



# New Providence Internal Medicine Associates

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## Bone Health



A woman's bones will lose density and strength after menopause. Thin bones won't cause any symptoms, at least until a bone breaks (especially the hip or spine) which then becomes very painful. We can screen for thinning of the bones, called osteoporosis, with a simple scan. If the bones are found to be thin, certain medications can be prescribed to help to add strength to the bones and prevent a fracture. All post-menopausal women should take 1500 mg per day of calcium (from a combination of supplements and diet) and 800 units a day of vitamin D. Exercise like walking and weight lifting is also very helpful.

In this issue, we'll focus on Womens' health issues. Please note that this is a very brief overview. The best opportunity to review the details would be at a routine physical or gynecologist visit.

## Routine Breast Screening



Fortunately, the incidence of breast cancer appears to be declining somewhat. However, it is still common enough that routine screening is appropriate, even if you have no relatives who have had it.

The current recommendations are for women over 40 to have a mammogram once a year, a doctor breast exam once a year, and to do self exam once a month. For more information, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/>

## Other Routine Cancer Screening



Although advanced cancer of the cervix is relatively uncommon, and often shows no symptoms, screening for it is very important. Every women over the age of 20 (or younger if sexually active) should get a Pap test once a year. This will detect most cases of cancer of the cervix.

Recent data indicates that cancer of the cervix is usually caused by a specific virus, called HPV. There is a vaccine (approved for ages 9 to 26) to prevent this virus which can reduce cervical cancer dramatically. For more information, go to: <http://www.gardasil.com/>



## Don't forget about the Heart

We must not forget that heart attacks and strokes are major causes of death in

women. Control of blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugars are as important in women as in men.