

YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Her first-aid kit

What women should keep at hand to stay healthy

By JoAnne Viviano

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When a woman gets sick, an entire household can fall apart, said Dr. Angela U. Tucker, clinical assistant professor of family medicine at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center.

So it's important for them to make sure they have what they need to stay well.

"We know that women are the driving force for health care in their family," said Dr. Ngozi Osuagwu of OhioHealth Obstetrics and Gynecology Physicians. "If the woman is healthy and building her immune system, it affects the rest of the family."

Tucker and Osuagwu offer these suggestions for what women should keep on hand to stay healthy:

Protein

With many people staying away from red meat and pork, Tucker recommends that women eat a good source of protein, whether it is from other meats or plant-based foods.

Fruits and vegetables

Keep a fruit basket on your counter and/or wash and package fruits and vegetables and place them at eye level in your refrigerator. That helps people grab those items first, Osuagwu said.

Some good choices include blueberries, which are high in antioxidants; apples, which can help with blood pressure; and bananas, which have a lot of fiber.

Cinnamon

The spice is good helping with glycemic control. Osuagwu heaps a tablespoon on her morning oatmeal. But choose Ceylon cinnamon, from Sri Lanka, over cassia cinnamon, which is

high in coumarin and has been shown to cause liver problems in high doses.

Garlic

It helps control blood pressure and cholesterol and can help with infections. But be careful not to take too much, especially before any surgery, because it can cause problems with blood clotting.

Ginger

It helps limit nausea and vomiting. Osuagwu suggests it to pregnant women who experience morning sickness.

Turmeric

This spice, used in Indian curries, has anti-inflammatory properties and helps alleviate pain, Osuagwu said.

Resistance band

Use a resistance band or another tool to help with exercising, Osuagwu said. Include four aspects in your workout: aerobics, strength



[JOSHUA A. BICKEL/DISPATCH]

training, flexibility and balance.

Vitamin C

Take it when you think you're coming down with a cold, Osuagwu said.

Prunes

These can help with constipation, Osuagwu said, and recent studies have shown that they also can be good for the bones.

Ibuprofen

This can help ease the pain of menstrual cramping, Tucker said.

Water bottle

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. Especially if you are pregnant, Tucker said.

Calcium

The mineral is helpful in bone health, but try to get it from food products, green leafy vegetables or fortified orange juice, Osuagwu said.

Women's multivitamin

In case you fall short of getting these in your foods, take a multivitamin for women that includes folic acid.

Antibiotic cream

Think of it as a helper for moms who need to tend to the cuts and scrapes of little ones.

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