



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Patients, Supporters and Friends

Happy 2014! I want to encourage each and every one of you to make this the year you make your health a priority. As a wife, mother and physician, I realize how easy it is to put your own health needs on the back burner. But despite the urge to place the needs of others first, the most important thing you can do is tend to your own health. And while it will require some effort on your part, the rewards—more energy, increased strength and improved mental well being, to name just a few—are well worth it! That said, take it one step at a time. Progress, not perfection, should be your goal.

Also, please keep reading our monthly newsletter to get the latest news on a variety of women's health issues. And if you learn something new, please share your knowledge with a friend. This month, we debunk the myth that sleep apnea is a man's disease, teach you how to eat for a healthy brain, take the mystery out of Kegel exercises, and tell you which health symptoms you should never ignore.

Happy New Year!

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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Movie Night & Lecture Series Coming in 2014

We've got a new twist on "chick flicks." And a Lecture Series that is informative and engaging.

Checkout our 2014 calendar at: uhealth.com/women

Progress over perfection

Try one new thing, one easy step at a time.

Contributed by **Lisa Larkin, MD**



Sometimes it can feel like making a big change requires a complicated plan or a Herculean effort, but research shows that small efforts done consistently have a much greater impact. If you're hoping to make some positive moves this year, take heart, you WILL make tremendous progress by just taking a few small steps regularly.

We've set up a few new programs to help you learn, discuss, and try new things in the company of other women who are on a similar journey! So this month, or this week even, see if one of our offerings could be the first step to a stronger you.

Lecture Series

We're excited to start the New Year off right with a little camaraderie and some great conversations around staying healthy, happy and confident! We hope you'll join us in 2014 for our monthly lecture series, designed to be informative and engaging. We'll be touching on the important topics in your life—eating healthy, healthy aging, taking care of your ticker, and much more. Our expert providers will give a talk on a specific topic and then allow the group to discuss the topic and ask questions. We look forward to seeing you!

Movie Night

January 30, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

We've got a new twist on "chick flicks." Instead of the usual romantic comedy, we're bringing in some interesting (and in some cases

humorous) documentaries that address women's issues. And the screenings aren't just for women, they're for both genders, young and old. Screenings will be held in the Women's Center.

Our first film will be Miss Representation, the award-winning documentary on how women are portrayed in the media. The stories of teenage girls, journalists, entertainers and academics bring up many issues for girls and adult women from self-esteem to body image, the potential to attain leadership positions and the ability to be fairly represented in our government. A great show for Mom's and their sons and Dad's and their daughters. There's sure to be a thought-provoking discussion!

Coming soon!

The Story of Mothers and Daughters—April 10

Hot Flash Havoc – June 19

Kind Campaign—September 18

All events are free and open to the public. Reservations are not required, but it's helpful for us if you call ahead. Please call (513) 475-UC4U if you have questions or to reserve a space. And be sure to check our website for future programs.

Sleep apnea can lead to more serious health conditions

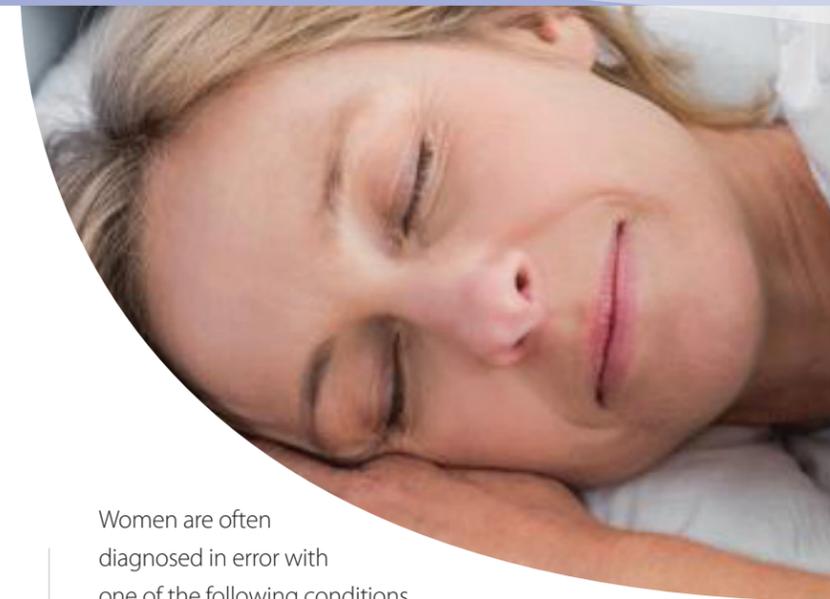
Study shows common sleep disorder more dangerous for women

Contributed by **Victoria Surdulescu, MD**

There's a common misperception that sleep apnea is a condition that only affects middle-age, overweight men. But the truth is anyone can suffer from this condition. And a new study from the UCLA School of Nursing says the long-term health consequences of sleep apnea may be even more harmful for women than men. The study found that women with obstructive sleep apnea—a condition in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep—had weaker autonomic responses. This is significant because autonomic responses control such functions as breathing, blood pressure, heart rate, and sweating. This is significant because if left untreated, obstructive sleep apnea can lead to heart disease, constant fatigue, shortness of breath, and other serious issues.

Women often misdiagnosed

To make matters worse, women are much less likely to be diagnosed with sleep apnea than men because symptoms among women can be vague or associated, incorrectly, with other conditions like insomnia, mood disturbances, restless legs, and depression. We also know that women's risk for sleep apnea increases as they transition through menopause. And post-menopausal women are up to three times more likely to have obstructive sleep apnea compared to premenopausal women.



Women are often diagnosed in error with one of the following conditions, rather than sleep apnea.

- Anemia
- Cardiac or pulmonary illnesses
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Fatigue from overwork
- Fibromyalgia
- Hypertension
- Menopausal changes

Women that have fatigue, are overweight or obese, have a history of snoring and dry mouth on awakening should at least get a neck girth measurement and some close questioning from a sleep specialist.

Don't let poor sleep affect your quality of life

Unfortunately, many women with sleep apnea put off seeing a doctor because they're embarrassed about snoring or they don't like the idea of having to wear a sleep mask. But the truth is sleep apnea is a medical condition that needs to be treated in order to live a healthy, long life. If you have questions about sleep apnea, please call (513) 475-UC4U to schedule an appointment with one of our sleep medicine specialists.

Lecture Series

JANUARY 23

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

You are What You Eat: The Benefits of Medical Weight Loss

Presented by Angela Fitch, MD

You Can Do It! Stick to Your Resolutions and Stay Balanced

Presented by Barbara Walker, PhD

FEBRUARY 27

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Take Care of Your "Ticker": Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention

Presented by Umara Raza, MD

The Power of Food: Eating for Your Heart

Presented by Sonal Hill, MS, RD, LD

MARCH 27

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Passport to Healthy Travels: Pre-Travel Physicals and Vaccinations

Lisa Larkin, MD, FACP, NCMP

Spring Ahead: Don't Let Allergies and Asthma Stop You

Sukaina Ahmad, MD

Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Causes

- A lower jaw that is short compared to the upper jaw (retrognathia)
- Certain shapes of the palate or airway that cause the airway to be narrower or collapse more easily
- Large neck or collar size (17 inches or more in men and 16 inches or more in women)
- Large tongue, which may fall back and block the airway
- Obesity
- Large tonsils and adenoids in children that can block the airway

Symptoms

- Act grumpy, impatient, or irritable
- Be forgetful
- Fall asleep while working, reading, or watching TV
- Feel sleepy while driving, or even fall asleep while driving
- Have hard to treat headaches

Problems that may occur with this condition:

- Depression that becomes worse
- Hyperactive behavior, especially in children
- Leg swelling (if severe)

Strive toward progress, not perfection

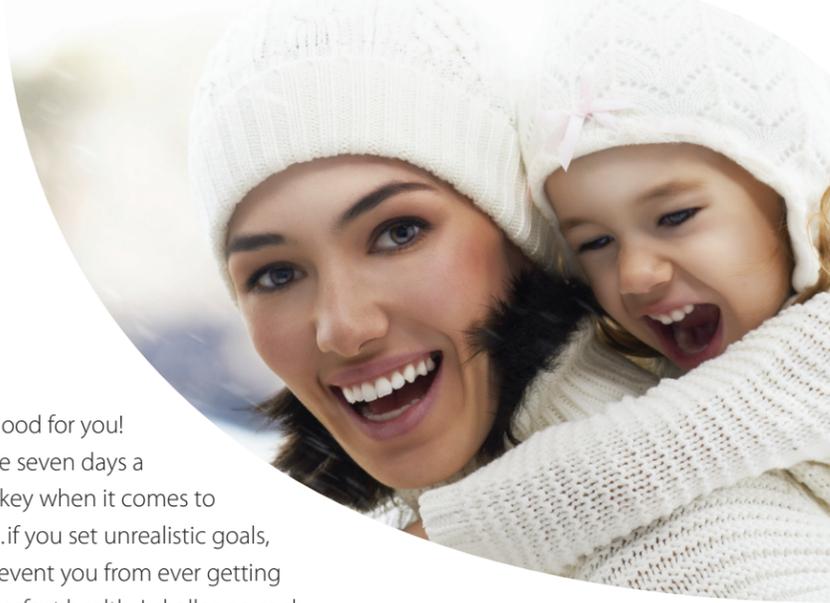
It doesn't have to be all or nothing

Contributed by **Sukaina Ahmad, MD**

If your New Year's resolution is to lead a healthy lifestyle, good for you! But if that means nothing less than committing to exercise seven days a week, cutting all meat out of your diet and going cold turkey when it comes to sweets, sodium and caffeine, we should talk. Let's face it...if you set unrealistic goals, chances are you'll fail miserably or even worse, fear will prevent you from ever getting started. So instead of using all of your energy to achieve perfect health, I challenge each of you to focus on making coordinated steps toward living a healthier lifestyle. Here are six simple—but effective—health resolutions to start your journey.

- **Eat a fruit or vegetable with every meal.** Keep produce out on the counter where you can see it; that way you're more likely to eat it.
- **Don't take your phone to bed.** It's hard to wind down to the tune of a "ping"-ing smart phone, and research shows screen time can contribute to sleep disturbances. Take your sleep seriously and truly unplug for 6-8 hours.
- **Swap out the latte or soda for water.** Water has many health benefits, from weight control to improved energy to better sleep. But the "eight 8-oz glasses" rule can be a bit overwhelming. Why not start out by replacing at least one coffee/soda/alcoholic drink per day with water?
- **Move every day.** That doesn't mean hopping on the latest fitness craze or joining a fancy gym. Take the stairs, park in the farthest spot, actually take your dog – or kids – for a walk instead of just letting them out to play.
- **Set a monthly date with friends.** "We need to get together more often." Sound familiar? Conflicting schedules can make it hard to cultivate relationships with friends. Put in the effort to find a set day and time that works for everyone; then, be consistent, and make it a priority to spend a few hours together each month.
- **Perform a random act of kindness once a week.** From paying the parking fee for the car behind you to paying someone a compliment, small acts can really make someone else's day.

Over time, you'll see that these small changes will become routine and you'll be happier and healthier. Then, you can set your site on new challenges.



WALK-IN APPOINTMENTS

Did you know Women's Center offers walk-in appointments for those feeling under the weather? Patients, staff and visitors can stop by the front desk to make a same-day appointment.



Add *Kegel* exercises to your fitness program

Learn how to "Kegel"

Contributed by **Aparna Shah, MD**

You may have heard of Kegel exercises—the squeezing and releasing of pelvic floor muscles—as a way to treat health problems caused by weak pelvic floor muscles. Did you know that incorporating Kegel exercises into your daily routine can also help ward off problems like urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse? Kegel exercises can counteract the negative effects of pregnancy, childbirth, aging and being overweight on the pelvic floor. These exercises can help improve sexual sensation in women who are having difficulty or who are experiencing pain. But to reap the benefits of Kegel exercises, you must do them correctly. Check out our list of DO's and DON'Ts for properly exercising your pelvic floor.

DO ...

- Make sure you are exercising the right muscles. Your doctor or a pelvic floor physical therapist can examine you and confirm that you are using the correct muscles if you are not sure.
- Work up to doing 10 contractions in a row, holding each for 3-5 seconds and relaxing in between.
- Perform Kegel exercises regularly—about three sets of 10, three to four times per day.
- Come up with a routine or certain cues to remember to practice your Kegels. For instance, do them after you empty your bladder, at every stoplight while driving, or during TV commercials.

DON'T ...

- Flex the muscles in your abdomen, thighs or buttocks. Try focusing on and contracting only the pelvic floor muscles.
- Practice Kegels while urinating as this can interfere with proper voiding.
- Get discouraged. Just keep practicing. As your muscle strength improves, you will get better at holding your Kegel contractions.
- Stop exercising your pelvic floor muscles. Doing Kegel exercises regularly can help with bladder control issues, improve symptoms of pelvic organ prolapse, and even improve sexual function.



The Women's Center is now on Facebook and Twitter! Connect with us at:



facebook.com/uhealthwomen



twitter.com/uchwomenscenter

Boost Your Brain

Try these eating tips to stay sharp

Contributed by **Angela Fitch, MD, ABOM**

It's time to ring out the old and bring in the new. This year, consider adding some foods to your "to-try" list that are good for more than just your body—these super foods will help "age-proof" your brain.

- 1. Eat more (soluble) fiber.** Incorporating more soluble fiber into every meal helps fight against insulin resistance. And insulin resistance can create brain-chemical imbalances, like those often seen in Alzheimer patients. So, at your next meal, be sure your plate has some kind of soluble fiber like beans, peas, barley or apples.
- 2. Eat earlier.** Not eating for about 12 hours, including the time you sleep, may help put your body in a very mild ketosis. Ketosis is a state when your brain uses ketone for energy. This may help brain cell efficiency to give you a mental edge.
- 3. Add seeds to more meals.** Sprinkling pumpkin, sunflower, sesame or flax seeds on salads, cereals or yogurt to boost your vitamin E levels, and help protect your brain against free-radical damage. A Dutch study found that participants who ate more vitamin E had a 25 percent lower chance of developing dementia or Alzheimer's disease.
- 4. Add leafy greens.** Vitamin B is a compilation of eight different vitamins, known as vitamin B complex, found naturally in high-protein foods. Leafy greens are another natural food source containing lots of B vitamins.
- 5. Eat more eggs.** Eggs contain key nutrients for brain health: protein, iron, vitamin D, zinc and even choline. Researchers at the Boston School of Medicine found that adults who had a diet rich in choline had higher scores on verbal and visual memory tests, and were "less likely to show changes on brain scans that are associated with dementia."
- 6. Eat more Mediterranean-style dishes.** Rich in antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids and healthy fats, Mediterranean diets have long been associated with slowing cognitive decline.
- 7. Be sure to get adequate amounts of vitamin B.** Foods rich in vitamin B can help prevent against temporary dementia (caused by low-levels of this critical vitamin) and improved cognitive function. At every meal, load up with foods rich in folate and all B vitamins to keep your brain running smoothly.



- 8. Spice things up – with cinnamon.** Cinnamon can offer many benefits to your brain, including anti-inflammatory properties, antioxidants and reduced blood sugar levels—all which help keep you mentally sharp and ward off neurological conditions like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. So next time you're getting ready to enjoy a nice, healthy bowl of oatmeal, add a little cinnamon.
- 9. Snack on blueberries and strawberries.** These popular fruits are more than just tasty treats. They can help you learn more quickly and keep your memory sharp. The on-going Nurses' Health Study showed that older adults who ate more of these super-berries had slower rates of cognitive decline as they aged.
- 10. Eat fatty fish twice a week.** Researchers at Columbia University found that healthy adults who eat more omega-3 fatty acids, like those found in fatty fish, had lower levels of a protein associated with an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and age-related cognitive decline.
- 11. Choose enriched and whole grain breads, fortified cereals.** The vitamin B in these food assists in digestion and the conversion of food into energy.

Top 10 Foods Highest in Vitamin B9 (Folate)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Beans (Black Eyed Peas - Cooked) | 6. Avocado |
| 2. Lentils (Cooked) | 7. Broccoli (Cooked) |
| 3. Spinach (Raw) | 8. Tropical Fruits (Mango) |
| 4. Asparagus (Cooked) | 9. Oranges |
| 5. Lettuce (Cos or Romaine) | 10. Bread (Wheat Bread) |

Eight health symptoms women shouldn't ignore

It's time to make your health a priority

Contributed by **Shazia Chaudhry, MD**

You work hard taking care of your family, friends, home, and work. But are you taking care of yourself? With the holidays behind you, there's no excuse not to get that nagging symptom checked out now. And by now, I mean stop what you're doing, pick up the phone and make an appointment to see your doctor. It may save your life.

The top women's health risks are heart disease, cancer and stroke. These are serious concerns. Remember, healthy lifestyle choices — such as eating healthy and adding exercise to your daily routine — can go a long way toward reducing women's health risks.

Here are eight symptoms you should never ignore:

- 1. Extreme fatigue.** Exhaustion can signal issues ranging from depression to heart failure. If you're feeling exhausted and can't seem to get your energy back with adequate rest, call your doctor.
- 2. Chest pain.** Pain or pressure in the chest should always be taken seriously. While it may not be a heart attack, it could be a symptom of cardiovascular disease.
- 3. Shortness of breath.** Shortness of breath can signal heart disease or even impending heart attack. If it's accompanied by chest pain or nausea, seek immediate medical attention.
- 4. Abnormal bleeding.** If you experience significant changes to your cycle, are spotting in between cycles or are bleeding during intercourse or after menopause, talk with your gynecologist.



- 5. Abdominal bloating or pain.** Cramping and bloating from time to time is normal for most women. But constant bloating and discomfort, especially if it's concentrated in one area or is accompanied by changes in bowels, can signal gallbladder disease or gynecologic issues.
- 6. Pain during intercourse.** Pain isn't normal. It can signal a number of issues, from an infection to hormone imbalance to an ovarian cyst. Get it checked out and get back to enjoying a healthy sex life.
- 7. Breast lumps.** Finding a lump doesn't always mean you have cancer—it could be a cyst or benign growth. But it's vital you schedule an exam to rule it out or ensure the earliest treatment possible.
- 8. Persistent headaches.** While stress at work or home are sure to cause a headache here and there, persistent headaches can be a sign of stroke, brain tumor or aneurysm. If you're headaches become regular, call your doctor for some peace of mind and relief.



Welcome to 2014!

We know some of you are cheering—you're ready for your new, fresh start. And some are weeping as the last of the sugar cookies get eaten and it's back to the regular routine. We get it! Our hope is that the events and programs we're offering will both excite and inspire you to make 2014 your happiest, healthiest year yet.

Make this your year with three simple principles:

- 1. Make your health your first priority.** You can do what you do best, when you are feeling your healthiest. And we know it can be a challenge to make, and remember, all those doctor appointments. That's why we're excited to offer two great services this year: A rejuvenation day to recharge those batteries after the long holiday season; and a check-up day where you can see the specialists you need and check off all those medically necessary health maintenance screenings, from mammograms, cervical cancer screening, cholesterol tests and more.
- 2. Progress over perfection.** It always seems we have such big plans at the start of the year. This year, let's get real. If we try just one step at a time, we'll make progress! This year, try something new like one of our lecture series or movie nights or an integrative medicine class like yoga, Pilates or tai chi. Trying something different this year will help you get off, and stay on the right foot.
- 3. Enlist support.** It's more effective and more fun if you don't try to do it on your own. We're here to help. Our providers offer expertise in a wide range of areas so you can find the support you need at every stage of your life. If you are going through menopause, having sexual health issues, or are a cancer survivor come in for a consult with one of our specialists or participate in a shared medical visit so you can learn more. And, as always, our primary care physicians are here to help be your key point person in getting to your healthiest self.

Visit our website to check out one of our upcoming events or programs and be on your way to a strong and vibrant new year!



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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