



Baystate
Health

every
WomanTM

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do You Have?

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Breast Wellness Series

Keeping Abreast: The Latest Breast Cancer Research

Wednesday, October 20, 6-7 pm



Grace Makari-Judson, MD

One recent focus of breast cancer research has been to identify individuals who need less treatment and spare them side effects, while selecting targeted treatments for those at highest risk. Join Dr. Grace Makari-Judson, breast medical oncologist, Baystate Hematology Oncology, Associate Medical Director, Cancer Services, Co-Director, Rays of Hope

Center for Breast Cancer Research and Chair, Baystate Health Breast Network, for a discussion about the latest research regarding breast cancer care and the work to find a cure.

Web's Most Searched Questions Answered: Breast Cancer

Thursday, October 21, 6-7 pm



Ann-Kristin Friedrich, MD

Join Dr. Ann-Kristin U. Friedrich, breast surgeon, Baystate Surgical Oncology & Breast Specialists, for expert answers to questions like: "What can I expect at my breast cancer consultation?", "What stage of breast cancer requires a mastectomy?", "Can you be cancer free after breast cancer?", and more.

9 Things You Should Know About Your Breasts

Wednesday, October 27, 6-7 pm



Holly Mason, MD

Join Dr. Holly Mason, breast surgeon, Section Chief, Breast Surgery, Baystate Surgical Oncology & Breast Specialists, Associate Professor of Surgery, University of Massachusetts Medical School-Baystate, for a discussion about breast pain, breast cysts, and mastitis, which are some common breast problems. Since not all

breasts are created equal, there are a lot of myths that will be debunked as well as answers to questions such as: "Should I wear a bra at night?" and "What if one breast is larger than the other?" Most importantly, learn how to know if your breasts are healthy, and how to improve breast health.

Timing Is Everything For Mammograms

Thursday, October 28, 6-7 pm



Jesse Casaubon, MD

We often hear at what age mammograms should be started for women, but why is it so important? Join Dr. Jesse T. Casaubon, breast surgeon, Baystate Surgical Oncology & Breast Specialists, for a discussion about how screening mammograms is connected to your health and why timing matters.

>> Visit [BaystateHealth.org/BreastSeries](https://www.baystatehealth.org/BreastSeries) to register. There will be time for questions and answers at the end of each virtual event.



Missed a Virtual Event?



Watch recorded events anytime at [BaystateHealth.org/Every Woman](https://www.baystatehealth.org/EveryWoman).



**Baystate
Health**

ADVANCING CARE.
ENHANCING LIVES.

Baystate Health is a leading not-for-profit health system with the charitable mission of improving the health of the people in our communities every day, with quality and compassion.

Blood Pressure During Pregnancy

Tuesday, December 14, 6-7 pm



Kathaleen Barker, MD

Having your blood pressure checked at every prenatal visit during pregnancy is routine and fluctuations are common. So how is blood pressure important during pregnancy and what are the implications when levels are low, or high? Join Dr. Kathaleen Barker, ObGyn, Baystate Women's Health Ob/Gyn, for a discussion about blood pressure during pregnancy what the numbers indicate and the best ways to stay healthy when having a baby. There will be time for questions and answers.

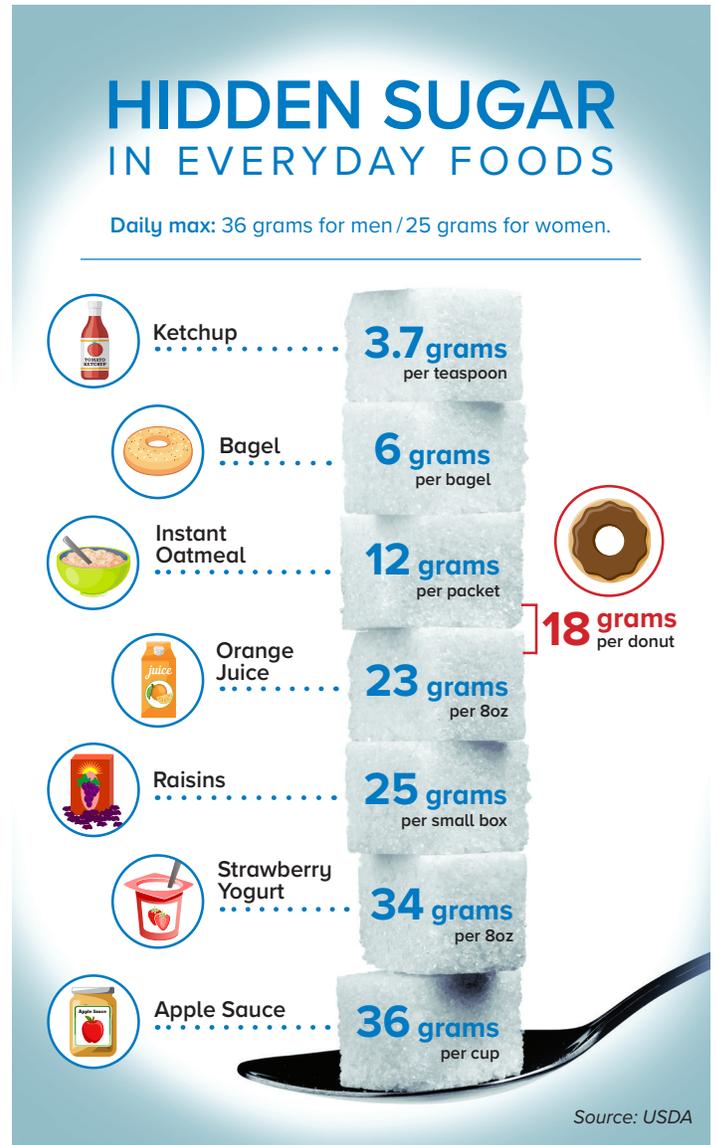
Could It Be My Thyroid?

Thursday, December 16, 6-7 pm



Ibitoro Osakwe, MD

The thyroid and thyroid hormones control a lot of the bodies activities including how fast we burn calories, how fast our heart beats and our mood and energy level. Join Dr. Ibitoro Osakwe, MBA, FACE, CPE, Chief and fellowship program director, Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes, Baystate Medical Center, for a discussion about the thyroid, how the gland works, how thyroid disorders and thyroid cancers are diagnosed as well as the many treatments. There will be time for questions and answers.



Baystate Health Beat

Practical health tips from trusted experts

Baystate HEALTH BEAT is a new monthly email publication with health information, inspiring stories, events & more!
Visit BaystateHealth.org to sign up.

To register for any of the virtual events visit BaystateHealth.org/EveryWoman and scroll to the bottom of the page or visit BaystateHealth.org/Events.

Questions?

Email Sue.Fontaine@BaystateHealth.org or call 413-794-5200.



10 Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Being Diagnosed with Breast Cancer

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Grace Makari-Judson, MD

SPRINGFIELD – Today women have a 13% risk – or 1 in 8 – of developing breast cancer in their lifetime. For men, that risk is much lower at about 1 in 800.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and a time for women to know their risk factors and what they can do to minimize their chances of developing breast cancer. It is also a time to recognize how Baystate Health’s Rays of Hope (ROH) has supported researchers to delve into salient questions around what makes an individual susceptible to breast cancer.

“Every woman is at some risk for breast cancer with the biggest risk being her age. Women who are 50 or older account for over 70% of all breast cancer diagnoses. While some risk factors can be reduced simply by lifestyle changes, others cannot be changed. Not everyone with risk factors will develop the disease and many women with no known risk factors still get breast cancer,” said Dr. Grace Makari-Judson, associate director of Cancer Services, Baystate Health and co-director of the Rays of Hope Center for Breast Cancer Research.

Rays of Hope scientists, clinicians and advocates have prioritized questions around why some women develop breast cancer and others don’t. The ROH Breast Research Registry includes a tissue repository, overseen by Dr. Sallie Smith Schneider, that provides a unique opportunity to study these questions.

Estrogen is one key to the development of breast cancer. It can cause damage to DNA, which in turn may lead to cancer. Dr. Joseph Jerry co-director of the Rays of Hope Center for Breast Cancer Research, and collaborators have studied estrogen exposure from the environment and how individuals respond differently. Specifically, they studied exposure to propylparaben and benzophenone-3 (compounds used in cosmetics and sunscreens) and how individual tissues differed in their sensitivity to these environmental estrogens.

Dr. Jerry often asks why seven out of eight women do not get breast cancer. What protects these women? ROH researchers have looked at genomic polymorphisms - small changes in an individual’s DNA that may lead to variable responses to both our own estrogen and environmental estrogen exposures. The search to understand what protects some women and to identify women who may be more vulnerable is a recurring theme.

As the research continues to move forward, tips for prevention and screening are key.

“If women pay attention to their lifestyle such as eating a healthful diet, exercising regularly, limiting alcohol intake, not smoking and maintaining a close to ideal body weight after menopause, their breast cancer risk could be reduced by 30-40%,” said Dr. Makari-Judson.

“We do know that women who have regular screening mammograms reduce their risk of death from breast cancer. While noting breast cancer screening does not prevent breast cancer, studies have shown women undergoing regular screening reduce their risk of dying from breast cancer by 60%,” she added.

“

WHILE NOTING BREAST CANCER SCREENING DOES NOT PREVENT BREAST CANCER, STUDIES HAVE SHOWN WOMEN UNDERGOING REGULAR SCREENING REDUCE THEIR RISK OF DYING FROM BREAST CANCER BY 60%.

”

– Dr. Makari-Judson.

OCTOBER

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Dr. Makari-Judson offers the following 10 ways to reduce the risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer:

1. Avoid weight gain after menopause. Although obesity throughout life has its health risks, weight gain after menopause is specifically associated with a higher risk of breast cancer. After menopause, women may tend to lose muscle mass and gain belly fat. Weight gain after menopause appears to especially be concerning in women who are not taking hormone replacement.

2. Exercise started anytime in life reduces risk.

Rigorous exercise in the premenopausal years can reduce the risk of breast cancer by 72%. Even moderate exercise, as little as 1-2 hours per week can reduce risk in postmenopausal women by 18%.

3. Limit alcohol. It doesn't matter what type – beer, wine or hard liquor – the more alcohol consumed, the higher the risk. Some women may be especially susceptible as they may metabolize alcohol differently leading to higher risk with lesser amounts.

4. Don't smoke. Although smoking impacts less on breast cancer risk than other cancers, it is still a contributing factor, especially in women who started smoking before age 20 or five years before their first pregnancy.

5. Breastfeed your children. Cumulative nursing time of at least one year reduces risk of premenopausal breast cancer. Having children prior to age 30 reduces risk, but this may not be a practical suggestion for many.

6. Minimize estrogen use after menopause. Studies show a higher risk of breast cancer with higher doses, the combination of estrogen and progesterone, and more prolonged use. Consider estrogen replacement if you have bothersome menopausal symptoms for a few years, but try not to stay on indefinitely.

7. Know your family history. You can't pick your family members, but you should know about any medical conditions they may have had and what ages they were affected. Find out if relatives have had breast cancer, especially any men with breast cancer, ovarian cancer,

pancreatic cancer or metastatic prostate cancer. If so, ask your doctor for information about genetic counseling and testing. There are specific risk-reducing strategies for women who may have inherited susceptibilities.

8. Know your breast density. Half of all women undergoing screening mammography have breast tissue described as “heterogeneously or extremely dense.” This may be related to estrogen exposure, family history or other factors and may warrant a personalized approach to screening.

9. If you have had a breast biopsy, know the result.

Certain benign breast conditions can be associated with higher risk of breast cancer. Breast biopsy results described as “atypical” generally are associated with a 15-20% lifetime increase in risk of breast cancer. Women with these types of benign breast disease may be considered “high risk.”

10. Know if you are high risk and consider a medication for breast cancer prevention.

One way breast cancer risk can be assessed is by computerized models which take into account risk factors, benign breast disease and family history. Tamoxifen, aromatase inhibitors or raloxifene (EVISTA) taken for five years reduce the risk of breast cancer in high risk women by 50 percent.

Dr. Makari-Judson recommends if you have any risk factors for developing breast cancer to talk to your doctor about ways to lower those risks and a personalized plan for breast cancer screening.

>> For more information on the Baystate Breast and Wellness Center, visit baystatehealth.org/services/breast-care or to make an appointment with a breast specialist, call 413-794-8899.





Support Breast Cancer Care in Your Community

The Rays of Hope Walk & Run Toward the Cure of Breast Cancer has raised more than \$15.7 million to support breast cancer care, research, equipment, and education. Every single dollar stays local to support patients and families in western Massachusetts. When you donate or participate in Rays of Hope, you're helping to spread the message of hope through your community.

Join us for this year's event on October 24 for a drive-thru "Pink Parade of Hope" at Temple Beth El or help spread hope by participating virtually and running or walking for this great cause on your own! Learn more, sign up, or donate at BaystateHealth.org/RaysofHope. If you have further questions, please reach out to us at 413-794-8001 or RaysofHope@BaystateHealth.org.



Participate!



**Now through
October 24**

Better Health Through Weight Loss Surgery



John Romanelli, MD

When most people think of obesity, their thoughts usually don't go much further than the notion of being overweight. But, in truth, there's a lot more to obesity than the numbers on the scale.

According to Dr. John Romanelli, Medical Director of weight loss surgery at Baystate Medical Center, "Obesity is itself a disease that often triggers a number of severe health conditions. Over time, those conditions can become chronic, progressive, debilitating, and potentially life-threatening. For many, the struggle to lose weight is complicated by the challenge of managing those health conditions. Individuals who are unable sustain a healthy weight and are experiencing chronic conditions are often strong candidates for weight loss surgery."

"That said," he continues, "I want to stress that the greatest benefit of weight loss surgery isn't dropping 'X' number of pounds; it's lessening – or even eliminating – related health conditions that keep individuals from living their life to its fullest. In that regard, surgery is a powerful tool for taking control of your complete health."

Benefits beyond weight loss

While the physical transformation many patients experience after weight loss surgery can be dramatic, Romanelli emphasizes that the greatest benefits have nothing to do with appearance. "Some studies suggest that patients who have a procedure and keep the weight off can increase their lifespan by as much as 10-11 years. Think about it. That's a lot of years and living to be enjoyed. And I say 'enjoyed' because your quality of life goes up tremendously after a procedure. The opportunity is truly there to enjoy, and not just endure, your life."

Living better after bariatric surgery

"From heart disease, diabetes, and fertility to asthma, depression, and even cancer," says Romanelli, "being obese can impact nearly every system in your body. However, as soon as you start to lose weight, you start to improve your health. In many instances, you can completely eliminate chronic conditions and achieve an entirely new level of health."

Some of the conditions most positively impacted post weight loss surgery include:

Diabetes: Studies have shown that 75% of patients who undergo weight loss surgery experience a complete resolution of the disease. The remaining patients also appreciated a marked improvement.

High blood pressure: Given that 75% of cases of high blood pressure are obesity-related, it's no surprise that up to 90% of patients' blood pressure levels return to normal or near normal range post-surgery.

Obstructive sleep apnea: Eighty to eighty-five percent of patients who achieve and sustain a normal weight post weight loss surgery experience remission of their sleep apnea within a year of the procedure with many no longer needing to use a CPAP machine at bedtime.

Cancer: Obesity increases your risk of developing certain cancers including liver, pancreatic, kidney, prostate, and post-menopausal breast cancer. However, studies have shown that weight loss surgery reduces the risk of those cancers compared to patients who do not have the surgery. In some cases, the risk has been decreased by up to 50%.

Chronic joint pain: Post surgery weight loss reduces the amount of stress placed on your weight-bearing joints. With the load lightened, that stress is frequently dramatically reduced and pain from arthritis is lessened.

Romanelli adds, "Many patients appreciate significantly more mobility after surgery. That mobility often allows them to engage with others and in activities that bring them joy; things they may not have done for years. While it's hard to quantify general quality of life, it's not hard to appreciate the difference weight loss surgery can have on an individual's overall physical and mental health."

>> To learn more about weight loss surgery options visit BaystateHealth.org/services/bariatric-surgery or call 413-794-7020 in Springfield, 413-773-2626 in Greenfield.



WHAT KIND OF HEADACHE DO YOU HAVE? A NEUROLOGIST BREAKS IT DOWN



James Otis, MD

We've all been there before: A headache attacks us unexpectedly or a dull pulse builds in our head hour-after-hour.

Headaches can be unnerving, and turning to Google to explain your symptoms can often lead to more panic and confusion. Today, 50-75% of adults experience headaches and they often interfere with our ability to go about our daily lives.

Dr. James Otis, a Baystate Health Neurologist, helps us break down the different types of headaches you might experience on any given day.

HEADACHE LOCATIONS, HEADACHE TYPES, AND THEIR CAUSES:



Migraine

A migraine is a severe headache with throbbing pain, often occurring many times a year. Symptoms of migraine may include:

- Pain located in the back of the neck, forehead, cheeks, behind both eyes, along the hairline, or on one side of the head.
- Nausea or vomiting
- Aura: flashes of light, blind spots, tingling in the hands or face and other vision changes
- Sensitivity to noise, odors or light
- Difficulty focusing due to the pain, aura and other sensitivities
- Symptoms are made worse by doing any activity.

Causes of migraines vary and can be hard to pinpoint.

It is recommended you visit with your primary care physician first who then may refer you to a neurologist to help determine the cause of your migraine, such as:

- Low serotonin levels
- Specific sounds, lights or odors
- A specific food
- Changes in the weather
- Sleep deprivation
- Hormones
- Family history of migraines
- Skipping meals or dehydration



Tension Headache

A tension headache is identified as a dull, non-throbbing headache often located at the back of the neck, forehead, cheeks, behind both eyes, along the hairline, or all over the head. A tension headache can also be experienced with tightness in the neck,

shoulders and jaw. The most common cause of a tension headache is stress and poor sleep. This is also the most common type of headache you might experience.



Cluster Headache

A cluster headache is identified as a headache that comes on quickly and severely. Cluster headaches occur in spurts or "clusters," where you may have these headaches for a few weeks or months and then none for some time. Cluster headaches are usually located behind one eye or on one side of the head.

Other symptoms of a cluster headache are:

- A red, teary eye, a smaller pupil and/or a drooping eyelid on the side of your head that you are experiencing pain

- Puffiness around one or both eyes
- Runny or stuffy nose
- A flushed or warm face
- Restlessness



Sinus Headache

A sinus headache is a headache that is usually accompanied by cold-like symptoms and pressure or tenderness around your eyes, forehead and cheeks. Other symptoms of a sinus headache include:

- Increasing pain if you lean forward or lie down
- Stuffy nose
- Fatigue
- Aching in your teeth
- Thick, yellow or green nasal discharge

Sinus headaches are often a result of an infection and should be treated by your primary care physician.

OTHER CAUSES OF HEADACHES

Other causes of a general dull-feeling headache, not attributed the above tension headache can include:

- Sleep deprivation
- Allergies
- Straining your eyes
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Caffeine withdrawal
- Injury or trauma
- Strenuous exercise
- Hangover
- Hunger or dehydration
- Brain freeze from eating or drinking cold food
- Rebound: a headache that appears after stopping an anti-headache medication
- Jaw problems
- Fever, flu or common cold
- Menstruation

HEADACHE TREATMENTS

Always speak with your primary care physician before taking any medication for headaches.

Tension headaches are often helped by over-the-counter (OTC) pain relief such as acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen. Repeated or more severe headaches may need a prescription medication from your doctor.

WHEN TO SEEK EMERGENCY HELP

If you have a headache that could be described by the “worst headache of your life” or a “thunderclap” feeling, you could be experiencing a stroke, brain aneurysm or brain hemorrhage and you should call 911 immediately.

If a you are experiencing a headache after injuring your head, especially if you lost consciousness when injured, you could have a concussion causing blood to form on the brain. This is called hematoma and needs emergency help.

Other signs of hematoma include:

- One eye pupil is larger than the other
- Inability to wake up or stay awake
- The headache continues to get worse
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness in the body
- Loss of balance or clumsiness
- Repeated vomiting, convulsions or seizure
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation

>> LEARN MORE

Headaches can come in many forms. Baystate Health Neurology is here to help you determine the causes and achieve short and long-term relief. Call 413-794-5600 to make an appointment or visit [BaystateHealth.org/services/Neurology](https://www.baystatehealth.org/services/Neurology)

A circular inset image on the left side of the page shows a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, holding her right hand to her forehead in a gesture of pain or discomfort.

TODAY, 50-75% OF ADULTS EXPERIENCE HEADACHES AND THEY OFTEN INTERFERE WITH OUR ABILITY TO GO ABOUT OUR DAILY LIVES.

Life After Menopause:

4 Key Health Changes Every Woman Needs to Know

For many women, the notion of menopause and the resulting end to periods, cramping, and bloating sounds extremely appealing. And while it's nice to say goodbye to some aspects of a pre-menopause life, there are some new realities that need to be recognized and embraced.



A look at the changes that come with “the change”



James Wang, MD

According to Dr. James Wang, an obstetrician-gynecologist with Baystate Medical Center, “Women often think of menopause as an event that occurs at a particular time in one’s life. But the truth is it’s a transition that takes place gradually over many months or several years, with effects and impact that continue well after menstruation has ceased.” He adds, “Menopause is brought on by the decline in the production of the

two hormones that control your reproductive system – estrogen and progesterone. The reduced hormone levels impact virtually every organ in your body. From your heart and bones to your emotional and sexual health, menopause is a full-body experience. While some effects, like hot flashes, are a nuisance others can pose real health risks to women as they age. It’s important to be aware of the extent of the changes taking place and be proactive in combating them.”

1. Increased risk of heart disease

According to Dr. Sabeen Chaudry, a cardiologist with Baystate Cardiology, “Estrogen plays an important role in heart health. It increases good cholesterol levels, decreases bad cholesterol levels, reduces the build-up of fatty plaque, and more. While menopause doesn’t cause heart disease, the resulting reduced estrogen levels can increase your risk of developing heart and circulatory disease.”

She adds, “Heart disease is the number one killer of women. The risk only increases with age and the onset of menopause. As women age, it’s very important for women to discuss heart health with their physician at their annual check-ups and take steps to minimize their risks.”

These steps include:

- Engaging in regular moderate exercise (150+ minutes per week)
- Enjoying healthy diet rich in vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains, and fish
- Reducing the amount of salt, caffeine, and refined sugars in your diet

- Quitting smoking
- Limiting alcohol intake to 0 to 3 drinks per week
- Getting seven to eight hours sleep regularly

2. Loss of bone density

One of the hidden side effects of menopause is bone loss. According to Wang, “Estrogen is vital to maintaining bone health. It’s possible for a woman to lose up to 20% of their bone mass in the first 5 years of menopause as estrogen levels drop. While bone strength is important at every age, it’s particularly critical as we age. The majority of women now live well into their 80s. Good bone health is important for avoiding fractures from inevitable falls. Unfortunately for many seniors, even minor trauma from a fall can require hospitalization, and, often, individuals never regain the level of functionality, mobility, and confidence they enjoyed before their fall.”

Wang encourages patients to be proactive in maintaining their bone health throughout their lives. “Loss of bone density is part of the natural progression

of aging. But when you pair it with certain behaviors known to contribute to bone loss, you're really setting yourself up for trouble later."

Key changes he urges patients to make include:

- Get moving: engage in weight bearing exercises that build bone strength (think golf, walking, yoga, and dance). Exercise also improves balance, reducing the risk of falls.
- Quit smoking.
- Avoid drinking more than 2 alcoholic beverages a day.
- Continue to see your doctor once you are postmenopausal for regular checkups and to help with any conditions that may develop after menopause.

Wang also advises women over 50 to bump up their calcium intake. "We need more calcium as we age, so it's important to add more to your diet." He recommends 1200 mg of calcium daily, ideally from dietary sources including dairy, leafy greens, broccoli, and fortified juices. He notes, "There are a lot of great online guides that can help you find foods rich in calcium that also appeal to your tastes and accommodate any food intolerances."

In addition to calcium, he reminds patients to be mindful of their Vitamin D intake. "Vitamin D is really the most important vitamin for bone health. It not only contributes to bone strength, it's also what enables our bodies to effectively absorb calcium." While Vitamin D is found in foods including egg yolks, mushrooms, and fatty fish like salmon, tuna, and mackerel, he encourages patients to take supplements, aiming for a daily intake of 2000 international units of the vitamin.

3. Physical and emotional changes

For many women, the first signs of menopause start in their 40s. "At that age, the changes aren't typically noticeable," says Wang. But by age

52 – the average age of menopause – some changes are hard to miss.

Hot flashes, a sudden and urgent need to urinate, sleep disruption, night sweats, and vaginal dryness, are among the potential symptoms of menopause.

"The onset of these changes can be very disconcerting," says Wang. "There's a sense of loss of control over your own body. Many women find themselves experiencing increased irritability, depression, and anxiety. Some of that's likely attributable to the physical discomfort being experienced and lack of sleep but changing hormone levels also contribute to one's emotional state."

Wang notes there's no predicting what side effects a woman may experience or how long they might last. "For many years it was thought 1-2 years was the average for experiencing hot flashes and night sweats, but new research suggests that they may never fully cease. They will likely decrease in frequency and intensity, but it's possible that they may endure for the balance of a woman's life."

For women experiencing disruptive side effects, he recommends trying over-the-counter herbal supplements. "In my experience, patients have found some relief with herbal supplements. The important thing is to first consult your healthcare clinician before you begin taking any supplements, and second, to check the label to ensure the product was produced in accordance with USP standards which assesses the quality, strength, identity, and purity of the ingredients."

Other treatments to alleviate menopausal symptoms, including non-hormonal and hormone therapy, can be prescribed by a woman's medical practitioner. Deciding which treatment is best will depend on an individual's medical history and personal preference.

4. Changes to sexual health

One of the least discussed side effects of menopause is the impact it has on sexual health.

Wang explains, "During menopause, the walls of the vagina begin to thin, or atrophy. This can lead to vaginal dryness that can make having intercourse difficult or even painful. This change is further complicated for women with male partners by the fact that his libido is dropping as he ages. Sexual encounters are likely to become less frequent. Often, the greater amount of time between sexual encounters, the greater the problem of dryness and pain becomes. If you're able to maintain a more frequent schedule of sex, it's likely you won't experience issues. But, honestly, there's no reason to endure any degree of discomfort from what should be a pleasurable experience, especially when personal lubricants are so readily available in retail settings and online."

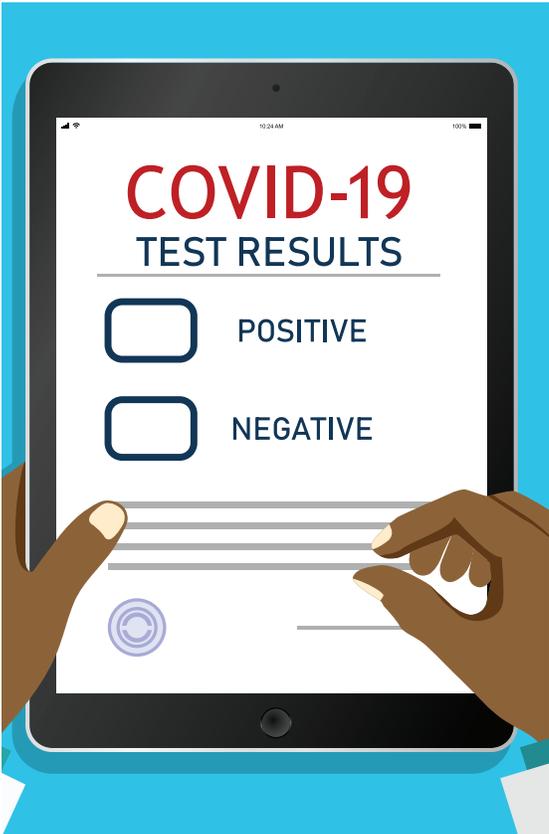
For patients who continue to experience discomfort even with lubricant, Wang often recommends a topical vaginal estrogen noting "It's an extremely safe option for restoring vaginal tissue and natural lubrication."

>> Understanding what to expect during and after menopause is an important first step to maintaining your physical and emotional health. If you have questions about any aspect of menopause and post-menopause, visit BaystateHealth.org/services/ObGyn.





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