

WHEN | Women's Healthcare Empowerment NOW!

- Men and women may produce different symptoms, different manifestations, and different treatment needs for the same diseases. This important new way of thinking is called gender-specific medicine.
- 21st century women's health focuses on the whole woman in the diverse contexts of her life and grounded in an interdisciplinary sex and gender-informed science. This includes mental and physical health and considers the effects of women's roles in society on their health.
- This new science can empower women to get the healthcare they really need—healthcare that takes their concerns and realities into consideration—healthcare that is tailored specifically to them.

Here are some areas that demonstrate how women's bodies are unique.

Your Brain

- Women are nearly two times more likely than men to suffer from a major depressive disorder in their lifetime
- Because they typically live longer, women are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than men
- Women suffer from migraines approximately three times more often than men

Your Heart

- In 2005, heart disease was the leading cause of death for women of all ages in the United States
- Approximately one third of women may develop cardiovascular disease

Your Lungs

- Women smokers are more likely to suffer serious to fatal health consequences from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than men who smoke
- Women report having a higher prevalence of asthma than men
- Women die of lung cancer in higher numbers than any other cancer

Your Blood Sugar

- Nearly 26% of women with diabetes don't know they have the disease
- Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death for women in the United States
- Female diabetics are at greater risk of coronary heart disease death than male diabetics

Your GI Tract

- Irritable bowel syndrome is more prevalent in women
- Women experience symptoms such as constipation, bloating, and abdominal pain more than men possibly because they empty both solids and liquids from their stomachs at a slower rate
- Women have a greater risk of gallstone disease compared to men

Your Skeletal System

- Women are more likely to develop osteoporosis than men
- About one in two women over the age of fifty will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime
- Asian and Hispanic women are at highest risk for developing osteoporosis

The Institute of Medicine reported that gender is important in recognizing and treating illness.

“Sex does matter. It matters in ways that we did not expect. Undoubtedly, it also matters in ways that we have not begun to imagine.”

—Institute of Medicine 2001. *Exploring the Biological Contributions to Human Health. Does Sex Matter?*
Mary-Lou Pardue, Ph.D.

Visit the following website for interactive information on this subject and to get tips for improving your health:

www.WHENforWomen.com

- ✦ More about women and gender-specific medicine
- ✦ Cardiovascular disease and your health
- ✦ Love your body, love yourself—with tips for stress management, nutrition, and exercise
- ✦ Guide to preparing for your next medical visit
- ✦ Resource list with links to websites, books, and articles



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Your Blood Sugar

Your bloodstream is similar to a superhighway circulating life-maintaining fluid in your arteries, veins, and capillaries. An important part of that magic elixir is glucose, or blood sugar, which helps power your cells.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease that affects the body's ability to produce insulin, respond to insulin, or both. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that acts as a key, unlocking the door of your cells and allowing glucose to enter. When your insulin system is not working properly, glucose in the blood that is meant to feed and give energy to your cells, can not enter and remains in your bloodstream. So even though people with diabetes are eating food, their cells are starving for nourishment. Ultimately, chronic high blood glucose places you at risk for long-term damage, dysfunction, and failure of various organs including the heart, eyes, kidneys, nerves, and blood vessels.

Metabolic Syndrome

Also known as Syndrome X or Insulin Resistance Syndrome, metabolic syndrome is a cluster of medical disorders that increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Metabolic syndrome affects an estimated 76 million United States residents, and the overall prevalence increases with age. Metabolic syndrome is identified in women when three or more of the following risk factors are present:

- Waist circumference greater than or equal to 35 inches
- Fasting glucose greater than or equal to 100 mg/dL, or you are receiving drug treatment for elevated glucose
- Triglycerides greater than or equal to 150 mg/dL, or you are receiving drug treatment for elevated triglycerides
- HDL ("good") cholesterol less than 50 mg/dL, or you are receiving drug treatment for reduced HDL cholesterol
- Blood pressure greater than or equal to 130 mm Hg systolic or 85 mm Hg diastolic, or you are receiving drug treatment for hypertension