

JUST

for the for the for the for the for the for the

HEALTH

of it of it of it of it of it of it of it of it of it

Did You Know ...

Although many people claim to suffer from sinus headaches, these types of headaches actually are quite rare. Only about two percent of the population ever has suffered from a headache due to a true sinus infection. The vast majority who believe their headaches are sinus-related really are experiencing symptoms of migraine attacks or cluster headaches, instead.

Migraine and cluster headaches can cause dilation of blood vessels within the sinus cavities, resulting in pain that feels similar to that caused by a sinus infection. True sinus headaches usually are accompanied by mild to moderate fever, nasal congestion or discharge, and a feeling of overall debilitation.

Early Detection Is the Essential Key to Successful Skin Cancer Treatment

More than 1.3 million new cases of skin cancer will be discovered this year, a 55 percent increase from the number diagnosed in 1996. However, with early detection and effective treatment, survival and cure rates for skin cancer are high.

One of the best ways to detect skin cancer early is to perform skin self-tests once a month to help determine whether a physician should examine an irregular mole or skin marking. These self-examinations can help identify patterns of moles, freckles and other skin marks, increasing the chances of noticing any pattern changes. Conducting these skin self-tests is particularly important for people who are at higher risk for skin cancer. Risk factors include light skin color, family or personal history of skin cancer, and chronic sun exposure or history of sunburns early in life.

To increase chances of early detection, dermatologists recommend making a doctor's appointment for a skin examination every three years for people between ages 20 and 40, and every year for those age 40 and older.

Although the word "cancer" is a universally alarming word, skin cancer is the most common and one of the most treatable cancers. In fact, with early detection and proper treatment,

nearly 95 percent of all skin cancers are curable. Additionally, there are advanced treatment options available like Mohs micrographic surgery, which offers a high cure rate, low recurrence rate and minimal disfigurement.

When preservation of healthy tissue is essential, as on the face, Mohs surgery is an optimal treatment. This state-of-the-art skin cancer treatment relies on the precision and accuracy of a microscope to trace and ensure removal of skin cancer - down to its roots. The Mohs technique ensures that all the diseased tissue is removed, leaving healthy skin intact and resulting in minimal cosmetic impact. Mohs surgery has up to a 99 percent cure rate for basal and squamous cell carcinomas, the two most common types of skin cancer.

"Protecting your skin is the best way to prevent skin cancer, however, for so many people the damage already has been done," says John W. Skouge, M.D., dermatologist. "This is why it's essential to conduct skin self-tests and see a dermatologist regularly to detect skin cancer in its early stages, when the disease can be treated most effectively with therapies like Mohs surgery."

Once-a-Month Skin Self-Test

If you have an unusual blemish, lump, sore or skin marking, check for the following:

| | YES | NO |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are the edges of the marking hard to define? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is the color inconsistent? Perhaps tan or brown in one spot and/or red, white or blue in another section? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Is the marking asymmetrical (one half shaped differently from the other)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Has it increased in size? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Is the marking diameter larger than 1/4 inch (the size of a pencil eraser)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Do you have a history of sunburns? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, you should consider making an appointment with your doctor for a skin cancer screening.

Revealing the Mysteries of Menopause

Women across the country share many similar bonds, whether they are career goals, family decisions or lifestyle preferences. Women also share physiological events, like menstruation, childbirth and menopause. While menstruation and childbirth often are discussed with women in great detail, the topic of menopause can remain a mystery. An uninformed woman may become intimidated and unsure about the changes that she is experiencing within her body. Much as puberty is a time of uncertainty for adolescents, menopause can produce similar feelings in women ages 40 to 50.

In order to better understand the changes associated with menopause, consult these guidelines excerpted from "Dr. Miriam Stoppard: Natural Menopause" (DK), by Miriam Stoppard.

What is Menopause?

As the supply of eggs in the ovaries dwindles, estrogen and progesterone levels fluctuate and begin to decline, resulting in the end of menstruation. Menopausal symptoms largely are caused by the suddenness of estrogen withdrawal. Many women experience few or no symptoms while others may feel incapacitated.

Menopause Timetable

There are three distinct stages of menopause: premenopause, perimenopause and postmenopause.

- * **Premenopause** - Refers to the time after the age of 40 when menstrual periods may become irregular and sometimes heavy, and the symptoms of menopause start to emerge.
- * **Perimenopause** - Stage lasting several years when physical changes are noticed and when hot flashes may start.
- * **Postmenopause** - This period overlaps with the end

of the perimenopausal stage and will extend into the years that follow. It lasts until the end of a woman's life.

* **Menopause** - This has precise meaning - menopause is the final menstrual period, or when a woman has not experienced a period for 12 months. It is impossible to know that menopause has been experienced until a woman has spent 12 months without a period.

Range of Symptoms

The list of menopause



Many women experience physiological and emotional changes during menopause.

symptoms is long, yet no woman experiences the whole range, and many women will have none. Here are some of the common symptoms.

- * **Hot flashes** are experienced by more than 85 percent of menopausal women, although both their frequency and severity can vary greatly from person to person. During a hot flash, a woman can perspire so pro-

fusely that perspiration runs down her face, neck and back. In rare cases, a woman actually faints during a hot flash.

- * **Night sweats** are the nighttime equivalent of hot flashes, where a woman wakes up hot and drenched in perspiration. Sleeplessness in menopausal women nearly always is linked to night sweats.
- * **Vaginal and urinary symptoms** are common, yet only a few women consult their doctor about them. Urinary symptoms include urinary discomfort and frequent and urgent urination. Vaginal symptoms include dryness and itching.
- * **Muscle and joint symptoms** can be a result of disintegrating collagen. Muscles lose their bulk, strength and coordination, and joints become stiff. Muscles are more prone to soreness and stiffness after exercise, and joints may swell so that their mobility becomes restricted.

While menopause is a natural stage in a woman's life, diet and exercise can make the transition easier.

COOL SUN PROTECTIN TIPS

Cover up with hats, shirts, sunglasses and sunscreen.

Outdoor activities should avoid midday sun.

Once isn't enough! Reapply sunscreen often.

Limit time in sun by playing in the shade.

Healing Power of Laughter ... for Baby, Too

Laughter is contagious and makes everyone instantly feel better - including a baby who is unhappy. Almost every parent is familiar with a cranky baby. Even a child with a superior disposition faces moments of grumpiness from life's little ups and downs - teething, diaper rash or general discomfort. Happy babies make life easier for everyone involved. A son or daughter who is not crying allows more time for his or her parents to get through the day stress-free. An irritable baby may cause mom or dad to suffer from broken sleep, or leave his or her parents at their wits' ends - not a healthy situation at all.

Parents attempt to cheer up their babies in many ways, as laughter is an inexpensive medicine that often can heal all wounds. A bubbly, cheerful baby becomes quite addictive to mothers and fathers who adore the chuckles of their little ones. In "97 Ways to Make a Baby Laugh" (Workman Publishing), by Jack Moore, successful baby-comedy antics are offered for parents who desire a happy and healthy coexistence with their children.

Following are a few exercises geared for babies ages 3 months to 14 months.

- * **The Live Put dad in a large cardboard box. family sing the fa-Goes the Weasel." the last line, dad box.**
- * **The Disappearing Noodle.** Place the end of spaghetti in dad's mouth and have him suck it possible.
- * **The Exaggerated Sneeze.** Fake a sneeze that takes a long time to arrive as in "Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah-Choo!"
- * **Hold a Silly Face Contest.** Have family members compete for baby's attention. Whoever gets the biggest laugh is declared the winner.
- * **With baby watching,** have mom, dad or more agile members of the family lift a soccer ball from the floor using nothing but their heads.
- * **This Little Piggy toe play** is part of every parent's repertoire. Granted, the original story of pigs going to market is completely lost on baby, but the line "wee, wee all the way home" rarely fails to bring on peals of laughter.
- * **Another oldie but goodie** is Baby's Stinky Feet. Put your nose close to baby's feet, and make a face while repeating "Pee-you, Stinky" in a high-pitched voice. ("Pee-you, Stinky" gets a laugh consistently. No one knows why.)
- * **Mirror, Mirror.** Babies adore looking at the most captivating face of all - their own. Hold baby in your arms so he or she is facing the mirror, point to the reflection and say, "Look, there's Baby!" Put one hat on you and other on baby. Switch hats.



Jack-in-the-Box. cardboard box. family sing the fa-Goes the Weasel." the last line, dad box.