



WELCOME LETTER

Dear Patients, Supporters and Friends

With 2014 nearing its end, I'm enjoying the opportunity to reflect on this year and all the exciting milestones we accomplished together! We've had so many including the opening of our second location in Midtown, introducing the Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy program, adding maternal fetal medicine services, developing new Integrative Medicine wellness programs and support services and hosting movie nights, lecture series and lunch and learns to name a few. It has been a busy year!

On a personal note, I am thrilled to let you know that I have finally completed cancer treatment, and just in time for the holidays! This year, the holidays hold a special significance as I am acutely aware of all that I have to be thankful for. One of the things I am most thankful for is you. My journey through treatment began in early spring, and was made easier because of all the support. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your support has meant more than you can possibly know.

On behalf of all Women Center providers and associates, I sincerely thank you for choosing us to be your provider of women's health and for staying connected to us through our newsletter, website and social media. It's amazing looking forward to the future and recognizing all the good things that we anticipate for you. We look forward to serving you in 2015 and wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Lisa Larkin, MD, FACP, NCMP

Director, UC Health Women's Center

Associate Professor and Division Director, Midlife Women's Health and Primary Care,

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine

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Support the Center

Our patients aren't just women. They're mothers, daughters and sisters. They're business women, teachers and caregivers. By advancing women's health care, we're not only helping women live longer, healthier lives, we're helping those who love and depend on them.

For more information, visit:

women.uchealth.com/about-us/support-the-center

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Screening is Important Even Without Symptoms

Contributed by **Lisa Larkin, MD, FACP, NCMP**

Sexually transmitted infections (STI) are common in both men and women, and screening for STI's are important for many sexually active women even if they do not have symptoms.

STIs are a serious health concern and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 20 million cases occur each year, with half of those cases in people ages 15 to 24 years. The most common STI's are caused by chlamydia or gonorrhea. These bacteria can live in the cervix, urethra, rectum or throat and are transmitted person to person through sexual relations. Infected men and women are frequently asymptomatic making transmission easy and allowing for these infections to go undetected. Untreated STI's can have long term serious consequences including pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, chronic pelvic pain, infertility and cancer.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently issued recommendations on prevention and detection of STIs. All sexually active women 24 years and younger as well any women deemed to be at an increased risk for an STI should be screened even if they do not have symptoms.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force also recommends screening women who develop new risk factors for chlamydia and gonorrhea since their last negative test result. They also recommend screening pregnant women who have tested positive for infection during their first trimester.



Vaccines

All parents know the importance of vaccinating their children, but many adults do not realize that they need to receive vaccines as adults as well. Updating your vaccines should be part of your wellness visits with your health care provider.

All adults should receive an annual flu vaccine. In addition, all adults, especially those who are in contact with young children, need to receive a pertussis booster (whooping cough) because protection from childhood vaccination fades over time. Some adults should be vaccinated against meningitis, human papilloma virus and others. You should discuss what vaccines you need with your health care provider. You can also take this simple quiz to determine which vaccines you need and create a printout to take to your next health care appointment.

SCREENING & TESTS

Winter break is a great time for your college daughter's annual gynecologic exam. These wellness visits are an important part of a young women's preventative health care. They provide an opportunity to discuss contraception and safe sex practices, screen for STI's and cervical cancer (if indicated) and discuss HPV vaccination.

- A sexually active female of any age need screened for STDs and HIV.
- Women ages 21 and older need an annual wellness visit with their OB/GYN regardless if they're sexually active or not. Pap tests aren't always performed on a yearly basis especially for women 30 and over.
- HPV vaccination is recommended for preteen boys and girls at age 11 or 12 so they are protected before ever being exposed to the virus. For young girls and women, the vaccine also helps prevent cervical cancer.

Don't wait for a problem to make an appointment with a gynecologist. To schedule an appointment for your daughter or yourself please call (513) 475-UC4U.

How Winter Affects Your Mental Health

Contributed by **Jyoti Sachdeva, MD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry**

December is here and that means winter and all that comes with it is here including a negative effect on your health. Winter is known to bring out a number of health problems, including colds, dry skin and eyes, lack of exercise and seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

SAD is a form of depression that's related to changes in the seasons, with symptoms beginning and ending at about the same time of each year (November to March). It affects over 500,000 people in the U.S. and symptoms can mimic those of clinical depression. Anxiety, sadness, irritability, social withdrawal, fatigue and lack of concentration are all common SAD symptoms.

The exact cause of SAD isn't known but some scientists think that certain hormones trigger mood-related changes at certain times of the year especially during the winter because there is less sunlight. Reduced exposure to sunlight can cause imbalances of brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, which affect your mood. During a recent study at the University of Copenhagen, scientists found that SAD may be caused by the serotonin transporter, or SERT, protein. Serotonin is a brain chemical responsible for maintaining mood balance. Scientists found that in winter, participants with SAD had 5% more SERT than in the summer, meaning more serotonin was being removed from their brains in winter, which can cause depression symptoms.

During the winter, it's important to take extra care of yourself to avoid the chance of developing SAD. Here are some things you can do to help keep SAD away:

- **Get sunlight whenever possible.** Stepping outside or letting in sunlight through the window will increase your body's serotonin levels, which balances your mood. Sunlight will also help brighten up the room, helping keep you more awake.
- **Don't cut exercise out of your daily routine.** Colder weather forces many people inside and can lead to excuses for not exercising. By exercising a few times a week, you'll help release endorphins, a hormone that gives you a natural high that in turn keeps you in a happier mood and energetic.
- **Get plenty of rest.** Sleeping seven to eight hours a night is needed to keep your mind and body regular.
- **See a doctor if needed.** If you experience changes in your mood, appetite, sleep habit or energy levels, visit a doctor to determine if you have SAD or if something else is going on.



At the Women's Center, we offer thorough diagnostic evaluations and individualized treatment plans for conditions such as SAD. We welcome female and male patients for treatment through our psychiatry and behavioral health treatment programs. To schedule an appointment, please call (513) 475-UC4U.

To learn more about symptoms and treatments for SAD and to take our quiz on SAD, visit <http://uhealth.staywellsolutionsonline.com/Library/Encyclopedia/85,P00755>.



Access your medical record online, anytime.

My UC Health allows you to access portions of your medical record through a secure, password-protected website. You can:

- Communicate with your doctor
- Access your test results
- View details of your past and upcoming appointments
- Request prescription renewals

To sign up for My UC Health, you will need an activation code that you can receive from your UC Health provider as well as your date of birth and last four digits of your Social Security number.

uhealth.com/myuhealth



Have Yourself a Good Night's Sleep This Holiday Season

Contributed by **Victoria Surdulescu, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine**

Sleep is absolutely essential for a person's health and well-being. You need sleep to keep your body going just as you need gas in your car to keep it moving but millions of people do not get enough sleep.

According to a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 48% of Americans say they don't get enough sleep. More women (53%) say aren't getting enough sleep over men (44%). Lack of sleep can be a result of a number of factors including sleep disorders, stress or an over-active brain. But how to do you give yourself the gift of sleep especially when the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is with us?

Spend time with your family and friends. Despite all the chaos that may be taking place around you during the holidays, some holiday traditions actually help you sleep. Visiting with family and friends is an effective way to destress, preparing you for a better night's sleep.

Watch a holiday themed television show or movie. Watching one of the many holiday themed television shows or movies (*It's a Wonderful Life, Miracle On 34th Street, National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, A Christmas Story*) will cause your stress hormone levels to drop significantly and your anti-stress growth hormone to increase, ultimately relaxing you and putting you in a happy mood so you will get a better night's sleep.

Schedule naptime. Taking a quick nap (20 minutes) in the afternoon will help you get some much-needed rest before you head out for holiday gatherings, shopping or any other activity you have scheduled.

Exercise. Walking around a neighborhood looking at lights, building a snowman, hitting the slopes, or ice skating are all great forms of exercise that can be done during the holiday season and help you get more sleep. By exercising, even a little, you reduce the time it takes to fall asleep and increases the total time you stay asleep.

Relax before bed.

The hour before you go to sleep is crucial for your body to wind down and relax so you can sleep. Late night cooking, shopping and entertaining guests should end at least two hours before you're ready to sleep so your mind and body can relax before you fall asleep.

Keep your regular sleep schedule. Staying up late or waking earlier is enough to throw off your biological clock. Your body is used to a particular sleep schedule and changing it, even for a day or two, can take a toll on your sleep cycle. If you have to stay up later or wake up earlier than you usually do, make sure to get back on track a few days before resuming your normal schedule.

If you have trouble sleeping, whether it's during the holiday season or any other time of the year, don't hesitate to speak to your doctor.



Watching holiday themed movies will cause your stress hormone levels to drop significantly and your anti-stress growth hormone to increase, ultimately relaxing you and putting you in a happy mood so you will get a better night's sleep.

The Gift of Wellness

Contributed by **Carly Hueber, EDM**

We all can get caught up in the rush of the holidays. The commute, stressful work, the balance of family life and financial worries can mean that you have little focus on yourself and the effect your lifestyle is having on your mind and body. A healthy body and healthy mind can be hard to retune, but a carefully chosen wellness program can provide the perfect backdrop from which to realign what has otherwise been thrown off balance.

This holiday season we encourage you to take the time you deserve. Give yourself or someone you love a meaningful gift. At the Women's Center we're offering a mixture of opportunities to help you relax and renew. Choose one of our integrative medicine services or bring a friend to one of our classes. We guarantee you'll be rejuvenated and inspired!

- **Massage Therapy** – we offer several types of message therapies to promote relaxation for physical and psychological healing.
- **Reflexology** – specific hand techniques are used for an improved feeling of well-being, vitality and mental/emotional balance.
- **Acupuncture** – fine needles are placed in points to restore balance and nourish the essential functions of the body

- **Yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi** – clear your mind, reduce stress and restore muscle strength. Private or group sessions are available.
- **Metabolic Health & Weight Management** - through a coordinated approach, our physicians, clinicians, integrative medicine practitioners, nutritionists and psychologists work one-on-one with you to develop an effective plan to help you achieve your weight loss and nutrition goals.

Gift Certificates Also Available

We're also offering a holiday special on our gift certificates which can be used to purchase services like massage, acupuncture, tai chi, private yoga sessions uhealth.com/women to name just a few.

Now until the end of the year, \$100 gift certificates will only cost \$80.

To purchase gift certificates or schedule an appointment, please call (513) 475-UC4U.

Larkin Honored As Women of Excellence

Lisa Larkin, MD, FACP, NCMP, Director of UC Health's Women's Center was honored on Nov. 21 at the 13th Annual Women of Excellence Awards.

Dr. Larkin along with nine other women received the award for their business and community contributions. Dr. Larkin has been practicing internal medicine and women's health in Cincinnati since 1991 and opened her own practice in 2002. One of her major accomplishments and vision was to create a comprehensive, multispecialty health center for women, which she did in 2012 when she joined with UC health to design, develop and direct the UC Health Women's Center.

Larkin has a long history of delivering compassionate, comprehensive women's health care. Her dedication to excellent care motivates her patients to be a health care partner rather than a bystander in the care. She's devoted her career to women's health with a focus on menopause, sexual health and cancer survivorship. Larkin has earned

recognition as one of America's Best Doctors and Cincinnati's Top Doctors on numerous occasions.

As a professor of medicine in the UC College of Medicine, Larkin has shared her talents and passion with residents. She drives and motivates the next generation of leaders to be their best.

Alongside the clinical practice and medical education, Dr. Larkin is committed to research in women's health. She recently submitted, and received grant approval for a study evaluating ways to educate women about sexual health issues. She's a regular health care news contributor and lecturer.

In addition to her career, she is an active member of several advisory boards and committees including, Go Red for Women (American Heart Association), the North American Menopause Society, Korey Stringer Foundation, LAM Foundation, the Women's Capital Club and Check YourGenes.org.

Healthy Eating through the Holidays

Finding a Balance That Works

Contributed by **Sonal Hill, RD, LD**

The holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends. And for many it also becomes a time for over-eating and weight gain. According to the National Institutes of Health, Americans, on average, gain a pound or two during the holiday season and often don't lose the extra weight once the holiday season is over.

The good news is that the holidays don't have to mean weight gain. Focusing on a healthy balance of food, activity and time with loved ones are what you need to help avoid weight gain during the holidays. I recommend following these steps:

- **Focus on vegetables and fruits** at most meals to help bring down your overall intake of calories.
- **Use smaller plates** instead of a dinner plate when eating a meal or snacks at a holiday gathering. By doing this, you will run out of room on your plate, preventing you from adding more food to your plate.
- **Eat a healthy meal or snack before the gathering.** By doing so, you won't be as hungry and less likely to over-eat in a short time.
- **Watch what you eat and drink regardless of the portion size.** Alcoholic beverages and dinner foods such as gravy, stuffing, casseroles and desserts are usually higher in calories and sodium.

Winning the Battle of the Bulge

It's that time of year when extra calories add up to weight gain. To avoid overindulging this holiday season, we recommend following these tips:

- **Don't arrive hungry.** Try eating a nutritious snack before the event and drink plenty of water to help stay full.
- **Bring healthy food.** Whether you're going to a party or potluck, bring low-calorie, healthy food.
- **Don't focus on food.** Spend time talking to your family or friends instead of circling the food table.

- **Be picky with sweets.** Limit yourself to small portions and set rules. If you love chocolate, then have only chocolate for a sweet treat. Try not to eat a variety of treats, regardless of size or calorie count.
- **Watch liquid calories.** Alcohol consumption typically increases and with that calories increase. Instead of alcohol, opt for water with a squeeze of lemon.
- **Get moving.** Keep exercise at the top of your priority list. Small changes do add up! Park farther away at the mall, take the stairs instead of the elevator and walk around a neighborhood looking at holiday lights.



- **Engage in conversation.** By talking to your family and friends, you will be distracted from the food surrounding you, causing you to be less tempted to eat.
- **Plan time for exercise.** Exercise helps relieve holiday stress and prevent weight gain. If you're time is limited, try 10 or 15 minute brisk walks twice a day.
- **Set realistic goals.** The holiday season is not the time to try to lose weight. Instead try to maintain your current weight and start thinking about your nutrition goals for the new year.

Enjoy the holidays and don't stress about your weight or food. Remember to balance your eating and exercising just as you do any other day. Doing so will go a long way in helping you enjoy the holiday season and in the long run, your body will thank you!



Women, We're Living Longer Than Men!

Contributed by **Ann Stone, ANP**

Life expectancy in the U.S. is at an all-time high, according to a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The report found that on average, Americans are living until they're 78.8 years and that women are living longer than men.

A girl born in 2012 can expect to live to 81.2 years – almost five years longer than a boy born in the same year, who's expected to live until 76.4 years. So why are women expected to live longer than men? The study found it's not necessarily because of their gender but more so because of their behavior. Here are the five reasons the report cited for women living longer than men:

Females are Tougher in Utero

Boys are much more likely to develop a prenatal infection or other issues while in the womb than girls. This commonly happens because prenatally, girls develop physically and mentally faster than boys.

Women are Less Likely to be Daredevils

Men like to take risks more than women so much so that unintentional injuries are the third leading cause of death in men and the sixth for women. This behavior can be blamed on their sex. The frontal lobes of the brain – the ones that deal with responsibility and risk calculation – develop much more slowly in males than females, resulting in them wanting to take risks more than women.

Women Succumb to Heart Disease Later

Heart disease is the number one killer in the U.S. for both women and men. While millions of men and women suffer from this deadly disease, men are more likely to develop it and die from it earlier in life than women. Women are protected from heart disease until menopause, since their bodies produce estrogen, which helps keep arteries strong and flexible to fight off heart disease.

Women Have Stronger Social Networks

It's no secret that women, more so than men, like to have talk about their feelings and any stress in their life. According to a study conducted in 2010 by Brigham Young University, people with strong social connections have a 50% lower chance of dying than those who don't. The one exception to the study is that married men



tend to live longer than non-married men because of the social connection.

Women Take Better Care of their Health

Women are more likely to see a doctor on a regular basis than men. Even with higher mortality rates from several different diseases, men tend not to make their health a top priority for a number of reasons including finances, time and pride.

Regardless of your gender, taking care of yourself, both mentally and physically will help you live a longer and happier life.

TIPS FOR A STRESS-LESS HOLIDAY

The holidays bring plenty of joy and togetherness, but can also bring stress. Whether it's shopping, family gatherings or working extra hours to have time off during the holidays, stress can rear its ugly head during what should be a festive time of the year!

Follow these tips to help minimize stress:

- **Get enough sleep.** Seven to 8 hours is recommended.
- **Exercise.** If you can't maintain your normal workout take a short walk.
- **Manage your time.** Decide what your priorities will be and kindly decline everything else. Avoid last-minute tasks and plan ahead as much as possible.
- **Simplify expectations.** Don't expect everything to be perfect or to run smoothly.
- **Seek to serve others.** Volunteer during the holiday season, doing something for someone else will make you feel good.
- **Decorate together.** Enlist family to help decorate the house.
- Give yourself the gift of wellness. Dedicate time each day to relaxing, meditating, enjoying good music and eating well.

UC Health Women's Center promotes industry-leading health care solutions, resources and education focusing on women's primary care and specialty services. The newsletter is published monthly by UC Health and offers health education, news and stories centered on academic based, discovery-driven health care. It is not a substitute for a consultation with a physician. UC Health Women's Center is located at 7675 Wellness Way, West Chester, Ohio 45069. For information, call (513) 475-UC4U (8248) or visit UCHealth.com/women. If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please email WomensCenter@UCHealth.com.



Get ready to *sparkle* this holiday season...

Buy One, Get One 50% Off Hydra Facial Masque with Dermaplaning.

First masque is \$80.00
Second is \$40.00
for a total cost of \$120.

UCHealth.com/women
(513) 475-UC4U

- **ELASTIderm Holiday Gift Set:** ELASTIderm Eye Cream/Gel and ELASTIderm complete Complex Serum, \$109.00. Limited Quantities!
- Reverse and restore severely dry, cracked and wrinkled lips using clinically proven moisture technology.
Offering 25% off ZO Medical LIPREBUILD - priced at \$37.50. Limited Quantities!
- **Skin Care Gift Certificate - \$100 value for \$80** redeemable on any full priced service/product. Excludes Dysport/Botox and Dermal Filler injections

**Exclusions may apply. Offer good through December 31st, 2014.*