



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Patients, Supporters and Friends

Every woman is unique. Just as no two women have identical viewpoints, no two women have identical health needs. Maybe for you, maintaining a healthy weight has always been an issue, for others it may be that they are working through the difficulties of breast cancer or they are concerned about a history of breast cancer in their family.

We know that many of the women who come to the Women's Center are in the midst of managing the symptoms of menopause and many others are constantly on the hunt for better ideas on how to eat healthy.

The good news is the Women's Center offers a variety of specialty programs to meet your unique health needs at every stage of your life, as well as primary care physicians specializing in women's health to help coordinate your care. Embrace who you are and celebrate what makes you so special!

PS It's National Breast Cancer Awareness month. Please take a moment to check out the American Cancer Society's website for the latest information on breast cancer risk factors, screening and early detection, diagnosis and treatment.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Lisa Larkin

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Do I really need a primary care physician? ... 2
Has menopause got you down? ... 3
Lisa Larkin interviewed for Pain Resource blog ... 3
National Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Week ... 4
Tired of riding the weight loss roller coaster? ... 5
News ... 5
Eating for Health ... 6
Healing benefits of yoga ... 7
Wellness Studio Class Schedule ... 8



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/



# Has menopause got you down?

## Our certified menopause specialists can help restore your quality of life

Nearly all women go through menopause, but no two women experience menopause the same way. For some, an occasional hot flash is the worst symptom, while others may experience an extensive list of symptoms including mood swings, memory loss, weight gain and sleep disturbances. And while menopause is a natural part of life, it doesn't mean you have to sit and suffer the side effects or resort to alternative treatment options that may not be right (and, in fact, could be dangerous) for you.

Effective menopause treatment is highly individualized and therefore requires a patient-focused, evidence-based approach to care. That's why, several years ago, the nation's leading menopause organization—the North American Menopause Society (NAMS)—set standards to ensure the highest quality of care for women at menopause and beyond. Licensed health-care providers who demonstrate expertise

in the field and pass the NAMS menopause competency exam are awarded the credential of NAMS Certified Menopause Practitioner (NCMP).

Providers with the NCMP credential specialize in midlife women's health and menopause medicine. They work with you to ensure you stay healthy and maintain the highest quality of life during the menopause transition.

Here at the Women's Center, we have five certified menopause practitioners: **Drs. Susan Stegman, Maria Wright and Lisa Larkin, and nurse practitioners Anna Fox and Catherine Geering**. Menopause is a complex health issue, where the "one-size-fits-all" model doesn't work. Having a practitioner who is trained in the diagnosis and treatment of menopause can lead to better outcomes. And a practitioner who is knowledgeable about other health concerns



like cancer survivorship, sleep, nutrition and the brain—and how those interrelate with menopause—is a practitioner you want.

**To schedule an appointment with one of our NAMS providers, please call (513) 475-UC4U.**

## Do I really need a primary care physician?

### Why you need your PCP in sickness and in health

Most of us know we have to make the annual visit to our gynecologist, and if you are over 40, you probably also make it a priority to have an annual mammogram. But what about a yearly visit to your primary care provider (PCP)? Many healthy women don't feel the need to regularly visit their PCP in fact, many women don't even have a PCP.

### A long-term relationship with a PCP has benefits

For those who seldom get sick, a local clinic is always available to prescribe an antibiotic or patch up an injury. Right? Well, yes, they can address your immediate needs, but it's difficult for a provider who sees you only one time to provide you with the same level of insight that would come from a

PCP who has seen you several times and knows your history. When you have an established relationship with a PCP, if an "ordinary" illness turns out to be more of a long-term condition, you benefit from a personalized treatment plan that can only come from someone who knows your complete medical history.

### A PCP can help keep you healthy and prevent disease

And even when you're feeling well, an annual physical examination provides an opportunity for your PCP to recommend medications, screenings and lifestyle changes to help prevent you from getting sick in the first place. While a gynecological visit and mammogram are critical for women each year, it is equally important to keep an eye on heart health, hormones,

weight and your overall well-being. A PCP can be your first line of defense in finding and treating issues early.

### PCPs can direct you to the right specialists

And should you require specialized care, a PCP can help you navigate the right approach and find the right specialists. At the Women's Center, our PCPs can help coordinate your care with many other specialists, from bone health to weight loss, Pilates to pulmonology, right here under the same roof.

### At the Women's Center, our team of PCPs all specialize in the care of women.

We'd love to help you on your journey to health. To see one of our primary care providers, please call **(513) 475-UC4U**.

## Lisa Larkin interviewed for Pain Resource blog

### Don't press pause on your sexual health

Aging gracefully doesn't mean accepting discomfort or pain as an inevitability. For the most part, we seek and find relief for the aches, twinges and physical manifestations (anti-wrinkle cream, anyone?) that accompany a long life. But when the discomfort or pain happens "down there," and interferes with intimacy, women are often too embarrassed or self-conscious to speak up.

What we're talking about is postmenopausal vulvar and vaginal atrophy (VVA), the thinning of the vaginal tissue related to low

estrogen. The symptom—including dyspareunia (pain with intercourse), vaginal dryness, and irritation—can affect sexual activities, personal relationships, and the activities of daily life.

All postmenopausal women will have VVA to some degree, and about half will experience moderate to severe symptoms.

To read the full article, visit: [painresource.com/ailments-conditions/understanding-vva/](https://painresource.com/ailments-conditions/understanding-vva/)

## National Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Week

# Do you carry a genetic risk for cancer?

Contributed by **Heather Pulaski, MD**

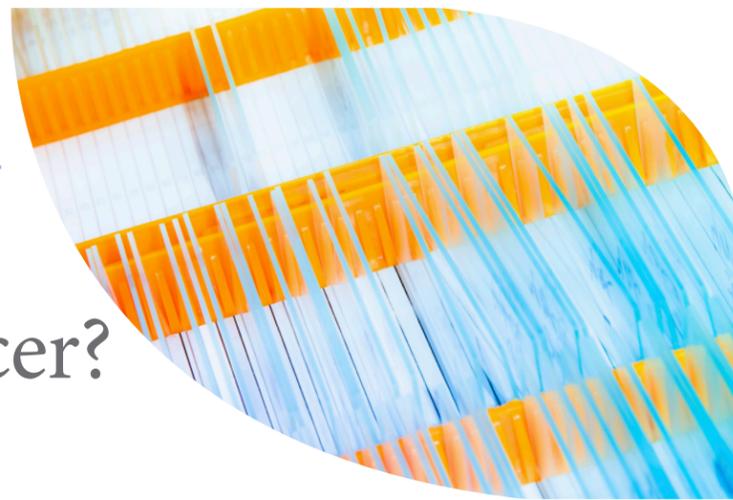
**It's very likely that you know a friend or family member who's a breast cancer survivor.** But do you know a breast cancer "previvor"? Not sure what I mean? Well, let me explain. A previvor is a woman who, as of yet, doesn't have cancer but is predisposed to it because she carries either the BRCA<sup>1</sup> or BRCA<sup>2</sup> gene mutation. Probably the most famous breast cancer previvor is Angelina Jolie. As you'll recall, Jolie decided to get a double mastectomy because she tested positive for the BRCA<sup>1</sup> gene mutation.

### How do I know if I should be BRCA tested?

The goal of Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Week, held this year from September 29 to October 5, is to raise awareness about hereditary cancer. It's estimated that among the 750,000 Americans who carry the BRCA gene mutation, only 10 percent know they're at risk. So if you're a woman with a strong family history of breast, ovarian, pancreatic or aggressive prostate cancer, you should discuss the possibility of BRCA testing with your doctor. In certain cases, BRCA testing is recommended when a breast cancer patient meets certain criteria, such as premenopausal disease, triple negative tumors and other combined, complicated risk factors. It is also recommended for patients with ovarian cancer. By doing so, they can let family members know whether or not they may be at risk for this gene mutation. Communication among family members is critical because the average woman has a less than a 1.5 percent chance of developing cancer in her ovaries, but a woman with a BRCA mutation increases her risk up to 40 percent, and a patient with BRCA<sup>2</sup> has about a 25 percent risk of ovarian cancer.

### I found out I'm a previvor. Now what?

If you're a previvor, there are things you can do to help to reduce your risk for developing cancer. These include taking certain medicines, routine cancer screenings to catch cancer at its most treatable stage and prophylactic breast and/or ovary removal. And for BRCA positive women already diagnosed with ovarian cancer, a particular class of drugs called PARP inhibitors has been shown to keep patients cancer-free for longer. In fact, a new trial through the University of Cincinnati Gynecologic Oncology Department is evaluating the effectiveness of PARP inhibitors in keeping BRCA positive ovarian cancer patients in remission. Of course, no matter if you're a previvor or survivor, it's important to talk with your doctor to determine which course of treatment is best for you.



### Know the symptoms of ovarian cancer

While ovarian cancer has often been called the "silent killer," as it's difficult to detect, perhaps a more accurate description is "the cancer that whispers." Though symptoms may be subtle, they do exist. Most ovarian cancer patients experience bloating, pelvic pain, difficulty eating, indigestion and bladder symptoms in the year prior to their diagnosis. So please stay in tune with your body. And if symptoms do appear, talk with your doctor.



Learn more: [www.facingourrisk.org/events/special\\_event.php](http://www.facingourrisk.org/events/special_event.php)

# Tired of riding the weight loss roller coaster?

## You don't have to tackle this alone

The South Beach Diet. The Grapefruit Diet. The Atkins Diet. Slimfast. Sugarfree. Detox. A plethora of new weight loss options seems to hit the market place every month. And for some, these options might work temporarily. But for many others, the constant search for the right approach, the one that will work, can be endless. At the Women's Center we're introducing our new weight loss program and the best news of all is you'll have the support you need to help you reach your goals. We partner with you to evaluate the best options and find a solution that will work for you.

### Multi-pronged approach

The truth is, losing weight is complex. It involves many aspects—physical conditions, emotions, habits, education and family dynamics, to name just a few. That's why our new weight loss program uses a team approach. By bringing experts together, we can develop the most effective plan for you—one that can include medically supervised weight loss, products, support, behavior modification, exercise and nutrition education, or even surgical solutions—all in one coordinated program.

### Dr. Angela Fitch, certified obesity specialist

Our weight loss program is directed by Angela Fitch, MD, ABOM, a board-certified physician and certified obesity specialist. A consult with Dr. Fitch is the first step in the program. With years of experience and a specialty in weight loss, Dr. Fitch will help you navigate the right path to a healthy weight. She will supervise your weight loss and help to monitor your health throughout the program.

### Support you can count on

One of the key aspects of our program is support. Not only will you have the expertise of Dr. Fitch and the rest of the Women's Center team, you'll also be able to participate in support groups to share your experience and learn from experts and other participants.

**To learn more about our program or to schedule your initial consultation with Dr. Fitch, please call (513) 475-UC4U.**

*Most consultations are covered by insurance.*



## NEWS

### Welcome to our new providers

The following providers have joined UC Health Women's Center: Sukaina Ahmad, Patricia Colapietra, Jocelyn Collins, Angela Fitch, W. John Kitzmiller, Dianne Litwin, Vince Martin, David Megee, Minh-Doan Nguyen, Vijaya Reddy, Micah Sinclair, Victoria Surdulescu, Brad Watkins

Dr. Heather Pulaski, gynecologic oncologist for the Women's Center, discussed genetic testing at this year's Pink Ribbon Luncheon on Thursday, October 3, at the Duke Energy Convention Center.

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





## Eating for Health

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

As a weight management doctor, I feel one of the most important things you can do to live healthier is to eat what I call a “plant-strong diet,” meaning more fruits and vegetables. For most people, this does not mean they have to commit to being vegetarian. But I am suggesting that because the foods we consume impact both our physical and mental health, eating whole foods will undoubtedly have a big impact on how you feel. Plant sources of protein offer many health benefits. They are often higher in fiber and have more vitamins and a wider variety of nutrients than other protein sources. They are also generally lower in calories and have less fat. Another advantage is that plant-based protein sources are usually less costly than other sources, making meatless meals a budget-friendly way to improve your diet.

### Avoid the “dirty dozen”—watch out for these high-pesticide foods

But how do we know which fruits and veggies to fill our carts with and when it makes sense (and cents) to buy organic? Luckily, The Environmental Working Group has a list of the best produce to buy organically to help us stretch our grocery budget and reduce our exposure to harmful pesticides and chemicals. The “dirty dozen” listed below were found to have the highest amount of pesticide residue. Next time you’re doing the grocery shopping, consider reaching for organic options of these family favorites:

Apples	Cucumbers	Nectarines (imported)	Spinach
Celery	Grapes	Peaches	Strawberries
Cherry tomatoes	Hot peppers	Potatoes	Kale/collard greens

The same group also compiles the “clean fifteen,” a list of 15 fruits and vegetables you don’t need to buy organically. Items like asparagus, pineapple and grapefruit were found to have low levels of pesticide residue. So when it comes to these, stick to non-organic options to save a little money.

So whether you are looking to shed some extra pounds or boost your overall energy level and health, one of the best things you can do is to eat a “plant-strong diet.” Work the organic versions of the “dirty dozen” and the conventional versions of the “clean fifteen” into your meals and you will feel the positive effects!

### The Clean Fifteen

- Asparagus 
- Avocados 
- Cabbage 
- Cantaloupe 
- Sweet Corn 
- Eggplant 
- Grapefruit 
- Kiwi 
- Mangos 
- Mushrooms 
- Onions 
- Papayas 
- Pineapples 
- Sweet peas - frozen 
- Sweet potatoes 

[www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary.php](http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary.php)

## Healing benefits of yoga

### Helping breast cancer patients sleep better

Contributed by **Geraldine Wu, MD**

The benefits of yoga are well known—strength, flexibility, posture, relaxation and concentration, to name just a few. But did you know that this 5,000-year-old practice also helps improve the quality of sleep for breast cancer patients and survivors? That’s right. A recent study found that women with a history of breast cancer reported significant improvements in sleep quality and sleep duration when they attended yoga sessions twice per week. And women who incorporate medical yoga into their traditional breast cancer treatment find side effects to be better tolerated, thus improving their quality of life.

### Sleep disturbances common for breast cancer patients and survivors

There are a number of reasons why so many breast cancer patients and survivors suffer from sleep disturbances. These include everything from anxiety about a cancer diagnosis to related health problems to side effects of treatments including surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and hormone therapy. Unfortunately, these sleep problems are both underdiagnosed and undertreated in cancer survivors. This, despite the fact that 90 percent of yoga study participants said they found the practice of yoga useful for improving sleep quality, and 63 percent said they would highly recommend it to other cancer survivors.

### What do you do at a yoga session?

Yoga therapy designed for breast cancer patients contain a series of postures which help physically strengthen the patient as well as stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is associated with the relaxation response. Cancer tends to make people feel diminished—the breathing and meditation techniques taught in yoga therapy can have a calming effect and help women build inner strength to endure the physical and emotional challenges breast cancer has brought to their lives.

### Improved sleep just one of yoga’s benefits

Research has also shown breast cancer patients have found that yoga works in simple yet profound ways. It helps improve physical functioning, reduce fatigue and stress, and improve overall quality of life. So what are you waiting for? Why not give yoga a try!



### Yoga tied to better sleep after cancer

Read more: [www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/30/us-yoga-cancer-idUSBRE97T0VP20130830](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/30/us-yoga-cancer-idUSBRE97T0VP20130830)





## Wellness Studio Class Schedule

Our Integrative Medicine specialty area offers a number of different classes from yoga to pilates, massage, and various support groups.

Our classes are by appointment only. Please contact us at **(513) 475-UC4U (8248)** to schedule.

For information about fees and pricing, please visit us at: [uchealth.com/women](http://uchealth.com/women)

*\*Due to the personalized nature of condition-specific yoga classes, a 30-minute assessment is required with the MD Yoga Therapist before joining Yoga for Chronic Pain or Yoga for Depression. Assessment may be scheduled on the day of your first class or the week prior. The cost is included in the fee for the 6-week series.*

### Tuesdays: Tai Chi & Qigong

9 - 10:15 a.m.	Tai Chi for Health	Alan Hundley, LMT
10:30 - 11:45 a.m.	Medical Qigong	
12 - 1 p.m.	Private Sessions	

### Wednesdays: Pilates

9 - 9:50 a.m.	Beg. Pilates Mat Class	Carly Hueber, EMD, CTRS
10 - 10:50 a.m.	Private Pilates Sessions	
11 - 11:30 a.m.	Pink Ribbon Program	
11:40 - 12:30 p.m.	Intm. Pilates Mat Class	
2 - 2:50 p.m.	Pelvic Floor Pilates Workshop	
3 - 3:50 p.m.	Private Pilates Sessions	
4 - 4:50 p.m.	Prenatal Pilates	
5 - 5:30 p.m.	Pink Ribbon Program	

### Thursdays: Medical Yoga

1 - 2:15 p.m.	Yoga for Chronic Pain*	Geraldine Wu, MD
2:30 - 3:45 p.m.	Yoga for Depression*	
4 - 5:15 p.m.	Yoga for Beginners	

### Fridays: Yoga

12:15 - 1:15 p.m.	Private Relaxation Yoga	Karen Johns
1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	Private Relaxation Yoga	

# Women's Center | UC Health™

#### WEST CHESTER

7675 Wellness Way, 4th Floor  
West Chester, Ohio 45069  
**(513) 475-UC4U (8248)**

#### CINCINNATI / EAST SIDE

4460 Red Bank Road, Suite 100  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45227  
**(513) 475-UC4U (8248)**

[UCHealth.com/women](http://UCHealth.com/women)