



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Common Cancers*

*Prostate and Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month — September 2011*

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*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Men and women are different in many ways. From a health perspective, each has their own unique risk for certain cancers. Prostate is the most common cancer among men, while women are at risk for any of five forms of gynecologic cancer.

Dr. Djenaba Joseph is a physician with CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of getting regular cancer screenings. Welcome to the show, Djenaba.

[Dr. Joseph] I'm glad to be here. Thanks for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Djenaba, let's start with men. When should a man begin getting screened for prostate cancer?

[Dr. Joseph] There is a screening test for prostate cancer called the PSA, but there is some controversy about whether all men should have this test. Some doctors don't think that it's very effective at decreasing the number of deaths from prostate cancer. So we encourage all men to talk to their doctor about whether that screening test is right for them. If they do choose to have it, most men should start at the age of 50, but there are some men that are at high risk, such as men with a family history of prostate cancer or African-American men who may need to start at an earlier age. And in addition to that, we encourage men to get regular check-ups with their health care provider to find any problems early.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the five common cancers found only in women?

[Dr. Joseph] Those five cancers would be cervical cancer, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] When should a woman begin getting screened for these cancers?

[Dr. Joseph] Well, the purpose of a screening test is really to find a cancer there are any symptoms, and there's really only one screening test for cervical cancer which is called the pap smear. The other four cancers, there's really no screening test, but women should continue to get regular check-ups with their health care provider which would certainly help find something early, or they should go to their health care provider if they have any symptoms.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms for these common cancers that people should be aware of?

[Dr. Joseph] Well, for women, if they have any vaginal bleeding that's unusual for them, they can have lower abdominal discomfort, bloating, vaginal itching or burning, and really any symptom that's unusual for them. So it's really important for them to know their bodies well so they can identify any symptoms that are unusual for them.

For men, often prostate cancer doesn't have any symptoms at all, but if there are any symptoms sometimes they'll see blood in their urine or they'll have trouble urinating.

[Dr. Gaynes] Djenaba, where can listeners get more information about cancer screening?

[Dr. Joseph] They can go to [www.cdc.gov/cancer](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Djenaba. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Djenaba Joseph about the importance of getting screened regularly for cancer.

Regular check-ups and screening may detect cancers early when they are most treatable. Tests for certain cancers are recommended at various ages, so talk to your health care provider to see if you need to schedule any cancer screenings.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

*[Announcer]* For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.