



## ARTICLES – JANUARY 2007

Health Facts With Dr. Max - Published every Tuesday in the Springfield Republican – Metro Edition

### **CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS**

*Published January 2, 2007*

Fibroids are benign tumors that can grow in the lining (or in between the muscles) of the uterus or on the outside of the uterus. Ranging from the size of an apple seed to as large as a grapefruit, fibroids can cause pain, pressure, heavy menstrual bleeding, or bleeding between periods, as well as infertility, frequent urination, and pain during intercourse. These symptoms lead about 25% of women with fibroids to seek treatment, which includes observation, hysterectomy (surgical removal of the uterus), myomectomy (removal large fibroids individually), or uterine fibroid treatment. This latter treatment involves threading a catheter into the femoral artery, releasing tiny particles into the blood vessels that feed the fibroids, and cutting off their blood supply.

Although hysterectomies were once considered standard treatment for several gynecological conditions, women are encouraged to investigate their options carefully before having such a procedure.

P.S. Minimally invasive uterine fibroid embolization provides faster recovery times and shorter stays than surgery for the treatment of fibroids.

## **A MATTER OF TIMING**

*Published January 9, 2007*

There is some research to show that exercising at certain times of the menstrual cycle could help women shed pounds more quickly. According to an Australian study, women who exercise in the later menstrual phase may burn more fat and feel less tired. Results of the study suggest that exercise performance is improved during the latter part of the menstrual cycle when circulating concentrations of ovarian hormones (estrogen and progesterone) are high. Ovarian hormones promote the body's use of fat as an emergency source during exercise, which means more fat is burned off. It also means that fewer waste products are being produced by the body, which contributes to fatigue when people exercise.

Exercise is vital to a healthy lifestyle because it tones and strengthens muscles; helps improve circulation and digestion, and burns excess calories. Make a commitment to good health in 2007!

BTW –

Exercise premenstrually also helps with the pain and mood changes in that part of the cycle, perhaps by increasing endorphins, which act as an analgesic and as a calmative.

## **INSOMNIA**

*Published January 16, 2007*

The onslaught of commercials to treat sleeplessness points to the fact that insomnia affects about 1/3 of all adults from time to time, 10% experience is chronically. Here are some suggestions to help whether medication is used or not:

- Go to bed and get up the same time every day.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, comfortable and dark.
- Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate) at least 6 hours before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly, but finish exercising at least 4 hours before bedtime.
- Don't take any daytime naps.
- Don't read, eat, or watch TV in bed-only use your bed for sleeping or sex.
- Don't drink alcohol to help you sleep.

A good night's sleep is part of overall good mental health and physical health.

BTW –

After eliminating the physical or medication side effect reasons for insomnia, we also evaluate anxiety and depression contributors to the problem. The newest products prescribed for insomnia have low addiction potential. The most innovative product, ramelteon, actually helps you restore your sleep – wake cycle to make you naturally sleepy at bedtime.

## **REDUCING RISK**

*Published January 23, 2007*

Over-the-counter pain relievers may reduce the risk of breast cancer in some women. Researchers found that postmenopausal women who took aspirin, ibuprofen, or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) at least twice a week for five to nine years exhibited at 21% reduction in their incidences of breast cancer. Regular NSAID use for ten or more years was associated with at 28% reduction. The standard doses were 325 mg. of aspirin or 200 mg. of ibuprofen with ibuprofen showing as better reduction than aspirin. This is the fifteenth study to show this effect. Some studies did not show this reduction. Regular doses of acetaminophen were not shown to have this effect.

Breast cancer becomes more common as a woman gets older. Having a mammogram every year once you reach 40 and doing a breast self-exam each month are important. Some women may benefit from taking over-the-counter pain relievers.

BTW-

NSAIDs can cause side effects such as stomach irritation, ulcers and bleeding, so most patients are advised to restrict their usage to one tablet twice a week if they are taking NSAIDs only to reduce their breast cancer risk.

## **ALTERNATIVE RELIEF**

*Published January 30, 2007*

Hot flashes, a common symptom of menopause, occur as diminishing estrogen levels exert less of an effect on the hypothalamus, the part of the brain responsible for body temperature. While estrogen therapy may be considered for the treatment of hot flashes, many women are concerned about its potential side effects. Now, researchers have found that gabapentin (Neurontin) controls hot flashes almost as well as estrogen. Hot flashes might diminish by regulating the flow of calcium in and out of cells, a mechanism that helps regulate body temperature. Most women who took the drug reported some reduction in hot flashes.

For some women, the menopausal period is barely noticeable. Other women experience a number of symptoms including hot flashes. Gabapentin can help reduce hot flashes.

P.S.

If you experience mild hot flashes, first try lifestyle changes (daily exercise, relaxation techniques, smoking cessation) to minimize their occurrence and severity. We also offer herbal preparations to try before trying prescription products.