

Women's Health Talk



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Breastfeeding Q & A

Properly nourishing her newborn is on the mind of every mother.

First-time and experienced moms alike have questions pertaining to breastfeeding. Below are issues of concern to nursing mothers:

How often should my baby nurse?

Allow your baby to breast-feed whenever he or she is hungry and until full. Times can vary due to aggressiveness or level of hunger. By the time your baby is 4 days old, nursing should occur 8 – 10 times a day.

At three to four days of age, your milk supply will increase and so will your baby's appetite. Your baby will probably want to nurse every 1½ – 3 hours. This is normal and advisable.

Can I take an oral contraceptive while breast-feeding?

Some types of oral contraceptives interfere with milk production. Talk with your physician about the right contraceptive measures that may be used during lactation. Above all, remember breast-feeding is not a form of birth control.

For more breastfeeding information, you can visit www.babylifestyle.com

Just a Little Help from Our Friends

WHB meets needs of premie twins

Mama said, 'Life is like a box of chocolates — you never know what you're going to get.'" When Forrest Gump uttered these words, Dodie and Vaughn Walpole of Tomball, Texas, never imagined life would deliver such sweet surprises.

Weighing in at just 12 ounces, Kylie Walpole and twin sister, Trinity, nearly three pounds, were born on February 11 this year, just 30 weeks after conception.

Kylie goes on record as one of the tiniest babies ever to survive and more miraculously, she is breathing without assistance. "Everything is developed," says neonatologist Dr. Rose Hernandez. "Her brain is fine, her lungs are fine, her kidneys are fine, her heart is fine, everything is perfect."

"There was a lot of prayer," says Vaughn Walpole, the twins' dad. "You don't know how many people have been praying for these babies."

The Walpoles not only experienced the blessing of healthy twins, they also learned a great deal about the kindness and concern of others.

"It took ten years to get pregnant, and then it was not a good pregnancy," says Dodie. "My friend, Lori Jones, was real supportive when we thought there could be complications. She listened — and prayed for me."

The members of Graceview Baptist Church, where the Walpoles attend, have also stepped up to the plate to help. "People have brought dinners, cleaned the house and offered to baby-sit," says Dodie.

The Walpoles never dreamed they would need assistance from the Women's Health Boutique. Dodie wanted a breast pump that would help her keep up with the demand of twins, and she knew no ordinary one would do. The lactation consultant at Texas Women's Hospital recommended she call WHB.

Andrea Rasler, owner of Women's Health Boutique in Houston, Texas, remembers when she first heard about the Walpole's need. "Dodie's mom called us on Friday, and since we didn't carry the pump she wanted, I had one overnighted so she could have it as soon as possible," she says. Andrea allowed them to borrow a pump from her store until their new hospital-grade Hollister Breast Pump could arrive.

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Endometriosis

A Growing Pain

Endometriosis is a painful, hard-to-detect disease of indefinite origin which affects over 70 million women and girls worldwide. Tissue normally builds up in the lining of the uterus each month and is shed with menstrual flow. Endometriosis is characterized by the abnormal growth and spread of this tissue outside the uterus onto surrounding organs.

It is the leading cause of infertility, chronic pelvic pain and gynecological surgery, and is more prevalent than breast cancer and AIDS, yet often goes undiagnosed. According to the Endometriosis Research Center, studies show there is an elevated risk of cancer in women with this disease. Taking invasive measures is the only way to verify its presence, generally by undergoing a minor surgical procedure called laparoscopy.

Some cases require more drastic measures. Kelly Crosby, mother of four and a returning college student, had occasional pelvic pain in the summer of 1999. As a busy, vocal music major, concerts and classes so occupied her schedule that it took more than a month to work in a visit to her doctor. "I put it off because I felt I couldn't miss school," says Kelly. "The doctor wanted to do a laparoscopy in September, but I waited until mid-January to have surgery."

By the time she scheduled it, Kelly's pain was so intense that she had lost 20 pounds. The doctor felt it was necessary to perform traditional surgery rather than use the laparoscopic method. "I don't care if you cut me in half," was Kelly's response.

Once inside, the doctor found the tissue had spread into the abdominal cavity through a Fallopian tube, completely smothering and absorbing one of her ovaries. As it spread, it attached to her intestines, creating scar tissue which was the source of her severe pain.


Symptoms of Endometriosis

- Pain before and during periods
- Infertility
- Painful urination/bowel movements during periods
- Diarrhea, constipation, nausea
- Pain during intercourse
- Fatigue

Her surgeon performed a hysterectomy and a gastroenterologist was called in to clear away scar tissue. Surgery that should have taken just over an hour and a half stretched to five.

The road to recovery was long. Kelly's doctor wouldn't allow her to sing for two months after her January surgery. By May, she started to feel like herself again. She believes waiting so long to seek medical attention made her condition worse than it needed to be. Heeding the body's warning signals to seek a doctor's care is the best way to maintain good health. Kelly wishes she had. "If someone asks my advice about whether to have surgery to improve a medical condition, I would say, 'Yes, do it NOW!'"

To find a wide array of post-surgical compression garments, visit the Women's Health Boutique nearest you. For more information, go to www.w-h-b.com

Sources: www.endocenter.org; www.endometriosisassn.org 

Reaching out to women everywhere...

Easing Your Child's Concerns


Life is unpredictable and full of challenges. Unexpected news affecting our health may unnerve us, and as we discover our own coping mechanisms, we wonder how to adequately comfort and prepare our children when life throws us a curve.

Elise Babcock, author of *When Life Becomes Precious*, shares the following tips to help kids to cope with a parent's illness:

- **Explore your feelings by reading, talking and reaching out for support.** The better you understand your situation and the more support you have, the easier it will be to talk with your children.
- **Give concrete, realistic information.** Using real terms, keep it simple and to the point in language a child can understand.
- **Keep them informed of changes.** If routines change, kids notice. Hiding your illness can create distrust at a time when you want to establish it.

• **Let them know — it's okay to cry.** And it's okay for you to cry as well. Share your feelings without overwhelming them.

• **Find events to be positive about each day.** Create meaningful ways to spend time together. Draw together, play board games or look at old family albums. Encourage your husband and children to plan a special meal.

The more we include our children, talk to them and focus on them each day, the stronger they will become — not only during a tough time but for the rest of their lives. 



Older Women in Crisis

Eating disorders on the rise

Thought eating problems like anorexia and bulimia were just a teen-age phenomenon? Think again. Middle-aged women have recently become the newest group to grapple with food issues.

Obsession with youth, with weight and marital insecurities are likely culprits of this disorder in older women, according to Dr. Edward Cumella, Director of Research, Education and Outcomes at Remuda Ranch, an inpatient facility in Wickenburg, Arizona. They provide intensive treatment for girls and women with eating disorders. “Pressures to stay fit and healthy are weighing on women like never before,” he says. “Our society does not value maturity.”

The cultural message equating slimness with beauty is an arrow aimed at the hearts of women experiencing the natural changes of aging. The popularity of cosmetic surgery, the fastest growing medical procedure in the country, is indicative of the desire to stay young and attractive.

The inconsistency of ever larger portion sizes and the prevalence of diet products in leading women’s magazines create conflict, leading not only to an epidemic of obesity, but also to an increasing number of women suffering with bulimia.

Marital insecurity may also be a factor in this disorder. Women in this age group are “the first generation from broken homes,” says Dr. Cumella. As these women see themselves aging, a deep insecurity develops that their husbands may leave them, as many of their fathers did. Eating may be the only thing in their lives they are able to control.

Other uncontrollable life changes, such as empty nest syndrome, loss of a child or illness may also trigger eating disorders. Hope and healing is possible for those who suffer with this condition.

“Women in midlife have a wealth of life experience from which to draw,” says Dr. Cumella. “Adult women can be empowered and can learn to rebuild their identity around accomplishments in life.” A shift in focus is required — learning to address fears, feelings and looking at personal strengths is the path to recovery. Remuda Ranch teaches life skills and 12-step recovery programs that have been successful in turning the tide for their clients.

Becoming part of a supportive community is vital to good emotional health. Families, friends, or recovery support groups may be safe places to experience healing. It all begins with accepting yourself. “Aging is a normal part of life,” says Dr. Cumella. “It’s OK to have gray hair and gain ten pounds.” ♡

Dodie not only appreciated the fast service she received from WHB, but the continuing assistance has allowed her to focus on her twins — not on paperwork. “Andrea is wonderful,” says Dodie. “She is still working with the insurance reimbursement for us.”

Not yet quite back to “normal,” the Walpole’s lives are slowly becoming more manageable. Though they still visit the hospital to see Kylie — who is doing “great” — they brought Trinity home in April. “It’s been a rollercoaster ride,” says Dodie. “We didn’t know they would be that early, but we are blessed — doubly-blessed!”

Women’s Health Boutique has an extensive line of products for the breastfeeding mother. For information on pumps, nursing bras or educational literature, go to www.w-h-b.com, or visit the store nearest you. ♡

Joy is Possible!

Does a senior adult in your family suffer from depression? Among people age 65 and over, nearly six out of 100 are clinically depressed — an often debilitating, sometimes deadly state of mind. With proper diagnosis and treatment, it doesn’t have to be a way of life.

Research suggests that depression, or mood disorders, are medical illnesses related to vascular changes in the brain. It can affect every aspect of a person’s life — appetite, sleep, energy levels and relationships. Activities typically bringing enjoyment become a chore.

Infirmity is common in older adults and can be a catalyst for depression. Mood disorders left untreated can actually prolong a physical ailment. Certain medications or drug combinations can contribute to a feeling of despair, so it is imperative the doctor be advised of all prescription, non-prescription and herbal remedies taken. Symptoms of depression should also be reported immediately to a physician.



A combination of anti-depressants and psychotherapy (“talking” therapies) has proven to be quite successful in treating depression in older patients. Try to get enough sleep, keep regular hours and eat a healthy, balanced diet. Moderate exercise also helps to release serotonin in the brain, which gives a feeling of well-being. Spend time with other people. Find someone with whom you can talk. Involvement outside ourselves and in the lives of others can be an effective way to move beyond depression into wholeness. ♡

If you experience the following, please see your doctor:

- Significant weight loss/gain
- Changes in appetite
- Sleep problems
- Restlessness, irritability
- Fatigue, lack of energy
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or hopelessness
- Difficulty concentrating, memory problems
- Recurrent thoughts of suicide/death

Source: National Institutes of Mental Health

Living with Asthma


Klara is 16 years old and has had asthma since she was four. "My chest feels tight and it is difficult to breathe. You never get used to that breathless feeling, and I sometimes start to panic."

More than 17 million people in America have asthma. Greek for "panting," this disease affects the lining of the airways, causing the sufferer to take only shallow breaths. During an asthma attack, the inflamed air passages swell or spasm, producing mucus which blocks the flow of air in and out of the lungs.

Health care costs associated with asthma is estimated at \$14 billion annually. While medicines are available to control it, 1 one in 250 people die each year due to this disease. The challenge for asthmatics is learning to manage it. The first step is to discover personal triggers precipitating an attack.

The causes of asthma vary. It is estimated that more than half of all cases are caused by allergic rhinitis. Dust mites, cockroaches, pollen, animal dander, second-hand smoke and even the ozone have all been associated with the allergic reactions leading to an attack. Exercise and other types of exertion are also triggers.

With the proper medical attention, most people with asthma lead normal, active lives. Health professionals may administer beta-agonists, inhaled steroids or cromolyn sodium to prevent and control attacks. These drugs, taken either orally or by inhaler, allow asthmatics to properly control disease.

"I'm lucky, my asthma is quite mild," says Klara. "So long as I recognize the first signs of an attack and use my inhaler then, I am usually OK." 



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