

# WomenTALK

A Periodic Bulletin From The Office of Kimberly Moran Turner, M.D. & Laura Burnham, CRNP

## A Mix Of The Old & New Enhances Women's Health

By Kimberly Moran Turner, M.D.

Who says that being a woman has to mean monthly mood swings...or that the "change of life" has to be a negative experience filled with night sweats, loss of sex drive, and irritability?

The above changes are largely due to hormone production. It is possible to use natural, herbal supplements, to lessen the severity of symptoms during the different "life-phases" that women go through.

Some skeptics claim that there is no scientific backing for such natural alternatives; however, let's take a look at their role in history. For centuries, vitamins, herbs, and other natural remedies have been at the core of Eastern medical care. They have been used for health maintenance and

for treatment for a wide range of conditions in Oriental and Indian medicine for thousands of years. Finally, this "natural" approach is growing in popularity in the US, as evidenced by the explosion of sales of natural-based nutritional supplements.

Part of the increase in open-mindedness and popularity of such alternatives is the mounting evidence that most women experience relief from their symptoms with the right mix of herbs, complemented by carefully planned nutritional and exercise programs.

If you are open-minded about trying nutritional aids as part of your com-



prehensive approach to wellness, discuss your options with me. Some health care providers are still skeptical in spite of increased

patient requests for alternative therapy, but I am not.

When considering products that include natural substances, be sure to share the ingredient panel with your other physicians, to ensure that there are no ingredients that will conflict with other medications you may be taking. In addition, before any surgical procedure, it is imperative to discontinue herbal supplements as they may increase bleeding.

### *Tid Bits*

**Sashaun Joins Practice** — We are pleased to announce that Sashaun Potts is our interim office manager, bringing more than eight years of billing experience and office management to our practice. If you have any questions about billing or insurance, please contact Sashaun.

**Practice Supports Great Program** — Our office was proud to be a sponsor of the Better Bedrest fundraiser in Howard County. This is a great organization for expecting moms who are placed on bed rest. Ask us for more details.

**Expanded Hours** — Mrs. Laura Burnham, CRNP, is now available on select Tuesday evenings for office hours until 7:30 PM. This expansion of hours is being done to better serve our busy patient population. Please call us if you would like an evening appointment.

### DNA Testing Now Available

As more information becomes available about genetics and health, many studies are indicating a link between genes and the way a body uses certain nutrients. Unfortunately, most people are not aware of which gene variations they possess and what impact such variations have on the aging process and the ability to fight disease. This makes them unable to know which dietary supplements to use and what life-style changes would be specifically beneficial for them.

Thanks to modern medicine, there is now an affordable, easy-to-do, genetic test called gene SNP that will help me determine which nutrients are best for you to live a long, healthy life given your specific genetic make-up.

I am now making this test available to our patients at the low cost of \$250. Unfortunately, most insurance companies do not cover the cost of this test. If you choose to take this test, your results will help the

office tailor a program of lifestyle changes and dietary supplements to fight off disease states for which we know you have a genetic susceptibility.

The test comes in a kit that you, the patient, can perform at home. (The kit includes a lifestyle questionnaire, swabs to capture the DNA from the inside of your cheek, and mailing instructions.) Your DNA samples go to a highly respected lab where they are analyzed confidentially and then destroyed. After several weeks, you will receive a report and DNA analysis that we can review and discuss together.

Call us for more details and plan to attend our September seminar! Feel free to bring a friend or two to the seminar with you. The gene SNP test is available to both men and women, on-line, through our practice. Every one of us can benefit from understanding our own genetic make-up.

Check out *Time Magazine* (June 12, 2006) for a great article, "Does My Diet Fit My Genes" by Christine Gorman.

## Herbs Relieve Symptoms

Here is a list of common herbal supplements that can be used for relief of menopausal or PMS symptoms. Most of these ingredients are included in a female support product called Feminene, available through our office.

**Black Cohosh** — Black Cohosh is a shrub-like plant native to the eastern deciduous forests of North America. It has been used for centuries to help counteract the symptoms of PMS and menopause.

**Vitamin E** — Vitamin E, or d-alpha tocopherol, is considered to be a highly effective antioxidant. Vitamin E has also been shown to play a part in the reduction of hot flashes associated with PMS and menopause, can reduce breast tenderness, and helps support normal heart health maintenance.

**Soy Isoflavones** — Soy is one the richest dietary sources of isoflavones available. Isoflavones are compounds which function as phytoestrogens (plant-based estrogens) in the body, providing health maintenance benefits from their subtle estrogen-like effects.

**Dong Quai** — Dong Quai has been referred to as the female ginseng. Used in traditional Chinese culture, it is prescribed to help maintain proper female health related to menstruation.

**Evening Primrose Oil** — Evening Primrose Oil, also referred to as EPO, contains gamma linolenic acid, or GLA. GLA is a fatty acid that the body converts to prostaglandin, a hormone-like substance. It has been shown in studies to dramatically reduce the symptoms associated with PMS.

**Wild Yam** — Wild Yam has many beneficial effects. It plays a role in controlling blood sugar levels. It contains antioxidant properties while possessing strong anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory qualities.

**Vitex (Chaste Berry)** — The use of Vitex dates back to the days of Hippocrates. It has been shown to offer relief from breast tenderness, cramping, headaches and acne, and promotes the proper level of prolactin, which can reduce the severity of PMS.

**Horsetail** — Also known as Shave Grass or Bottlebrush, Horsetail is rich in silicic acid and silicates. It also contains potassium, and over a dozen bioflavonoids.

**Red Clover** — Similar to Soy, Red Clover also contains high levels of isoflavones, well known for their subtle estrogen-like properties. Red Clover has been considered as a possible alternative to estrogen in some menopausal women.

**Passiflora** — Also known as Passion Flower, Passiflora has shown to contain flavonoids that have relaxing properties believed to help reduce the anxiety associated with PMS and /or menopause.

**Valerian Root** — Valerian Root contains many essential oils that can have a calming effect. It has also been shown to have a positive effect on sleep quality without increasing total time spent asleep.

**Sage** — Sage is a leafy herb used for a variety of purposes, including helping control hot flashes. Some essential oils found in Sage are also considered to have powerful antioxidant qualities.

**St. Johns Wort** — St. Johns Wort is herbal-based mood regulator that has gained a great deal of popularity in the last few years.

**Vitamin B** — Vitamin B deficiencies have been associated with a wide range of health challenges, ranging from moodiness to cardiovascular complications. Vitamin B6 and B12 also help reduce homocysteine levels, which have been shown to be a key risk factor in maintaining a healthy heart.

## Antioxidants & Isotonics

We decided to make wellness products available through our office due to the high demand for “natural” medications. We hope that by providing prevention-oriented health care, your life will be enhanced. The line of antioxidants and vitamins we chose to endorse are isotonic. This means that, unlike traditional vitamins and antioxidants, these products are bio-available almost immediately. Most of our products are in a powdered form which can be mixed with water for easy-to-digest use. Ask any staff member about such supplementation for general health and wellness.

## HPV Vaccine Now Available

Given the huge link between cervical cancer and the HPV virus, we urge you to consider the HPV vaccine immediately. It is indicated for girls/women aged 9-26 as a preventive measure. The vaccine is given in three doses over six months. Most insurance companies are not yet covering the vaccine, but it is available for only \$120 per dose.

**September 11**  
**DNA Testing & Natural**  
**Alternatives To Prescriptions**  
Homewood Suites by Hilton®,  
Columbia

**October 16**  
**Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) & Cervical**  
**Cancer. The new HPV vaccine,** Howard  
County Chamber of Commerce Conference  
Room, Columbia

**November 6**  
**Menopause,** Howard County Chamber of  
Commerce Conference Room, Columbia

Please call us to RSVP by the Thursday before each seminar so we can assure adequate seats. We are asking for a \$5 donation per person for the Domestic Violence Center of Howard County, but this is not required.

All seminars are scheduled for 7:00 pm. If schools close early due to inclement weather, we will cancel the seminar and reschedule.



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