

Today's Health Trends

Doctors say women in their 20's and 30's are having **stomach problems**, mainly from eating too much fast food. Women in their 30's and 40's are experiencing increased breast pain and breast cancer. Women in their 40's and 50's are plagued with **osteopenia** the hormone replacement therapy scare. And **depression** has swept over women of all age groups. 🌸 Overcoming these issues is all the more challenging because of so many myths perpetuated over the years, and that has Albuquerque women seeking out newer solutions than the old find-a-pill approach. They're also much more open to those solutions than men, doctors say. "A lot of women are seeking nontraditional medicine," says Dr. Dairne McLoughlin, an acupuncturist at the Diamondback Wellness Center. "We're doing things very differently than our mothers did."

Not Our Mother's World

"Alternative" medicine really isn't -- according to doctors in the field -- particularly here in New Mexico. "We have tools the medical world isn't offering—herbs and homeopathy and a vast array of things we can choose from," says McLoughlin. Dr. Stephen Weiss agrees. "I practice integrative medicine so there are times I do prescribe western medicine when I think it's the appropriate treatment. There's a lot of innovation in this part of the world and a lot of openness to more natural approaches," Weiss said.

Fountain of Youth

Dr. Steve Komadina, of Women's Health Horizons, says the major issues for his female patients are weight problems, menopausal and hormone replacement issues, and anti-aging. "Of course there's a great concern about how to remain young, especially in this day and age when there are lots of baby boomers and others re-entering the dating relationship at the same time they're entering menopause," says Komadina. "So we do lots of skin treatments—lunchtime dermabrasion, entomology and other things to get rid

of cellulite." Komadina also spends time orchestrating nutrition counseling because health problems "tend to show up in your skin first," he said. Weiss adds, "The largest burden of toxins we are exposed to are stored underneath the skin." Massage is important also, says Dr. Karen Genter, a chiropractor at High Desert Chiropractic and Wellness. "It helps rid the body of toxins and has a big stress relieving component that's really needed," she said. "It has great health benefits."

Fantastical Food

Komadina points out that 90 percent of what we buy in the grocery stores didn't exist 100 years ago, and that even the things that did exist have been bioengineered to the point where there's no nutrition in them. They're full of hormones and omega-six's, from grain that can contribute to toxicity and numerous other problems. "Have you ever seen a wild strawberry? They're practically microscopic they're so small," he says. "The ones you buy in the store are the size of plums."

"We keep creating feel-good food and I'm sure it has never tasted as good as it does today in America. It stimulates the pleasures in the narcotics center of our brain and as soon as it wears off we're hungry again. Heroin comes from grain and the new U.S. government food pyramid's biggest section is grain. Egypt was the first civilization where grain was eaten and they died from the same things we die from—heart disease and cancers. One hundred years ago people didn't die of heart attacks."

The food we eat is having a tremendously negative impact on women in particular, in a variety of ways. But it's only one factor in a host of lifestyle choices that are causing an epidemic of breast cancer and depression in record numbers in women of every age group, even teenagers. The pre-menopausal businesswoman who goes to several happy hours a week, adding the depressant of alcohol to hormone swings and an omega-six loaded diet, can easily become a walking Prozac prescription.

Here Comes The Sun

Add those factors to a combination of high altitude and lots of sun and you have a bunch of women slathering on the sunscreen in an effort to avoid cancer. Another unfortunate myth, say Weiss and McLoughlin. Not only are they exacerbating other health challenges, but they may be adding to their depression and to their cancer risk.

"The sun has been believed



»»» to be this big enemy," says Weiss, "which it can be in when in excess.

But the latest research is quite stunning. It shows that sun exposure may actually prevent 30 times more cancer than it causes." This includes lymphoma and colon, prostate and even skin cancer. "They've found that people with the lowest levels of vitamin D get these cancers," said Weiss. "The other thing about vitamin D (which we get from the sun) is that the cancers it prevents are much more deadly than even melanoma."

Exposing yourself to the sun in small amounts—10-15 minutes in Albuquerque, says Weiss, is a great way to build up your levels of vitamin D. For women, that's a nutrient that's critical for the prevention of depression, of osteopenia—the forerunner of osteoporosis, and cancer. And you can't get it through a supplement. "Vitamin supplements don't have the active form of vitamin D," says Weiss. "A certain amount of sun is really, really important," says McLoughlin. "We're seeing tremendous vitamin D deficiency. That has a lot to do with the depression and mood swings (women experience)."

Just as a lack of sun and vitamin D can lead to depression—depression, fear and other negative emotions could be contributors to breast cancer, Weiss and McLoughlin say. "If you have this constant fear or anger or sadness, that can create illness. That's a huge belief for us in Chinese medicine," McLoughlin stresses. "When we start suppressing things in our body they usually come back with a vengeance, and I think we are seeing that with antibiotics. We used and abused them for so many years they aren't working anymore."

Dr. Karen Genter adjusts the neck of mother-to-be Dianna Sammons.

Fear Factor

That's something to think about the next time you turn on the television and see countless ads for breast cancer awareness, urging women to get mammograms. "The fear factor is a huge factor in health. From a Chinese perspective the emotions can be as detrimental as eating the wrong thing," McLoughlin says. Weiss adds, "A lot of media focuses on fear... it plants this insidious seed. Fear is extremely powerful. We need to balance the messages we give to the public."

Dr. Mary Mark, of Women's Health Specialists, maintains that doctors are treating breast cancer more successfully because of the increased awareness. "I think that awareness

of the risk and the rate we recommend mammography has been beneficial. Though we're seeing more cases, we're catching it much earlier," she says. But mammography has McLoughlin worried. "We do have a mass escalation of breast cancer, and the jury is still out on mammograms and whether having your breasts radiated over a longer period of time is really a safe thing. There are other alternatives to mammograms and women don't know about them." McLoughlin is talking about thermograms, done with a device that is heat-sensing as opposed to radiating the breasts.

Excessive estrogen is also the reason McLoughlin says that women are having such extreme mood swings and depression during menopause, because so many hormones have





Dr. Steven Komadina consults with Caisa Franklin about nutrition.

been injected into the animals we consume. "They normally should experience some mood swings, but not crash and burn depression like they have these days," says McLoughlin.

Solutions In Shape

As part of the solution to all these health challenges that American women are facing, Komadina recommends that they try to "eat like a cavewoman," with at least 29% of their diet coming from meat or protein, half from carbohydrates that are fruits, vegetables and greens, not grains, and 20% from fat. "The problem is you can't get the fat today you

could get a 100 years ago because we changed the way we feed cows," says Komadina, who raises his own water buffalo. "They use to be grass fed."

But with all the low-fat/no-fat products bombarding us on television and in the grocery store, it's hard for many women to digest the fact that they need fat. "The majority of our ancestors' calories came from fat," Komadina points out, "especially the Alaskans and they're some of the healthiest people on earth."

Women these days, however, often seem obsessed with eliminating every possible ounce of fat from their diets and their bodies. They can become obsessive about working out, resulting in damaging effects that take their toll both internally and externally. "It's a classic association with a tendency toward anorexia," says Mark, "and it's worse in younger girls. If you overdo it you can stop ovulating. You can get golden ovaries, which comes from high levels of kerotene, if you tend to eat a whole lot of vegetables and carrots and things that have few calories. Just like moderation in diet and moderation in drinking, exercise needs to be in moderation as well."

Genter advises, "Stay physically active but don't push too hard. Make sure your joints are lined up properly so they're not being worn improperly." Just as important as exercise in losing weight, says Genter, is having less of that depression-causing flour in your diet.

"For 35 years we've had this experiment of low fat diets and complex carbohydrates, and eating less and exercising more," says Komadina. "People are out there saying 'everybody knows' that this is what you're supposed to do. Well there are 42 countries where people live longer than we do in America and it's time to stop that experiment." 🍌