

• Menopause, From Page 3

menopause at some point in her life, not all of them will experience it the same way. According to the North American Menopause Society, as a woman transitions into menopause, lower estrogen levels not only cause hot flashes but have several other effects on the body such as vaginal dryness, which can undermine sexual motivation and drive.

In fact, according to a 2015 Toluna Quick Survey Study of 1,000 post-menopausal women, 75 percent suffer from vaginal dryness to some extent, and 90 percent who responded they suffer from vaginal dryness to a moderate-large extent said the dryness negatively affects their life. This is because peri, menopausal and post-menopausal women often experience VVA, or Vulvo Vaginal Atrophy, also known as GSM, or Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause, – characterized by lesser known symptoms of vaginal dryness, burning, itching, incontinence and painful intercourse.

Myth: Menopause symptoms impacting a woman's intimacy are permanent.

Fact: Symptoms that affect intimacy can be frustrating for both a woman going through menopause and her partner. However, women who experience these types of symptoms do not need to live with them for the rest of their lives. CO2RE(R) Intima – a simple, quick and effective procedure – is one of the latest innovations in vaginal therapy, helping women with their intimate wellness, particularly with issues surrounding menopause. The procedure delivers both immediate and long-lasting relief in a painless, non-surgical treatment. CO2RE Intima can help treat these symptoms and get a woman's sex life back on track. Visit co2reintima.com to find a physician in your area and to see if treatment is right for you.

Myth: After menopause, a woman's sex life is never the same.

Fact: Many women remain sexually active beyond midlife and into older age. Some women enjoy their sex lives even more once they are postmenopausal as they no longer need to worry about pregnancy. Additionally, menopause may come at an age when many women are becoming "empty nesters" after sending children off to college, an opportunity for them to reconnect with their partners and reinvent their sex lives. If you're experiencing symptoms of menopause that may be preventing you from enjoying your sex life, visit co2reintima.com to learn more about CO2RE Intima treatment and how it can help restore vaginal health.

Myth: All vaginal rejuvenation treatments are for aesthetic purposes.

Fact: While some women may think that vaginal laser treatment is strictly for cosmetic purposes, in fact, it can help restore women's intimate wellness by offering a number of functional and clinical benefits. CO2RE Intima is designed for women who want to relieve the signs of childbearing and aging in their vaginal area. This includes post-child bearing and peri and menopausal women, women who desire enhancement in sexual functioning and a better sexual experience, women who seek vaginal cosmetic improvement and women who want to feel more confident about their feminine health.

Rather than an ending, menopause should signify a new beginning in a woman's life and opportunities for renewed intimacy. Don't let menopause interrupt your sex life. Now that you know the facts and what CO2RE Intima treatment can offer, you can feel confident about your feminine health throughout your menopausal journey.

One hundred years ago, lung cancer was virtually unheard of. The leading medical textbook of the era, Dr. William Osler's Principles and Practice of Medicine, dedicated 75 pages to tuberculosis, the single most common cause of death at the time. By contrast, lung cancer was described in four sentences as a rare event,

with it most likely being a cancer that has metastasized (spread) to the lungs from elsewhere.

However, starting in the 1930s, lung cancer rose at epidemic rates. The cause? One could blame tobacco; but in some ways, the Industrial Revolution and World War I were responsible as well.

Tobacco had been used for hundreds of years, but when modern manufacturing techniques were invented, instead of being hand rolled, tobacco could be mass produced into cigarettes. Without a ready market, tobacco companies gave them away to soldiers fighting in World War I (and subsequent wars), addicting entire generations of (mostly) young men. A few years after the war, lung cancer rates started sky-rocketing.

Today, lung cancer is the largest cause of cancer deaths. Out of about 8,500 Mainers who will be diagnosed with cancer this year, 1,300 of those will be diagnosed with lung cancer, and almost 1,000 will pass away from it, including 125 from York County. About 85 percent of lung cancers are associated with tobacco.

Tragically, as the tobacco industry started marketing to women in the 1960s, they too started smoking tobacco, and their smoking rates started catching up with men's. Lung cancer expanded to them as well. In fact, today, although more women are diagnosed with breast cancer (in Maine, 1,100 of them) than lung cancer (600) per year, more women die from lung cancer (450 of them) than from breast cancer (200).

Maine's cancer rates – both incidence and death rates – are higher than the national average, and one



Lung Cancer:

What we can all do about the last 100 years' epidemic

major reason is our high lung cancer rates. Why are our lung cancer rates so high? Although there are likely a number of

Lung cancer

is a cancer that starts in the lung. Sometimes other types of cancer spread to the lungs, and although the cancer is in the lungs, this type of tumor is not considered lung cancer. For instance, breast, bladder, colon and prostate cancers commonly spread (metastasize) to the lungs but are still considered and treated as the original type of cancer and not lung cancer per se.

factors, there are three big ones: Maine's historically high tobacco addiction rates; high rates of lung cancer being detected in late stages; and a high prevalence of radon (a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in high levels in Maine's soil).

What can we do to reduce our risks?

1. Tobacco. First, we should all minimize our exposure to tobacco. Although it is highly addictive, there are a number of treatments that can help. And if you've quit before and have not been successful, try again. It often takes several attempts to be successful. Keep in mind that smokers are not the only ones who are impacted. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke are also at risk for its effects, including lung cancer. Maine laws protect the vast majority of employees from secondhand smoke, but you may be exposed at home. If so, there are suggestions for how to minimize your risk, such as asking people to smoke outside. More information on quitting and minimizing your exposure can be obtained from the Maine Tobacco HelpLine at 800-207-1230 or on the website tobaccofreemaine.org/quit_tobacco/Maine_Tobacco_HelpLine.php.

2. Screening Tests. If you have been unable to quit or if you used to smoke, you may be eligible for a lung cancer screening test, which detects

lung cancer early. We know the five-year survival rate for lung cancer is 55 percent when diagnosed early, yet because lung cancer in its early stages often has few symptoms,

it is hard to detect. Seventy-five percent of Mainers with lung cancer are diagnosed when the cancer is already very advanced. Screening people at risk for lung cancer detects it early and increases the chances for a cure. Current recommendations are that those with a history of heavy smoking, even if they have quit in the last 15 years, and are between the ages of 55 and 80 years old, should be considered for screening with low-dose CT scans. For more information, visit the website cdc.gov/cancer/lung/basic_info/screening.htm.

3. Radon. This colorless, odorless radioactive gas exists naturally in soil and seeps into homes and well water. Maine has some of the highest levels of radon in the country. While nationally, one in 15 homes has high levels of radon, in Maine it is one in three. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers. When smokers are also exposed to radon, their risk for lung cancer increases significantly. Maine's high radon levels are likely another major reason why our lung cancer rates are so high.

Every home should be tested for radon. Any house can have a problem; it doesn't matter if your home is new or old. Testing is done of the air in a home as well as the water if there is a private well. If the levels are high, treatment systems can reduce them. For more information, visit the website maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/rad/radon/hp-radon.htm.

Finally, there is another issue that many people with lung cancer speak about. That is the shame that they sometimes feel, especially if they smoked. As mentioned earlier, Big Tobacco has mass-produced and marketed their product for 100 years, addicting many millions. It is, therefore, the tobacco industry that should be shamed.

— Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, is vice president for Clinical Affairs and director of the Center for Excellence in Health Innovation, University of New England.