

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 Heart

You run up a flight of stairs and feel your pulse racing and your legs aching. You are using one of the hardest working muscles in your body—your heart. The heart pumps blood to the entire body, delivering oxygen and nutrients to the body's organs and tissues, including the heart itself. When something goes wrong with this system it is most frequently called cardiovascular disease, which means there are problems with the heart and/or blood vessels.

Cardiovascular Disease

- Women get coronary heart disease (CHD) later in life than men. Women may also present differently and some diagnostic tests may be less accurate.
- If you develop fatty plaques in your arteries, called atherosclerosis, the blood's flow through the artery can be significantly reduced.
- Blood pressure is created by the force of the blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as it circulates and the force of the arteries as they resist the blood flow. When this pressure is consistently high it is called hypertension or high blood pressure. Untreated high blood pressure may lead to damage to the heart, eyes, kidneys, and brain.
- Chronic high blood sugar levels of diabetes are associated with long-term damage to the heart and blood vessels. Patients with diabetes have an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Know the Symptoms of Coronary Heart Disease (Heart Attack or Unstable Angina) in Women

Women may not always experience chest pain or discomfort.

Other symptoms experienced by women may include:

- Middle or upper back pain
- Neck pain or jaw pain
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty in breathing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Indigestion
- Loss of appetite
- Weakness or fatigue
- Dizziness/lightheadedness
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms
- Sweating
- Palpitations



If you have any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.