughout the Unites States. For example, for the years 2000-2007, the rate of dying from all cancers was higher in Louisiana than any other state in the U.S. for men. For women, the rate of dying from all cancers was highest in Kentucky for the same time period.

The Southern Community Cohort Study (SCCS) is designed to help explain and prevent some of these health disparities.

While researchers are working to help eliminate health disparities by conducting studies that help us understand why they occur, community health centers are working to eliminate health disparities by improving the quality of health care in communities at risk for poor health. If you are one of the more than 57,000 SCCS participants who enrolled in the study at a community health center, then you might already know how valuable your local community health center is to the health of your community.

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Blue-Cornmeal Griddle Cakes

Recipe

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INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/4 cups ground blue cornmeal
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup skim milk
- 2/3 cup honey (divided)
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 2/3 cup dried blueberries (or 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries (or 2/3 cup dried blueberries)
- 1/4 cup powdered cornmeal
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup vegetable-oil cooking spray
- Chili powder (optional)
- Drizzle warm honey and chili for each cake.

PREPARATION:

1. Combine first 4 ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Whisk together milk, 1/3 cup honey, oil and eggs in a separate bowl and add to dry ingredients.
3. Fold in blueberries.
4. Heat nonstick skillet over medium heat.
5. Coat lightly with cooking spray.
6. Warm remaining honey in a saucepan and add a dash of chili powder to taste, if desired. Drizzle warm honey and chili powder mixture over cakes.

Enjoy!

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The chance of surviving at least five years after a cancer diagnosis is lower for people who live in poorer areas of the U.S. (where 20% of people or more live below the poverty line).

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