**Mom, a totally different creature!!**

Women’s health affects all of us, because even if you are not a woman there is a pretty good chance that you have a mother, sister, wife, girlfriend or daughter in your life, so women’s health does affect you in one way or another. Since this is mother’s day weekend I thought it’d be a great time to remind us about all the mom’s we know, love and cherish and how we can help them take care of themselves.

The five most debilitating conditions that affect women are heart disease, breast cancer, osteoporosis, depression and autoimmune diseases. There are also five screenings that are very important for women to do on a regular basis and they are blood work (cholesterol and triglyceride levels), Pap test, Mammogram, Colonoscopy and Skin screenings. Early detection, prevention and healthy lifestyles all attribute to keeping the moms in our lives healthy.

Moms are entirely different creatures than everyone else (like you didn’t know that one). Moms tend to categorize their health differently and often less importantly than their loved ones health. Most moms are “care-takers,” they take care of everyone else in their lives, leaving their own health at the bottom of the long list of house-hold and/or family to-do-lists. Did you know that the reason heart disease is the number one killer for women is because women tend to ignore the warning signs more often than men?

Even when it is outside the family, women are the first to help a friend in distress. We plan meals for ailing friends, we sit by friends receiving chemotherapy, we skip our workout in order to car pool our children all over town and we stay up later than the rest of the family to take care of household chores. I think you can see where this is going. Moms just do these kinds of things and if they run out of time, they take the time away from their own schedule.

When was the last time you asked your mother, sister or daughter if she has been to the doctor and gotten those five screenings listed above? Why aren’t we more assertive with our friends and family members in practicing healthy habits? Why don’t we stop over and sit with the kids so our girlfriends can go on a walk instead of waiting to sit with them during chemotherapy?

I remember a quote from an article I read a couple of years ago, “women have fewer opportunities and more reasons not to exercise.” Do moms really have fewer opportunities and more reasons or have women and put themselves in that position and don’t take/make the opportunities to take care of themselves? Have we, the family and friends put the moms in our lives into this position by not supporting, helping and allowing them these opportunities to take care of themselves as they care for us?

I pause for you to consider all the questions I just mentioned above. It’s a complete twist in looking at the women and moms in our lives. It’s not a good twist, but there is some truth to it all. Think about those five leading debilitating diseases, are we going to wait until they happen to our moms or are we going to truly become more proactive in supporting their health and encourage them to get screened, exercise regularly and eat properly?

So mother’s day could be about recognizing all the wonderful things they do for us and making a commitment to share and help them with the stresses in their own lives and more importantly to focus on their own health and exercise, a commitment that’s not only on mother’s day, but every day.

Let’s make the opportunities available and give the moms in our lives reasons to take care of their health. To twist one final quote a little to conclude this article, as they say in my house and many homes around the world… “If mom’s not happy, nobody’s happy!” I want it to change to… “If mom’s not healthy, nobody’s healthy!”