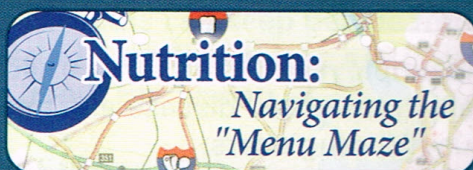
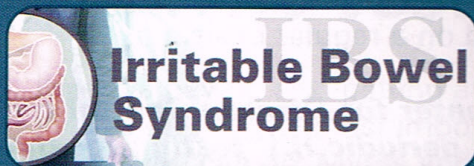
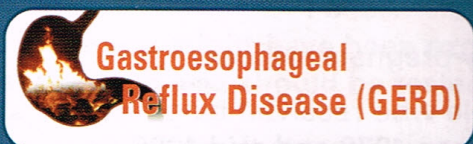


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Is That Itchy, Scaly, Burning?
Skin Psoriasis?



... and much more!

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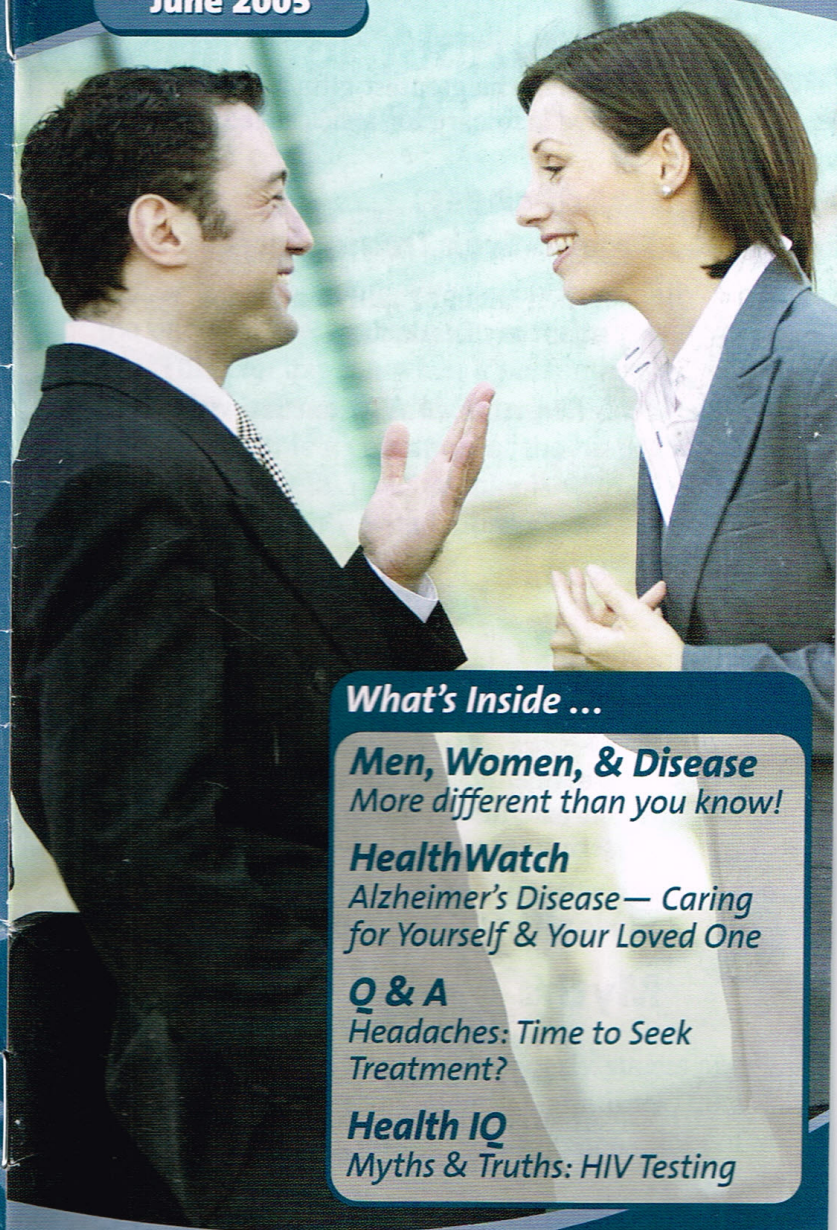
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Patient Education Center

June 2005



What's Inside ...

Men, Women, & Disease

More different than you know!

HealthWatch

Alzheimer's Disease— Caring for Yourself & Your Loved One

Q & A

Headaches: Time to Seek Treatment?

Health IQ

Myths & Truths: HIV Testing

Visit us online at
www.patienteducationcenter.org

Table of Contents . . .

3

HealthWatch

Alzheimer's Disease

Caring for Yourself & Your Loved One

One of the greatest gifts a person can give is to care for a sick loved one . . .

6

Headaches:

Time to Seek Treatment?

When should I talk to a doctor about my headaches?

8

This Month's Main Feature

Men, Women, & Disease

More different than you know!

A disease does not always affect men and women in the same way. In fact, diseases often have different symptoms, treatments, and outcomes depending on whether a man or a woman is suffering from it.

14

HealthIQ

Myths & Truths

of HIV Testing

Answers and explanations to this month's Health IQ questions.

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HealthWatch

Alzheimer's Disease

Caring for Yourself & Your Loved One

One of the greatest gifts a person can give is to care for a sick loved one. Sometimes it can be a thankless job, especially when the one you love no longer remembers who you are. This can happen when a person has *Alzheimer's disease*. Alzheimer's disease, called AD for short, is a condition of the brain that can cause memory loss and problems with everyday tasks. Most people with AD are older adults; the longer a person has the disease, the worse their ability to think clearly.

Caring for someone with AD is a tough job. There are a lot of elements to consider — healthcare, eating, bathing, getting dressed, financial concerns, other family needs, and more. Some days will be a struggle, but not every moment has to be tough. Here are some considerations to help you be prepared for your role as caregiver and to keep your own health in mind.

Plan, Plan, Plan

If your loved one's AD is in its early stages and he or she still can think clearly sometimes, take advantage of those times. Ask questions, lots of questions.

- How should you manage his or her finances and medical care?
- What are his or her wishes at the end of life?

- How do other family members want to be involved?
- What might you do to his or her home to make it safer and easier to manage care?

Taking Care of Yourself

If you don't take care of yourself while you're taking care of someone else, you might not be as able to help them. Your own life should be as important as theirs, especially since you probably won't always be a caregiver. Doctors often talk about the "caregiver burden" (see below) — the toll caregiving can have on your physical, emotional, and financial well-being.

Signs Pointing to Caregiver Burden

If you often have the following feelings while being a caregiver, talk to your doctor. He or she may be able to help you find solutions to that overwhelmed feeling.

- Are you under too much stress? What parts of your day are the most stressful?
- Have you been sad or depressed lately? How about anxious or irritable?
- Do you see or talk to your family and friends often? Do they help care for your loved one so that you have some time for yourself?
- Do you have any help besides your family, such as a visiting nurse, in this responsibility?
- Are any of your loved one's behaviors, such as wandering, difficult to handle?
- What are you doing every day to relieve your stress and tension?

Adapted from: American Academy of Family Physicians.

Make sure you take care of yourself while caring for others:

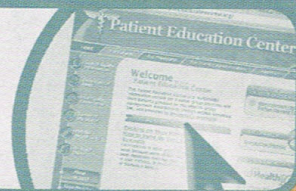
- First, make sure your doctor knows that you are the primary caregiver for someone with AD.
- Being a caregiver can be overwhelming and stressful. If you're having these feelings, talk about them to your doctor, friends, and family.
- Take a break sometimes!
- Pay attention to your mood. Some caregivers develop depression.
- Join a support group. You are not alone on the emotional rollercoaster of caregiving.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians.



Additional information about Alzheimer's Disease & Caregiving can be found at www.patienteducationcenter.org.

- Making life easier.
- Handling behavior changes.



Headaches:

Time to Seek Treatment



Q: When should I talk to a doctor about my headaches?

A: If the pain is keeping you out of work or school, from doing everyday tasks, or from sleeping (or is causing you to sleep more than normal), you should definitely talk to your doctor.

There are many different kinds of headaches – *tension* or *stress headaches*, *migraine*, and *cluster headaches* are just a few. It's not always easy to figure out when a headache means a visit to the doctor instead of just a visit to the medicine cabinet. For most people, headaches are easily treated with over-the-counter (OTC) medications like aspirin or ibuprofen. However, sometimes that's not enough. A doctor might be able to recommend a prescription medication to better deal with your headaches.



Here are some guidelines for when it's time to talk to a professional:

- Chronic headache (they keep coming back).
- OTC medications don't help.
- Blurred vision.
- More than one person in the house gets headaches (may be a gas leak).
- Personality changes and mood swings.
- If the pain keeps getting worse.

It's not really what you ask your doctor about headaches as much as it is how you talk to your doctor.

1. Prioritize your questions.
2. Learn about your headaches.
3. Share your concerns.
4. Learn about your treatment.
5. Work toward a successful and open relationship with your doctor.

Source: National Headache Foundation.
"Talking to Your Headache Doctor."

Seek immediate medical care if you have headaches with any of following:

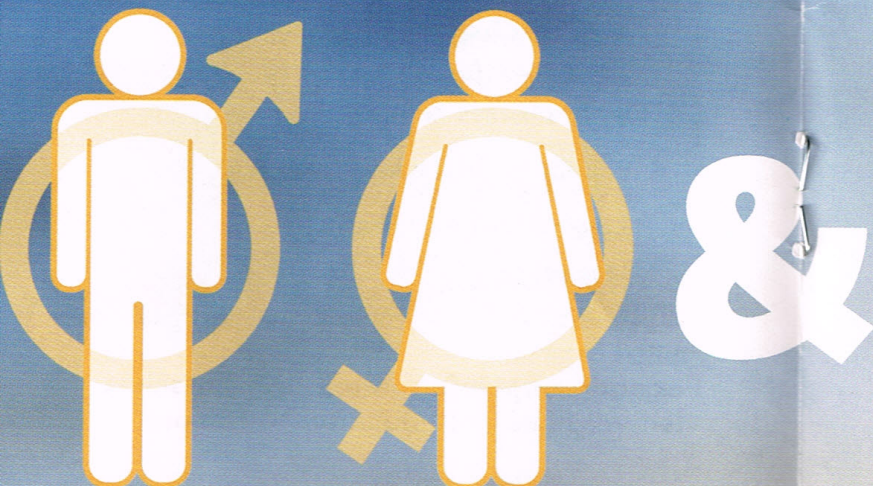
- Fever, stiff neck, rash, vomiting, or any combination of these symptoms.
- A sudden, terrible pain in your head, especially if you've never been troubled by headaches before.
- Numbness in the arms or legs.
- Loss of vision or hearing.
- Head injury.

For additional information on headaches, visit www.patienteducationcenter.org.

Men, Women, & Disease

***More different
than you know!***

A disease does not always affect men and women in the same way. In fact, diseases often have different symptoms, treatments, and outcomes depending on whether a man or a woman is suffering from it. If you don't know that diseases affect men and women differently, you're not the only one. But learning about how these differences may affect you is an important thing to do.



DEPRESSION

Differences in Depression Symptoms

Mental health problems, especially depression, often are not diagnosed in men. The sexes may report signs and symptoms of depression differently to their doctors:

Men Might Talk About

- Sleep disturbances.
- Fatigue.
- Loss of interest in work or hobbies.



Women Might Talk About

- Sadness.
- Worthlessness.
- Excessive guilt.



STROKE

Early Warning Signs of Stroke



Symptoms of stroke are generally the same for men and women. If you experience any of these symptoms, don't hesitate — call 9-1-1 or emergency services right away:

- Numbness or weakness in the face, arm, leg, or down one side of the body.
- Difficulty seeing or loss of vision, especially only in one eye.
- Problems speaking or trouble understanding what you're saying.
- Severe, sudden headache without cause.
- Unexplained dizziness.
- Unexplained unsteadiness or falls, especially in combination with any of the other signs.

Talk to your doctor if you find yourself experiencing any of these symptoms.

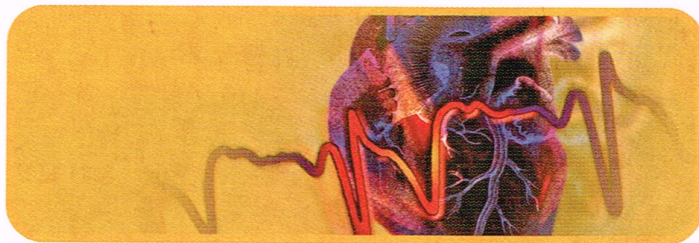
HEART DISEASE

Differences in Symptoms

Women may be more likely than men to die from heart disease because of how their bodies react to a heart attack. The signs are not always clear. Most people know that chest pain can be a clue to heart attack, but many women do not experience chest pain.

Women May Experience

- Chest tightening (*this feeling often lasts for a few minutes or goes away and comes back*).
- Back or jaw pain.
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea or vomiting.



Men May Experience

- Chest pain or pressure (*like someone is squeezing your chest*).
- Pain or numbness in arms, back, neck, or stomach, often accompanied by chest pain.
- Shortness of breath.
- Cold sweat accompanied by lightheadedness and nausea or vomiting.

There are many other important differences when it comes to heart disease in men and women. To learn more about these differences, visit www.patienteducationcenter.org.

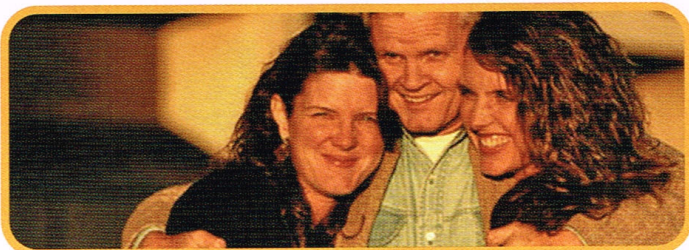
DIABETES

Complications From Diabetes in Women & Men

Women

Experts say that a third of American women have diabetes and don't know it. It's good for people to know if they have diabetes because it may mean you have other conditions that need treatment, as well. For example, women with diabetes are more likely to develop:

- Heart and nerve problems.
- Depression.
- Fatigue.



Men

Erectile dysfunction (ED) — problems getting and keeping an erection — is a concern for men with diabetes. As many as three out of every four men with diabetes will have this problem. However, you have a better than 50/50 chance of successfully managing ED linked with diabetes with medication, so ask your doctor.

Important Tests for Good Health

Regular medical testing can help you detect and prevent a number of serious illnesses. Sometimes, men and women require different tests to prevent health issues. Here are a few.

Medical Tests for Early Detection & Disease Prevention

For Men

- Prostate cancer.
- Testicular cancer.

For Women

- Breast exam.
- Pelvic exam and Pap test.
- Bone density measurement.

For Both

- Blood pressure.
- Cholesterol test.
- Colorectal cancer.
- Fasting blood sugar.
- Hearing, dental, and vision tests.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Skin exam.

Additional information about Men, Women, & Disease can be found at www.patienteducationcenter.org.

Go online to learn more about:

- Schizophrenia
- Autoimmune Disease
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Osteoporosis
- Cancer





Myths & Truths of HIV Testing



If you're having sex, getting an HIV test might be the most important thing you can do. Myths and untruths can keep people from being tested. Take this quiz to see if you know the truth about HIV testing.

1) True or False

HIV can only be detected with a blood test.

False. Blood tests are the most accurate, but urine and saliva testing are options.

2) True or False

If you think you might have been exposed to the HIV virus, you should be tested as soon as possible.

False. Wait three weeks. HIV shows up in most people's systems about 20 days after exposure.

3) True or False

If I am sexually active and have already tested negative for HIV, I never have to be tested again.

False. Most people will test positive or negative for HIV within 20 days of exposure but it can take longer, up to a year. One negative test does NOT guarantee you don't have the virus or won't get it later. If you have more than one

sex partner or a high-risk partner, retest on a regular basis and *always* practice safe sex.

4) True or False

HIV may not make you feel sick or show any symptoms for 10 years or more.

True. Most people with HIV remain symptom-free for a decade or more. This is why it is so important to get tested and, if you are at risk, retested on a regular basis.

The Center for Disease Control recommends periodic HIV testing for the following groups:

- People employed in clinics that treat sexually transmitted disease and intravenous (IV) drug users.
- People who have had multiple sex partners and/or engage in unprotected sex, whether vaginal, anal, or oral.
- IV-drug users and their partners, including needle-sharing partners.
- Every pregnant woman.
- People who received blood transfusions between 1978 and mid-1985.
- People with tuberculosis.

Additional information about the Myths & Truths of HIV Testing can be found at www.patienteducationcenter.org.

- **Myths and Truths of HIV and Pregnancy**

