



Women's Health: Fact and Fiction

Women's Health Center of Northfield Hospital
Lakeville Women's Health Expo
May 2, 2009

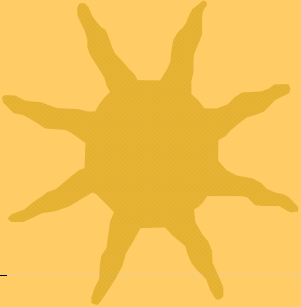




Contraception



Contraception

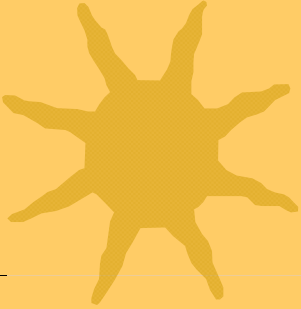


- ★ The pill makes you gain weight...**FICTION!**
- ★ Fact: Large scale clinical trials *with contemporary BCPs* have not supported this. Older, higher dose pills in the 1950s-60s were often associated with more significant side effects than today's pills, including weight gain.
- ★ *Caveat: everyone is different, and certain pills will cause side effects in one woman that aren't seen in everyone.*





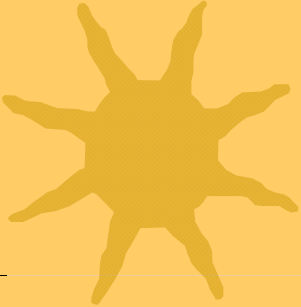
Contraception



- ★ You can't stay on BCPs too long, or you will have trouble getting pregnant one day...**FICTION!**
- ★ Most birth control methods (except Depo-Provera) are not associated with ANY delay in return to normal fertility, even in the first month after discontinuing use.



Contraception



★ Birth control pills (BCPs) cause breast cancer...**FICTION!**

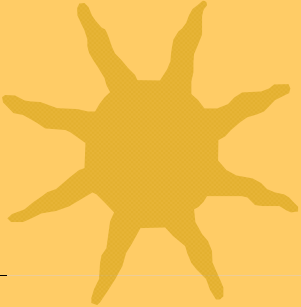


★ Fact: there is conflicting data, but most studies show **NO** increased risk in women who used BCPs.

★ The risks of endometrial (uterine) cancer—the most common GYN cancer—and ovarian cancer—the deadliest GYN cancer—are both significantly decreased by taking BCPs.

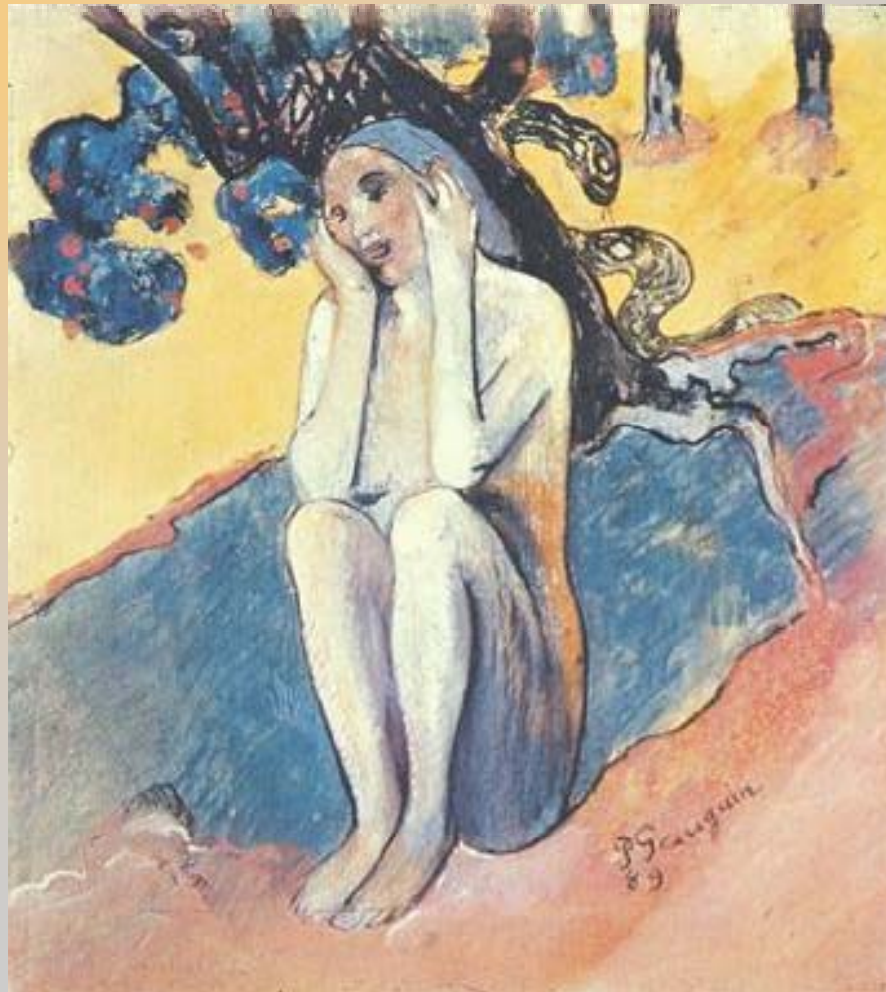
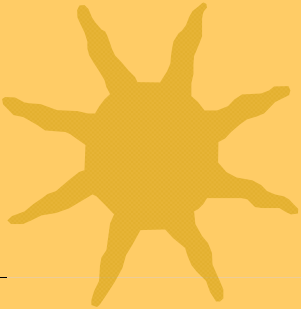


Contraception



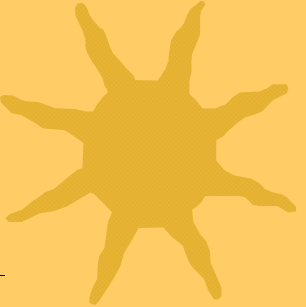
- ★ Birth control that causes you to “skip” periods isn’t safe...**FICTION!**
- ★ **FACT:** there is no biological reason why women must bleed every month if on hormonal contraceptives.
- ★ Nothing is “backing up”: methods that allow women to control the timing of cycles work by keeping hormone levels steady all month. The drop in hormone levels just before a period is what triggers bleeding in women not on birth control.

Menopause





Menopause



FICTION

- ★ **EVERYONE** gets hot flashes, night sweats, and gains weight.

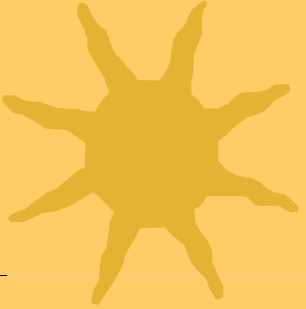


FACT

- ★ All women are different.
- ★ Other symptoms include mood changes, anxiety, heart palpitations, difficulty sleeping, changes in skin and hair, decreased sex drive, vaginal dryness...the list goes on.



Menopause



Hormone replacement is bad for you. It causes cancer, and stroke, and blood clots...right???

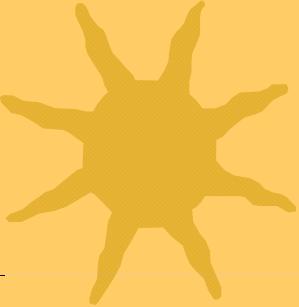
FACT:

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is a safe option for most women.

Exceptions exist: history of stroke or blood clots, history of breast cancer, heart disease.



Hormone Therapy



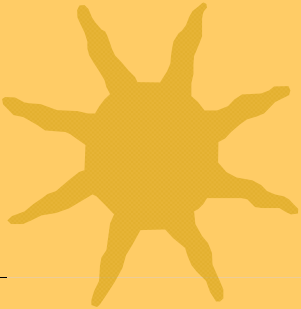
★ In the study that most media outlets use to tout the dangers of estrogen and progesterone therapy, the *actual* increase in risk was very small.



★ Breast cancer: 8 more cases per 10,000 women/year on both hormones, and a trend towards *decreased* breast cancer risk on estrogen alone.



★ Pulmonary embolus: 8 more cases per 10,000 women/year as well.



Hormone replacement

- ★ Even for stroke and heart disease, the two things the study was designed to examine, subsequent analysis showed that for women recently in menopause, there was no increased risk with hormone therapy.

So, actual risk was low...which is NOT what played out in the media coverage.





Natural Remedies



★ Natural remedies or “bioidentical hormones” must be better, because they are natural...**FICTION!**

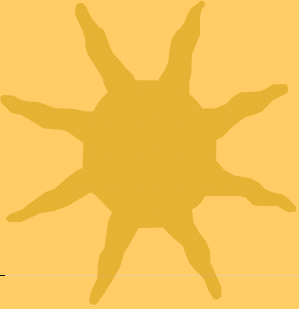


★ **While some women choose natural supplements rather than prescribed hormones, it is important to realize that there is no evidence to support that these therapies are safer than using FDA-approved medications.**



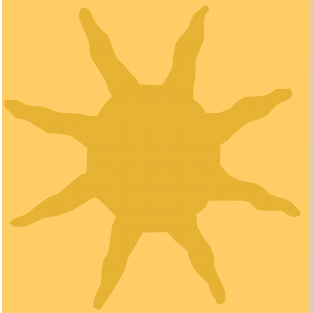


Bioidentical Hormones



- ★ “Bioidentical” is not a medical term. It usually refers to plant-based sources of estrogen.
- ★ There are several FDA-approved medications that are identical in structure to those produced in the body.



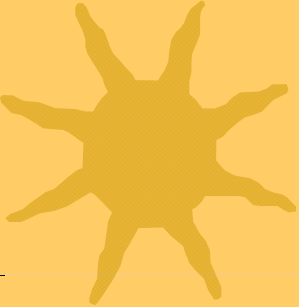


Cancer Screening





Breast Cancer



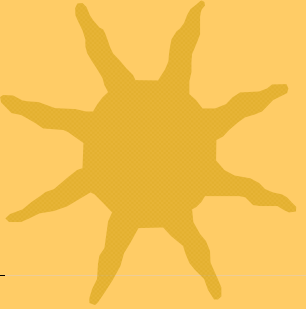
★ Mammograms hurt, and if you don't have anyone in the family with breast cancer, you probably don't need one every year...

FICTION!

- ★ **FACT:** Newer mammography machines are much more comfortable than older models.
- ★ **FACT:** Less than 10% of breast cancers are “inherited” forms—the rest are not related to genetics at all.



Breast Cancer Screening



★ Most organizations recommend screening mammograms beginning at age 40, and yearly after that.

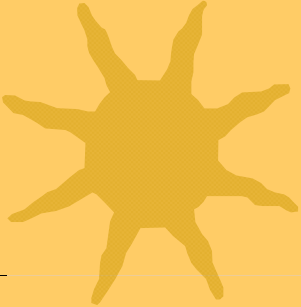


★ What about breast MRI?





Breast Cancer Screening



★ Breast MRI is currently recommended for screening only in women with a 20-25% calculated lifetime risk of breast cancer.

★ You can calculate your individual breast cancer risk by going online to:

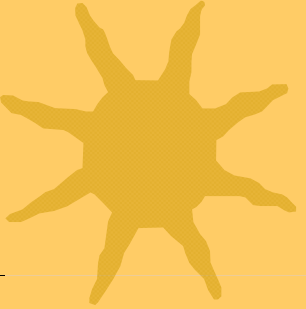
<http://www.cancer.gov/bcrisktool/>



Ovarian Cancer

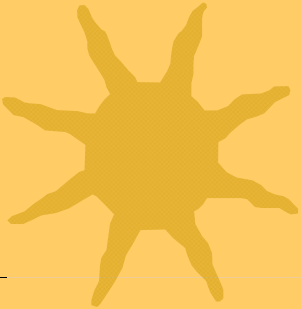
★ All women should have a blood test and possibly an ultrasound to test for ovarian cancer...**FICTION!!!**

★ **FACT: THERE IS NO SCREENING TEST FOR OVARIAN CANCER.**

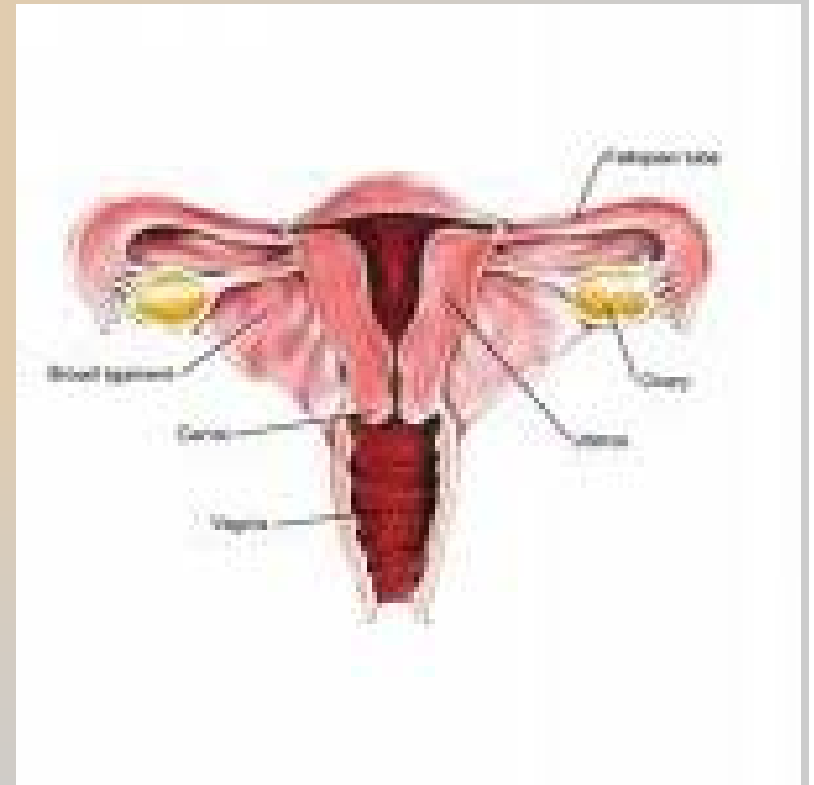




Ovarian Cancer



- ★ There are 15,000 deaths in the US every year from ovarian cancer.
- ★ Lifetime baseline risk for ovarian cancer is 1.8%.





Ovarian Cancer

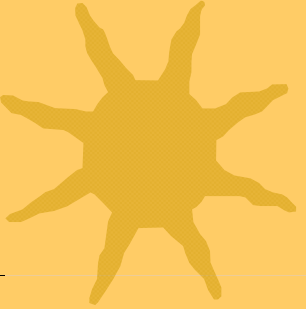
★ What about the CA 125 test? Isn't that the blood test to check for ovarian cancer?

FICTION!!!

★ The CA-125 test is a blood test that is used to *monitor* women who have already had treatment for ovarian cancer. It is also used in women who have a suspicious ovarian mass on ultrasound to help determine if cancer might be present before surgery is planned.



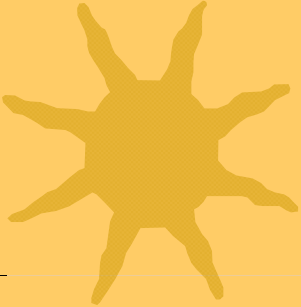
Ovarian Cancer



- ★ The problem with the test is that it is not very sensitive for early cancer—50% of women with early stage ovarian cancer will have normal results, AND...
- ★ It is also not very specific—especially in women who have not gone through menopause, the test can come back elevated for reasons other than ovarian cancer (fibroids, endometriosis, or infection.)



Ovarian Cancer

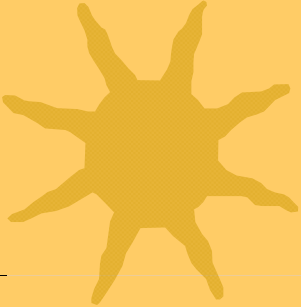


- ★ Bottom line: if you have a family history, discuss this with your gynecologist.
- ★ If you have a strong family history of breast and ovarian cancer in close relatives, ask your doctor whether you might benefit from genetic counseling.





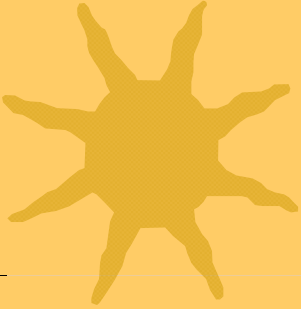
Cancer Screening Guidelines



Age	Cervical Cancer	Breast Cancer	Colon Cancer
21-29	Pap smear	Exam	N/A
30-39	Pap or Pap + HPV test*	Exam	N/A
40-49	Pap or Pap + HPV test*	Exam plus mammo	N/A
50 and up	Pap or Pap + HPV test*	Exam plus mammo	Start screening#



Urinary Leakage





Urinary leakage

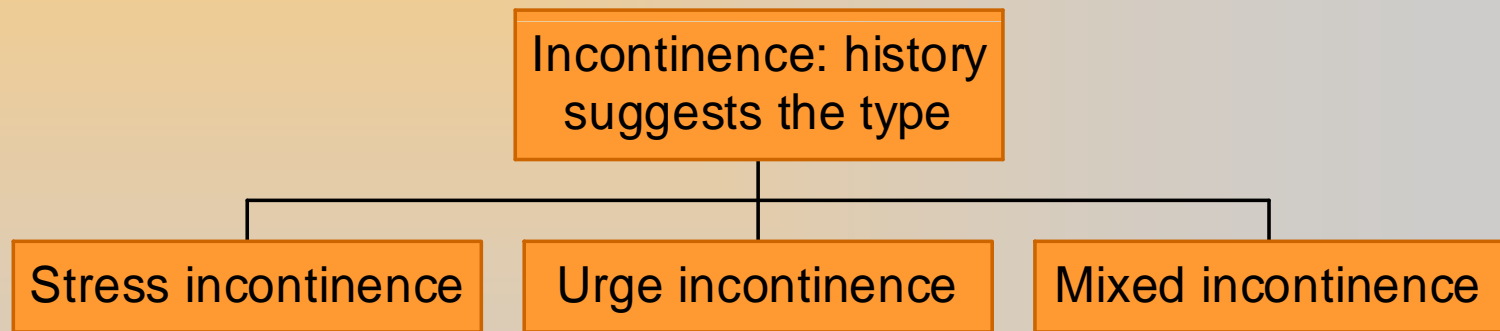
★ All women have this happen when they get older, and there is really nothing you can do about it. Just stay off the trampoline...

FICTION!!!

★ There are multiple causes of urinary leakage (incontinence), and different treatments are available based on a particular woman's situation.

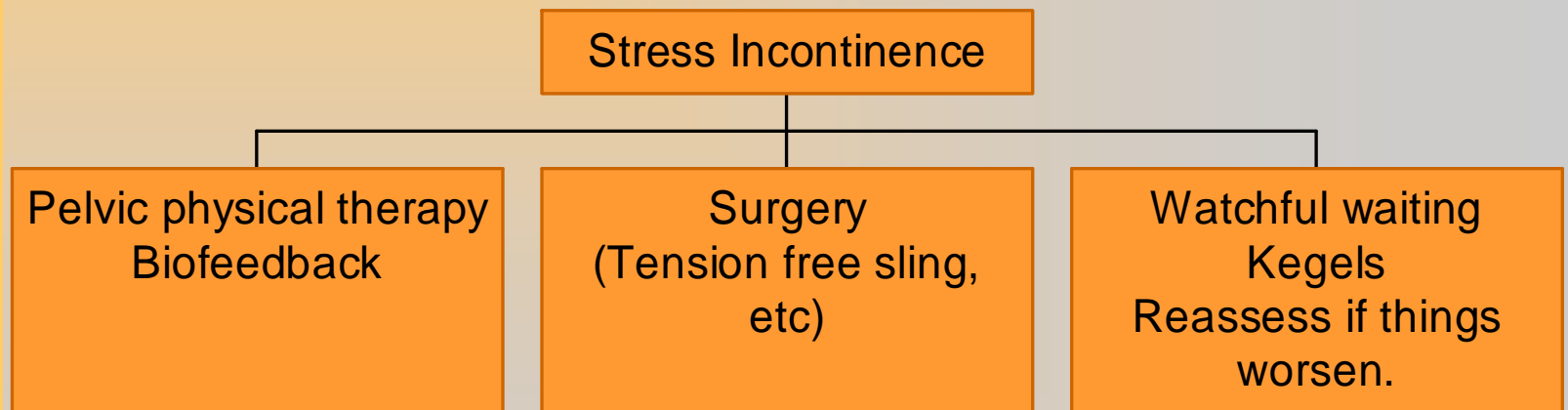
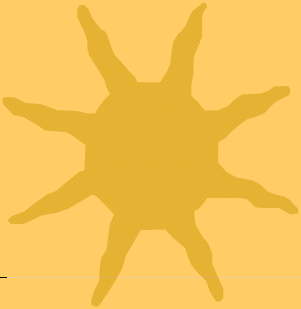


What kind of incontinence?



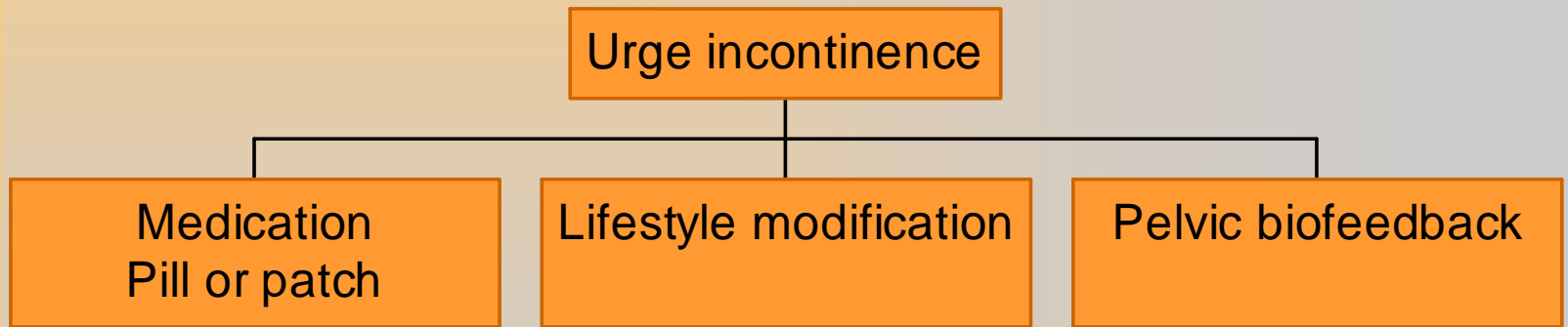
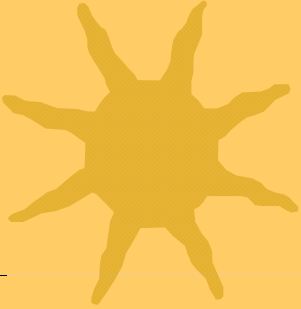


Stress incontinence



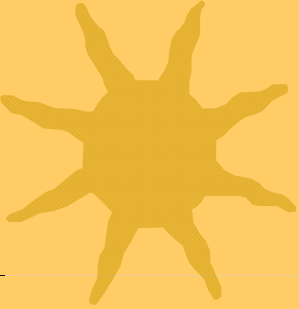


Urge Incontinence





Mixed Incontinence



- ★ Combination of stress and urge incontinence

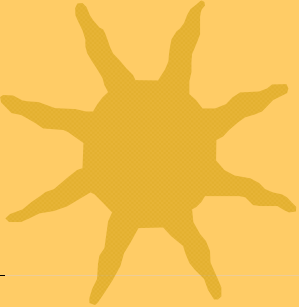


- ★ If suggested by history, is an indication for immediate urodynamic studies (special tests for the bladder).





Parting points



- ★ Be a smart consumer of health care information. Have a list of trusted medical websites, and refer to those to answer questions.
- ★ Ask your doctor what websites he or she uses or would recommend to family.
- ★ Please see list of preventive services and informational websites attached to the slide handouts.



Thank you!

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of Northfield Hospital