



Fort Bend County Podcasts

Podcast Episode 37- Be Proactive for Early Detection

April 24, 2025

Gina- Welcome to this week's benefit detective podcast. I'm Gina.

Wendy- And I'm Wendy. (Doorbell) Let's welcome back Dr. Lu with our Fort Bend County Employee Health and Wellness Clinic.

Gina- Hey, Dr. Lu.

Dr. Lu- Hello. Thanks for having me back.

Wendy- Today's podcast will be a little different. We want to talk about ways to be proactive for early detection and prevention of cancer.

Gina- Yes. So, Dr. Lu, what are some ways employees can become proactive for early detection and prevention of cancer?

Dr. Lu- Well, there are several things that can be done, in terms of lifestyle. Definitely quitting smoking or any tobacco will definitely reduce your risk of those related cancers. And we actually have a smoking cessation program that we offer at the clinic and invite everyone to come partake in that if you are a tobacco user yourself. And on top of that, you also get the insurance discount, which is a great, extra benefit of that. As well, there's also, trying to maintain a healthy weight. And so, meaning that if you are obese or overweight, if you can reduce that weight into healthier range or I tell everyone, as long as it's lower, that's better. You know? And, for that, we also have another program, our own it program, which is our on-site weight management and nutrition through individualized treatment. So, own it, basically, our weight loss program, which we also encourage everyone to partake in, and especially, like, for anyone who is on any medications for weight loss, that is a required part of that. And so definitely encourage that. And then also, you know, going along those lines as well, you know, part of weight, big part of it is your diet. So, eating a healthy diet, I will say quality of food is important, but quantity is also important. And so that can lead to, you know, healthier weights. Definitely eating more lean protein, whole grains, vegetables, and a limited amount of fruits. Fruits are a tricky one that gets a lot of people because I like to call it the it's a healthier sugar, but it's still a sugar. So not too much. And then trying to reduce processed meats, red meats, sugary drinks, and so that will also help with, the weight. And part of that too is because obesity has been found to actually be, a risk factor for cancers in general. So that's why that's also important. And so, another component of weight is exercise. Exercise is always good, and the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology, they recommend, in at least one hundred fifty minutes of moderate aerobic exercise per week. So however you want to divide that up and, you know, good for joints and mobility as well. And then, another simple one, summer is coming quickly, almost here pretty much. And so, protecting yourself from the sun, whether sunscreen,



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protective clothing, hats, sunglasses, all that can reduce your risk of, skin cancer. And, avoiding at least, again, at least reducing alcohol because that can also increase your risk of some cancers. And then also managing your stress level, is also important in general and can contribute to cancer. And, of course, lastly, just coming for your annual wellness checkups, you know, just routinely. So, it's always better to detect early and whatever, whether cancer or other illnesses or, conditions. And so doing that annual checkup, you know, we do the physical exam as well as the blood work that can help, suggest things and detect things early.

Gina- Now, Dr. Lu, going back to what you were saying about, annual wellness, what are some recommended ages for certain annual wellness test?

Dr. Lu- Okay. Well, first of all, beginning with the broadest would be the annual wellness visits. Visits. And so that it would be starting with adults aged 18 and over, and it can go throughout life. And, again, that's when we will do the full physical and all the blood tests. And so, depending on your risk factors, then we will decide which additional tests need to be ordered for you. So, the next one would be cervical cancer screening, which would be mainly the Pap smear, and that's, for women aged 21 to 65 years old. And for some selected individuals, there may be additional testing which can be discussed with the provider at that time. And then the next one related to that is, mammograms for the females. Women aged 40 to 75 years. And, again, there are different based on different risk factors, when and how often to test can be determined, in discussion with the provider. And then the other common one is screening for colorectal cancer. And that one, the recommendations have also, changed. They're always changing in medicine, but at least from age 50 to 75 years, people should be screened for that. And now they're recommending for some people possibly even down to 45 years starting at 45 years and older. And, also, if you have family history of colon cancer, then definitely, talk about that with your provider, and you may want to be one of the ones who starts testing earlier. And for the colorectal cancer screening, there are different options, which, again, can be discussed with the provider. But there's, there's anything from annual stool testing to now there's a Cologuard test that test for blood and DNA, for the cancers. And so that's once every three years instead. And then there's also the colonoscopy, is typically the one that is, every ten years. Flexible sigmoidoscopy is an option, but it's not as good as colonoscopy. And those can be done through the specialist, though. But we can give you the referral, and we've been doing that through the PrimeDX program. So, we can get that for you at least discounted, if not, maybe possibly free. I'm not sure how much it's been costing people. So, and then in addition to that, there's also for the men. There is, for again, this is another one of those things that the current recommendation now is to actually have a discussion with the provider to determine whether or not you should undergo, PSA testing. That's prostate specific antigen testing. It's a blood test. So, getting it is easy, but who it's indicated for it now, that's an a discussion to be had nowadays, as opposed to in the past where it's just everyone should get it. And then, another, relatively new one is also annual low dose computed tomography testing. Basically, low dose CT scan, and that is to screen for lung cancer in certain individuals who smoke and meet certain criteria. So, again, another one to discuss with a provider, and then we can figure out who that, applies to.



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Gina- Wow. Awesome. Well, thank you for allowing some time out of your busy schedule, Dr. Lu, to talk to us about this important topic.

Dr. Lu- Thank you for having me. It was a pleasure as always.

Gina- Well, that was a lot of great information that doctor Liu provided for us.

Wendy- That was. And don't forget about the benefits offered by the county for participants on our medical plans to help be proactive for early detection, such as Care Navigation, which is through PrimeDX, where you can bundle and save on a colonoscopy.

Gina- That's right. And there's also the nicotine sensation program. So, if anyone who is on the Fort Bend County medical plan would like to participate in the nicotine sensation and also get that discount for next year's medical premiums, feel free to contact the employee clinic at (281) 633-7750.

Wendy- And those on our Fort Bend County medical plans have a \$5,000 annual wellness benefit where you can get a physical well woman exam, mammogram, labs, colonoscopy, prostate exam, EKGs and more as long as they are coded as a wellness and not have a diagnosis. But remember, when you max out the \$5,000 annual wellness benefit, anything over will be subject to your deductible or coinsurance. And lastly, you also have the free Fort Bend County Employee Health and Wellness Clinic that can help you with being proactive on getting these tests done and saving money.

Gina- And all of this information can also be found on Econnect under Risk Management Benefits or under Risk Management Links. Well, that's a wrap for this week's Benefit Detective Podcast. I'm Gina.

Wendy- And I'm Wendy. So, stay tuned for our next podcast, which releases every second and fourth Thursday of each month. And, come join us for our sixth annual fun run, which is on Saturday, May 3. And registration is available on Econet.

Gina- And remember, the benefit detectives are here to help.