

4 Ways to Be Your



OWN

Health Advocate

1

Know Your Normal & Do Monthly Breast Self-Exams

Familiarize yourself with how your breasts look and feel. Knowing your "normal" makes it easier to detect changes early and report them to your doctor.

2

Understand Your Family History

Find out which family members, on both sides, have had breast, ovarian or prostate cancer, heart disease or other conditions, and at what age they were diagnosed. Share this information with your doctor — it can influence screening schedules, genetic testing recommendations and preventive care decisions.

3

Stay Current on Important Health Screenings

- **Annual Mammogram.** Women of average risk should begin annual screenings at age 40. Women with a higher risk for breast cancer may begin screening at an earlier age as advised by your doctor.
- **Pelvic Exam.** Women should start seeing a gynecologist/primary care physician for a Well Woman Visit by the age of 18 and continue to receive pap and pelvic exams for as long as advised by your doctor.
- **Blood Pressure Screening & Cholesterol Checks.** Your blood pressure and cholesterol should be checked during your check-ups with your primary care doctor.
- **Skin Cancer Screening.** Women should conduct regular skin self-exams. If you notice any moles or spots that have changed size, shape, color, or are itchy, painful or bleed, see a board-certified dermatologist.

4

Speak Up & Ask Questions at Every Appointment

Never leave an appointment feeling confused or unheard. Come prepared with a list of questions or concerns. If you feel like something isn't being addressed, it's ok to ask, "Can we explore this further?" or "Can you explain that a bit more?"

Being your own health advocate means being an active participant in your own care. Start today by scheduling your mammogram.

