



Health Facts with Dr. Max

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TIMING IS THE KEY

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Estrogen's protection of the brain has been demonstrated in animals, but is still being debated for humans. The current theory is that there is a critical age range where its benefits are shown and the lack of estrogen is harmful. To prove this, the Mayo Clinic looked at women who underwent surgical removal of the ovaries before menopause and followed them for 25-29 years. The study looked for cognitive problems, dementia, or Parkinsonism as compared to a control group of women of the same age who did not have surgery. Their findings agreed with the "critical window" theory that women should not be deprived of estrogen before menopause. Women who lost their ovaries before menopause had more cognitive impairment, more dementia or more Parkinsonism, **unless they took estrogen therapy after surgery**. The younger they were at the time of surgery, the more risk of problems if there was no hormone therapy.

Every woman is different and the risks and benefits of hormone therapy should be calculated separately for each one. Reports in the media or pressure from friends and family should not be part of your decision-making. If our individualized approach to health care appeals to you, call 525-4546 for an appointment. We are **The Counseling & Gynecology Group** and are located at 281 Maple Street, East Longmeadow.

FYI - The same timing concept seems to hold for the reported antidepressant effect of estrogen therapy in midlife women.