



2006: The Year of Prevention

Major Causes of Death in LA

Chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes are the leading cause of death and disability in Los Angeles County. They impact the quality of life and substantially increase the cost of providing health care. Yet chronic diseases are often preventable.

Prevention Matters!

To encourage a healthier life and avoid serious illness, the *Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors* declared 2006 as "The Year of Prevention," following a motion introduced by Supervisors Gloria Molina and Yvonne B. Burke, pictured with OWH Acting Director Ellen Eidem.



Prevention is key to a healthier life. Lifestyle changes and regular health screenings can help eliminate or reduce many chronic diseases. Additionally, healthy choices have the added benefit of boosting your self-esteem, and increasing your sense of well being and your energy level.

Recommended screenings include gynecologic and clinical breast exams, Pap tests and, if you are over 40, mammograms and screenings for hypertension, cholesterol and diabetes.

Encourage all the women in your life to be active, eat smart, don't smoke, and get checked. **Prevention Matters!**

Heart Disease in Women - An Overview

By Rita Singhal, MD, MPH

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the U.S. Typically this disease is believed to be a man's disease however 38.2 million women have heart disease and one in three women will die from it.

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the most common form of heart disease. There is narrowing of the coronary arteries that feed the heart. When coronary arteries become clogged, not enough blood is supplied to the heart and angina or a heart attack can occur. Chest pain or discomfort with activity is the main symptom of CHD; however women are more likely to have unusual or atypical symptoms such as shortness of breath, indigestion, nausea and fatigue or chest pain at rest. A

Welcome to the first issue of the quarterly Office of Women's Health (OWH) newsletter.

We intend to present our readers with information on women's health issues, provide updates on our *Prevention Matters!* campaign, feature special events, and spotlight our community partners, including best and promising practices.

We encourage our readers to submit articles and information about activities, and will appreciate your comments and suggestions.

Email submissions and comments to the Editor, Jessica St. John.
jstjohn@ladhs.org

In this Issue:

- Year of Prevention.....1
- Heart Disease in Women.....1
- Ask the Doctor.....2
- OWH in Action.....3
- Prevention poster.....7

OWH Mission

To improve the health status of women in Los Angeles County by providing education and promoting resources, programs and policies that are helpful and responsive to women, and increasing access to culturally competent, comprehensive health services.

Heart Disease in Women – An Overview *continued from Page 1*

woman who has any of these symptoms should talk with her doctor so additional tests can be done to determine if she has CHD. Sometimes there may be no symptoms of CHD until there is a heart attack or sudden cardiac arrest.

Certain behaviors and conditions can affect your chances of developing heart disease or worsening it once it starts. The risk factors that can not be changed are age (being 55 or older) and family history of early heart disease (a father or brother diagnosed before age 55, or a mother or sister diagnosed before age 65). A woman's risk for heart disease increases dramatically after menopause when the protective effect of estrogen is no longer present.

The risk factors that you can change include: cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, overweight/obesity and physical inactivity. Targeting these modifiable risk factors by maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help prevent or control heart disease. Six

main steps that you can take towards a healthy lifestyle are: stop cigarette smoking, lower high blood pressure, reduce high cholesterol, tightly control diabetes, be physically active and lose extra weight. In addition to lifestyle changes, you may require medications to help prevent or treat heart disease.

Prevention of heart disease begins with knowing which risk factors you have and taking action to control them. Be active, eat smart, quit smoking and get checked. Prevention Matters!

www.americanheart.org

The American Heart Association website provides in depth information on making and maintaining a healthy heart in English and Spanish.

www.ladhs.org/owh or preventionmatters.org

Multi-lingual heart health educational materials are available for downloading on the OWH website under "Features."

Your Heart, Your Life...



Ask The Doctor...

How can I tell if I am having a heart attack?

The most common heart attack symptom is pain or discomfort in the center of the chest usually described as squeezing fullness or tightness. When this occurs at rest and is associated with other symptoms such as shortness of breath, discomfort in the neck, jaw or arms, palpitations and sweating, it can signal a heart attack.

In women, a heart attack can present differently. Symptoms such as indigestion, nausea, vomiting, lightheadedness and pain in the back are somewhat more common in women than in men. Also, the symptoms tend to start slowly and build up over a longer time period.

If you or someone you are with is having these symptoms, call 9-1-1 right away. The faster you get to the hospital, the better chances you have of surviving the attack. If you can't reach emergency medical services, have someone drive you to the hospital. You should not drive if you think you are having a heart attack.

If you have a question for Ask the Doctor, please submit it to jstjohn@ladhs.org.



Dr. Rita Singhal
OWH
Medical Director

Prevention Matters!

is OWH's multi-lingual, multi-cultural umbrella campaign that addresses general preventive health for women with an emphasis on heart disease, the #1 killer.

Working together with community partners, the goal is to reduce the burden of chronic disease among low-income women by **eliminating disparities** in access, utilization and quality of care; **promoting awareness and education** on living a healthier lifestyle; **increasing access** to screenings, treatment, and establishing a medical home; and **promoting advocacy and policy opportunities**.

OWH in Action

Community Dialogues

Medical Experts ~ Healthy Cooking Demonstrations ~ Physical Activity

The OWH in conjunction with the American Heart Association and *Prevention Matters!* community partners continues its' series of Community Dialogues on heart disease, the #1 killer of women.

*Promoting
the importance
of a healthy
lifestyle ...*



Pictured: Dr. Jonathan Fielding, Director Of Public Health, and Doctors Eloisa Gonzalez, Sheila Kar and Debra R. Judelson.

Below left, Chef Udochi demonstrates healthy cooking. Below, Gema Morales-Meyer, RN, MSN, MPH leads an activity break.



African American Community Dialogue



Latina Community Dialogue

Multilingual Hotline and Mobile Clinic Outreach

Operators speaking 7 languages - English, Spanish, Armenian, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese - are ready to assist low-income women who call the OWH appointment and referral hotline -1-800-793-8090.

Appointments are made for a free Pap test, clinical breast exam and mammogram at one of our nearby community partner clinics. Referrals to clinics are also made for other health issues.

The Mobile Clinic program provides low-income women with free screenings for hypertension, cholesterol, diabetes, body mass index,



cervical cancer, gynecological & clinical breast exams. The OWH works with community-based organizations to coordinate each event.

If you are interested in having the mobile clinic at your site, contact Esther McDowell, Outreach & Education Manager, at least 3 months in advance: emcdowell@ladhs.org

Announcing
OWH

Speakers' Bureau

Providing our community partners with speakers on women's health issues for large or small audiences.

To request a speaker or to join our roster of speakers, contact

Esther McDowell

626-569-3823 or

emcdowell@ladhs.org



OWH in Action

Advocacy and Policy

The OWH has begun meeting with our state legislators to discuss the *Prevention Matters!* campaign and ways we can work together to improve women's health status. Thus far, meetings have been held with Assemblymember Judy Chu and with the staff of Assemblymembers Cindy Montanez and Karen Bass.

An informational pamphlet on heart disease in women listing the OWH appointment and referral hotline was developed with Assemblymember Montanez' staff and mailed to her constituency. The pamphlet is now available to all state legislators.

Pending Legislation

The OWH will keep you posted on legislation that impacts women's health such as SB 840, currently in the Rules Committee.

This bill would make all CA residents eligible for specified health care benefits under the California Health Insurance System.

Learn more at www.legislature.ca.gov

Dr. Susan Wood speaks at UCLA Faculty Center

Dr. Susan Wood, former Assistant Commissioner for Women's Health and Director of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Office of Women's Health, resigned her position in August 2005 in protest of their controversial decision to limit access to emergency contraception.

On April 11, the OWH and the Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Education & Resource Center co-hosted a special breakfast and discussion with Dr. Susan Wood.

Pictured (left to right): Ellen Eidem, OWH, Dr. Janet Pregler, UCLA, Dr. Susan Wood, and Terri Thorfinnson, JD, Chief of California Office of Women's Health.



Media Connections

"Desperate Housewives" - OWH worked with Hollywood Health and Society to arrange a panel of doctors to brief the writers & producers of "Desperate Housewives" on potential health-related storylines. Hollywood Health is a project at the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center that provides entertainment industry professionals with accurate and timely information.

"The Women's Network" - OWH representatives discussed women's health issues & the importance of prevention on this cable TV show, broadcast on Adelphia and Comcast channels.

Multi-lingual Press - Interviews on the importance of preventive screenings have recently been given in Spanish on Univision Radio (Community Program with Pepe Vega) and in Korean for a press conference facilitated by the Korean Resource Center for radio, TV and newspapers.

Revlon Run/Walk for Women - May 13, 2006

For the 7th year in a row, the OWH coordinated the Department of Health Services' team. This year, 96 team members raised over \$10,000 to benefit women's cancer research and outreach programs.



OWH in Action

~ OWH Staff ~

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Monica Macius
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OWH Website: preventionmatters.org

Visit our website for multi-lingual health education materials, mobile clinic schedule and community calendar, and information on women's health issues and the *Prevention Matters!* campaign.

Recognition of Outstanding Programs and Individuals

The OWH works with the Board of Supervisors in acknowledging achievements in women's health.

January

Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Kimlin Ashing-Giwa, PhD



Supervisor Burke presents a commendation for Dr. Ashing-Giwa's research on the effects of cervical cancer, especially for ethnically and socio-economically disadvantaged women.

There are 2 ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.

- Edith Wharton



May

Women's Health Month

Anita Nelson, MD



Dr. Nelson, pictured with Jessica St. John & Ellen Eidem, has worked tirelessly for over 20 years in women's health as a researcher, an Ob/Gyn physician and a professor.

She is Medical Director of the Women's Health Care Clinic & Nurse Practitioner Program at Harbor-UCLA Biomedical Research Institute.

Public Health
Volunteer of the Year

Karen Kayekjian

Commendation presented by
Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe.

Karen volunteers at OWH and plans
to go into medicine.

Articles Available

The OWH can provide articles on women's health topics for your newsletters!

Articles Wanted for our Newsletter

We are interested in what you have to say... patient stories, promising practices, women's health issues - send them in!

We will also post upcoming community events.

Contact jstjohn@ladhs.org

Women's Health Policy Council

(OWH Advisory Body)

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Prevention
**Matters**

***For Appointments and Referrals Call
Office of Women's Health***

1-800-793-8090

www.PreventionMatters.org

Women's Health

The Year of Prevention

-  **Raise Awareness**
-  **Increase Access**
-  **Address Health Disparities**
-  **Screenings Save Lives**
-  **Prevention Matters!**



Prevention

Matters

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