DINNER WITH A DOC:
MENOPAUSE

Presented By: Marygrace Elson, MD, MME
Menopause

“Menopause is an exciting developmental stage—one that, when participated in consciously, holds enormous promise for transforming and healing our bodies, minds, and spirits at the deepest levels.”

Christiane Northrup, MD, Wisdom of Menopause
Menopause

- End of childbearing years
- Reduced levels of estrogen and progesterone
- No period for 12 consecutive months
- Average age 51
- Can be medically induced
- Can result from surgery
Menopause—Symptoms

- Hot flashes and night sweats
  - Called vasomotor symptoms (VMS)
  - Caused by expansion of blood vessels
  - Occurs in ~ 80% pre/postmenopausal women
  - Most common menopausal symptom
  - Severity and frequency of VMS varies widely
Menopause—Symptoms

- Vaginal dryness—due to lack of estrogen
- Mood changes—anxiety, depression
- Cognitive changes—trouble reasoning or remembering
- Sleep disturbances!!!!
Menopause and Sleep

- 50 percent of women 40 to 59 report poor sleep quality
- Poor sleep quality is more common with surgically induced menopause than natural menopause
- Total sleep time may not suffer, but sleep quality does

“Frankly I wouldn’t mind the insomnia at all if I hadn’t lost my libido at the same time!”
Menopause—Sleep Disturbances

- Causes
  - Hot flashes and night sweats
  - Mood symptoms
  - Medical conditions (e.g., heart disease, COPD)
  - Lifestyle factors
    - Smoking
    - Alcohol consumption
Sleep Disturbances

- Insomnia
  - Difficulty falling asleep
  - Waking frequently or too early
  - Trouble falling back to sleep
  - Sleep not restorative

- Snoring

- Obstructive sleep apnea

“I toss and turn all night and you won’t count that as an eight-hour aerobic workout?!”
Importance of Sleep

- Essential for cardiovascular health, weight control, upbeat mood and overall health
- Deep sleep single most effective way known to metabolize stress hormones (Christiane Northrup)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sleep Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborns (0-2 months)</td>
<td>12-18 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants (3 to 11 months)</td>
<td>14 to 15 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toddlers (1-3 years)</td>
<td>12 to 14 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschoolers (3-5 years)</td>
<td>11 to 13 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-age children (5-10 years)</td>
<td>10 to 11 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens (10-17)</td>
<td>8.5-9.25 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>7-9 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Sleep Foundation
Sleep Disturbances—Dangers

- More accident prone
- Decreased concentration
- Less efficient
- Lower motivation
- Higher rates of judgment errors
- Increase in stress hormones

You may be menopausal if:
1. You're easily distracted.
2. You keep losing your train of thought.
3. Bread and milk
Sleep Deprivation

- Increased Hunger
- Increased Opportunity to Eat
- Altered Thermoregulation
- Increased Fatigue
- Increased Stress Hormone

Leptin

Ghrelin

Increased Caloric Intake

Reduced Energy Expenditure

Catecholamines

Cortisol

Obesity

Reduction in State of Alertness/Concentration

Leptin

Suppresses appetite

Ghrelin

Increases appetite
Sleep Hygiene

- Routines and practices that prepare your mind and body for sleep
  - Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
  - Sleep in a dark, cool room
  - Wear lightweight clothing
  - Have a bedtime routine
  - Limit bedroom activities to sleeping and intimacy
  - Drink herbal tea or warm milk before bed
  - No blue screens in the bedroom
  - Avoid vigorous exercise near bedtime
  - Avoid caffeine or other stimulants from mid-afternoon on
Nocturnal awakening

- Get up and do simple tasks
- Keep lights low
- NO blue screens
- Try warm milk or warm herbal tea
Treating Menopausal Sleep Disruptions

- Sleep hygiene
- Exercise
- Complementary health practices
- Hormone therapy
- Medications
Exercise

- Helps relieve menopausal symptoms for some women
- Reduces stress
- Improves sleep quality
Complementary Health Practices

- Harness power of mind to influence body
- Used alone or with traditional medical practices
- Categories most often used for managing menopause symptoms
  - Mind-body practices
  - Herbs and supplements
Complementary Health Practices

- Mind-body activities
  - Yoga
  - Tai chi
  - Qigong
  - Relaxation therapy
  - Deep breathing
- Scientific evidence mixed regarding effectiveness
- Some women find them helpful
- Generally do not cause harm, so safe to try
Complementary Health Practices

- Herbs, supplements
  - Melatonin
  - Over-the-counter phytoestrogens
    - Ginseng
    - Red clover extract
    - Black cohosh
    - Soy
  - Valerian– can be habit-forming
Complementary Health Practices

- Inconclusive scientific evidence regarding effectiveness and safety
- Just because it’s natural, doesn’t necessarily mean it’s safe
  - Side effects
  - Potential harmful interactions
- Work with a licensed alternative care provider
- Discuss all complementary practices with your doctor
Hormone Therapy

- Types of Hormone Therapy
  - Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)—estrogen and progesterone
  - Estrogen replacement therapy—estrogen only
- Uses include
  - Treating hot flashes and night sweats
  - Improving sleep
Hormone Therapy

- Major study raised serious concerns about long-term safety of hormone therapy
- May be appropriate for some women
- If use, in smallest doses for short time
Hormone Therapy

- Bio-identical hormones
  - Medicines prepared in specialized pharmacies
  - Contain variations of hormones (estrone, estradiol, progesterone, testosterone)
  - Not approved by FDA
  - Effectiveness and safety unclear
  - Quality may vary depending on pharmacy
Medications

- Paroxetine
  - Low dose of mesylate salt of paroxetine
  - 7.5 mg capsules FDA-approved dose
- In early clinical studies
  - Reduced number night awakenings
  - Increased duration of sleep
  - Well tolerated with minimal side effects
- Discuss with your doctor
What Else to Do

- Epsom salt bath before bed
  - Magnesium sulfate
  - Helps relax muscles and nerves
- Glass of warm milk
  - Tryptophan helps control sleep patterns
  - Camomile tea
- Eat healthy diet
- Get a good mattress
Avoid or Limit

- Over-the-counter sleep aids
  - Habit forming
  - Lose effect over time
  - Can interfere with memory formation
- Spicy foods
  - May trigger hot flashes
- Going to bed on a full stomach
Avoid or Limit

- Caffeine (especially late in day)
- Alcohol
  - Can have rebound effect
  - Helps you fall asleep but keeps you awake later
- Nicotine
- Exercise too close to bedtime
- Late night TV or video games
  - Increases alertness
  - News can make you stressed
Thank you!

UI Women’s Health Clinic

Locations:
University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics
UI Health Care–Iowa River Landing
UI Women’s Health Quad Cities Clinic

Schedule an Appointment:
319-356-2294
www.uihealthcare.org/obgyn
All I Need To Know About MENOPAUSE I Learned From My Cat

👑 Be finicky 👑 Give attitude 👑 Act catty
👑 Never tell your age 👑 Don't stress out over your first gray whisker 👑 If anyone bugs you, hiss and spit 👑 Act completely unimpressed by those around you 👑 Just stare at what you want til you get it 👑 When in doubt, take a nap 👑 Paws and reflect on what life has given you 👑