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Considering a Hysterectomy?

Thirty-seven per cent of Canadian women will have a hysterectomy by the age of 60. Take caution and explore natural alternatives before considering this often-unnecessary medical procedure.

Over the past 50 years, we have seen a dramatic increase in estrogen-dominant conditions, the most common of which include endometriosis, PMS, uterine fibroids, breast cancer, fibrocystic breast disease, ovarian cysts and menorrhagia (heavy periods).

These conditions now affect about 50 per cent of women over age 35 in industrialized countries—many of whom feel compelled to seek out harmful and/or radical treatments. Estrogen-dominant conditions involve relatively high levels of the hormone estrogen in relation to normal or low progesterone levels. Endometriosis (overgrowth of the lining of the uterus) and premenstrual syndrome (PMS) affect about 15 and 30 per cent respectively of premenopausal women. Uterine fibroids (nonmalignant fibrous cysts of the uterus) are a concern for 25 per cent of women aged 25 to 50. Breast cancer is continuously on the rise; one in eight women are affected, while one in four will die from it. Other conditions associated with too much estrogen include fibrocystic breast disease (nonmalignant breast cysts),
ovarian cysts, menorrhagia (heavy periods), low sex drive, risk of stroke and heart disease, osteoporosis, weight gain, hypothyroidism, infertility and ovarian, cervical and uterine cancers. A new study published last year in American Family Physician reported that estrogen increases the risk of seizures, while progesterone has an inhibitory effect. Many of these female conditions eventually lead to a complete or partial hysterectomy (removal of the uterus); therefore, it is very important to understand the effects and prevalence of this surgery.

More than 60,000 hysterectomies are performed each year in Canada; our hysterectomy rate is one of the highest in the world, second only to that of the United States, and almost double that in most European countries. Thirty-seven per cent of Canadian women will have a hysterectomy by the age of 60.

Effects of hysterectomy
The allopathic profession typically views the uterus as useless once a woman is past childbearing age; hence, the exceedingly high numbers of so-called “harmless” hysterectomies. However, a growing body of research totally refutes the idea of a “useless” uterus. For starters, this operation seriously interferes with sexual fulfillment, which may be a surprise to those who think that the sensations of intercourse are limited to the clitoris and vagina. Sexual desire is usually completely lost or severely diminished after hysterectomy. In fact, for most hysterectomized women, libido and sex life—even if the ovaries have been left intact—are worse than after menopause. Hysterectomy results in shortening, narrowing and drying of the vagina, loss of sensitivity, decreased blood flow to the ovaries, as well as damage to nerves that enter the ovaries, and frequent pain caused by pressure from any source on scar tissue that develops after the operation.

The uterus is also vital for immunity. Evidence indicates that it produces a variety of prostaglandins (hormone-like substances) that regulate the female immune system, even after menopause. Many women lose most ovarian function when the uterus is removed, even when the ovaries are conserved. Current studies indicate the uterus may regulate ovarian hormone production via prostaglandins. Studies also show that hysterectomized women, even those who retain their ovaries, have a much higher risk of cardiovascular disease and depression than women who have never had a hysterectomy. They are also more prone to osteoporosis at an earlier age and develop osteoarthritis more frequently than women who go through menopause with all their parts intact. It is obvious that nature never makes an organ that loses its usefulness at a particular stage of life.

The number-one reason for hysterectomy according to a Mayo Clinic study is prolapse (downward displacement) of the uterus. The second most frequent reason is sterilization and the third is medical treatment of conditions related to the most common estrogen-dominant conditions: menorrhagia, ovarian, uterine and cervical cancers, fibroids and endometriosis.

www.greenspluscanada.com
Boost Your Kids Health
The Easy Way!

Dr. Joey Shulman, DC, RHNI

Do your children suffer from sweet tooth syndrome? Are they more inclined to munch on the latest sugary or salty delight in the form of cookies, cakes, chips, crackers than to eat fruits or vegetables? Research clearly shows that the answer to this question is a resounding “yes.” With childhood allergies, asthma, obesity and Type II diabetes on the rise, it is time to get our kids back to the basics of healthy eating. Consider the following facts:

- When fried vegetables are excluded, 30% of children consume less than one serving of vegetables per day.
- Fried potatoes account for between 25-30% of all vegetables consumed.
- Only 7% of children get the recommended three or more servings of vegetables and two or more servings of fruit daily.

It is no great secret that fruits and vegetables are loaded with essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber; however, recent scientific advancements have enabled researchers to identify additional chemical compounds called phyto(plant)nutrients. These plant compounds play a role in disease prevention. According to the American Dietetic Association, phytonutrients are associated with the prevention and/or treatment of the four leading causes of death in the United States: cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension. There are an estimated 100 different phytonutrients available in each serving of vegetables. The health benefits and future nutritional insurance provided by phytonutrients are immeasurable, which is another reason to fill up your family’s plates with fruits and veggies.

Unfortunately, today’s child is bombarded with clever marketing tactics that lure them to the latest products such as sugary, refined cereals containing a free CD-ROM as a bonus gift. Not only will products like this send a child’s blood sugar soaring, creating symptoms such as mood swings and weight gain, they will also plop them in front of a computer screens for hours. The combination of the poor quality and excess quantity of food the average child is consuming plus a declining level of activity is a one-way ticket to health problems. In order to steer your children clear from these potential health hazards, consider implementing the following food tips into your home:

- Keep cut-up fruits and vegetables in the house with tasty, healthy dips such as hummus (chickpea dip), natural peanut butter, or salsa.
- Replace snack foods such as sugary fruit roll-ups or a juice box with the real thing—fruit!
- Make sure every meal has at least one live, raw fruit or vegetable on your child’s plate.
- For a treat, try chocolate-dipped fruit instead of refined, processed chocolate chip cookies.

Because of busy schedules and the reality that parents can’t always get children to eat as many fruits and veggies as they should, I recommend purchasing a fortiﬁer that can be mixed into children’s juice or water in the morning. That way parents can breathe a little bit easier knowing their children are receiving a boost of fruits and veggies before they even start their days. Fortiﬁers, such as green powders designed for kids, should not be used to replace meals or proper nutrition; rather, they should be considered as an excellent nutritional safety net.

I highly recommend green+ kids, which can be purchased at most health food stores (www.greenplusecanada.com). One serving supplies a child with a hearty serving of the disease-fighting phytonutrients. The product contains over twenty-ﬁve fruits and vegetables, plant nutrients, non-dairy bacterial cultures for immune system and gastrointestinal health, and brain-boosting elements. It has a natural berry taste and a purple colour that turns water into a fun shade, or it can be disguised in juice. Allow your children to do the mixing so they can participate in healthy living activities.

Children desire the very best in every area of life with health being no exception. To paraphrase Adele Davis, “Our children are indeed much more than what they eat—but what they eat can help them to be much more than who they are.”

References:
Eat plenty of vegetables, especially those from the cruciferous family (broccoli, cauliflower, kale and Brussels sprouts), as they contain plant compounds called indole-3-carbinol that can reduce harmful estrogen load.

Choose, whenever possible, organic fruits and vegetables, and hormone- and antibiotic-free animal products to reduce your exposure to xenoestrogens.

Eliminate your intake of refined sugar; it suppresses the immune system.

Supplement your diet with a multi-vitamin high in B vitamins and with minerals.

Support your liver in its role to detoxify harmful estrogens. Curcumin, indole-3-carbinol, calcium D-glucarate, milk thistle, green tea extract, lycopene and dandelion can assist in this process.

Support the adrenal glands with Siberian ginseng, rhodiola, ashwaganda or adrenal glandular products to help combat negative effects of stress on hormone balance.

For those women on the “pill,” take vitamin B₆, folic acid, vitamin C and a multi-mineral containing iron, zinc and copper.

If the condition requires temporary hormonal treatment, choose safer hormone replacement treatments available through compounding pharmacists. To find a compounding pharmacist, contact the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists at 1-800-927-1ACP or e-mail iacpinfo@iacprx.org.

Hormonal health depends completely on the overall wellness of the individual on all levels—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. I encourage all women to take more responsibility for their own bodies with optimal health as the goal.

"Scientists have discovered that nutritional deficiencies, stress, lack of exercise and environmental toxins wreak havoc with hormonal balance, often leading to unnecessary hysterectomy."
