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UConnHouseCall

REMARKABLE CARE THROUGH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION



GYNECOLOGICAL CANCER AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Early Detection and Treatment Are Key to a Cure

Many kinds of cancer, if diagnosed and treated in the earliest stages, can be cured. The trick is developing an accurate screening test that can detect cancer before it develops. A superior example of this kind of test is the Pap smear, used to detect the early stages of cervical cancer.

Carolyn D. Runowicz, M.D., Director of the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center, is an American Cancer Society vice president who will be president in November of 2005, a past president of the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists and a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board. Dr. Runowicz says, "Cervical cancer is the gynecological cancer that we have done the best job preventing, beginning with the widespread use of the Pap smear. In fact, if every woman got a Pap smear on a regular basis, cervical cancer could be eliminated almost entirely."

New technology has recently improved on the Pap smear's success. Now, most Pap smear samples are put in a liquid solution, which increases the accuracy of the test. "There has been a recent drop in the incidence of cervical cancer in the United States, believed to be due in part to the new Pap smear method," says Dr. Runowicz.

It also has been recently discovered that all women with pre-cancer and cervical cancer test positive for the human papilloma virus (HPV), a sexually transmitted disease, leading researchers to believe that HPV is a cause of cervical cancer. "Research is underway to develop a vaccine that will prevent HPV, thus potentially preventing cervical cancer altogether," says Dr. Runowicz.

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According to Dr. Runowicz, there are exciting advances in gynecological cancer research in the areas of:

Human papilloma virus (HPV). By adding this test to an abnormal Pap test, an at-risk determination for cancer can be made. HPV tests also can be added to Pap smears for screening women over age 30.

THE ANSWER TO CANCER

Carolyn D. Runowicz, M.D., a cancer survivor herself, and her husband Sheldon H. Cherry, M.D., have written a book, titled *The Answer to Cancer*. Their book:

- provides information on new strategies and medications to prevent certain cancers
- identifies key lifestyle factors that can influence cancer risk
- helps men and women create and conduct their own personal risk assessment

- evaluates the effectiveness of popular anti-cancer measures.

“We have the technology to prevent most cancer deaths if the cancer is identified and treated in the early stages. Identifying the cause of cancer—such as the HPV-cervical cancer link—is the future of cancer treatment. In my mind, the answer to cancer really is early detection and prevention,” says Dr. Runowicz.

To learn more, please attend our Discovery Series event, “The Answer to Cancer.” See page 4 for more details.

Endometrial cancer. Women with an inherited syndrome called *hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer* (HNPCC) are at an increased risk for endometrial cancer. If HNPCC is detected, a woman should be screened regularly for endometrial cancer.

Ovarian cancer. Studying protein patterns present in certain diseases may prove useful in the fight against ovarian cancer, which generally has no symptoms until the later stages. Certain protein patterns detected in women with

ovarian cancer may lead to screening tests to detect early stages of ovarian cancer.

Dr. Runowicz urges all women to talk to their doctor about the signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancers. “What you know can save your life,” she says.

For more information or to make an appointment, call the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center at 860-679-2100 or visit us on the web at cancer.uhc.edu.

WHO READS YOUR PAP SMEAR AND OTHER LAB TESTS?

After your doctor performs tests, he or she sends them to a medical laboratory. A medical doctor called a *pathologist* directs the laboratory. The pathologist is responsible for medical oversight of the laboratory and proper interpretation of all lab tests.

“With Pap smears, every individual cell is looked at under a microscope for abnormal or pre-cancerous cells,” says Melinda Sanders, M.D., Chief of the Anatomic Pathology Laboratory at the UConn Health Center, which is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and the College of American Pathologists (CAP). After the pathologist makes his or her report, the results are delivered back to your doctor.

Below are some questions to ask your doctor if you’re concerned about lab results.

How did your physician pick the lab he or she uses? Ideally, your doctor should know the



pathologists and their credentials.

Does your doctor use the same lab for all lab work? Using the same lab for all tests cuts down on the need to take multiple samples.

Is the lab accredited by the College of American Pathologists? A CAP accreditation is an additional certification of excellence that many labs receive.

UConn

Couples with infertility issues can access the latest infertility treatments and technology at UConn’s Center for Advanced Reproductive Services. The center is a full-service fertility center—offering everything from initial evaluations to *in vitro* fertilization—with locations in Farmington and now in Hamden.

Since 1985 the center has been providing the highest standard of care in a compassionate, knowledgeable setting for couples experiencing infertility, according to John Nulsen, M.D., Director. Couples are given the hope, support and medical care they need to have a baby.

The center offers the following advantages for couples searching for infertility solutions:

- nationally superior success rates with low multiple-birth rates

HEALTHY HABITS FOR MOMS-TO-BE

Most people know they should exercise and eat right to stay healthy. Pregnant women should make an extra effort to follow through on healthy habits in order to have a healthy baby.

According to Joseph Walsh, M.D., an obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/GYN) at the UConn Health Center, "Generally, what is healthy for the patient is healthy for the baby, with a few extra areas of caution. While you are pregnant, do all the healthy things you know you should be doing anyway: exercise moderately, eat right, take a multivitamin, don't smoke and don't do illegal drugs."

TAKING CARE OF YOU AND BABY

Some otherwise healthy foods or activities may pose a greater risk for pregnant women. For example, drinking alcohol while pregnant has been shown to be harmful to the developing baby. Also, food poisoning in a pregnant woman can have deadly consequences for her baby. For this reason, Dr. Walsh recommends that pregnant women avoid the following foods:

- swordfish, shark, king mackerel and tile fish, which may contain unhealthy levels of mercury
- raw or undercooked fish, meat, poultry and hot dogs
- deli meats, such as ham, salami and bologna

- soft-scrambled eggs and all foods made with raw or lightly cooked eggs
- unpasteurized milk and any foods made from it, such as soft cheeses like Brie, feta and Roquefort
- herbal supplements and teas.

And, while regular exercise is recommended, pregnant women should avoid strenuous or dangerous exercise, like skiing and scuba diving. What kind of exercise should you do? "Many women enjoy swimming, water aerobics, yoga, biking or walking. Try for a combination of aerobic, strength and flexibility exercises, and avoid bouncing. Talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program," says Dr. Walsh.

Women also should avoid saunas and hot tubs during pregnancy, as high body temperatures can lead to birth defects.

SORTING THROUGH THE MYTHS AND MISINFORMATION

Pregnant women often have questions about what they can and cannot do, and folklore and misinformation can contribute to the confusion. Here are a few of the most common pregnancy myths: Standing on your head after sex can increase your chances of becoming pregnant. The shape and height of your belly can indicate your baby's sex. Fetal heart rate can indicate your baby's sex.

Information, such as "You are eating for two,"



also is untrue. While your appetite may increase significantly during early pregnancy, your actual caloric needs are only slightly increased during the first trimester. Be sensible about your food intake.

Don't take herbal supplements or medication during pregnancy without first talking to your physician. In addition, the **Connecticut Pregnancy Exposure Line (860-523-6419)** will provide free, up-to-date research information regarding the possible risks to an unborn child if the mother is exposed to a particular medication or substance during pregnancy.

UConn OB/GYNs see patients in the East Hartford and West Hartford offices of UConn Health Partners and in Farmington at the Charlotte Johnson Hollfelder Center for Women's Health. **To make an appointment or for your FREE Maternity Information Kit, call UConnLink at 800-535-6232.**

LEARN MORE!

For more pregnancy information, visit the following web sites:

- health.uchc.edu. Select "Health Information."
- www.fertilitycenter-uconn.org
- www.modimes.org
- www.4women.gov/pregnancy

Also, attend our Thursday, November 4 Discovery Series program. See page 4 for more details.

OFFERS HOPE FOR INFERTILITY

- physicians who are board-certified or active candidates for board-certification in reproductive endocrinology and infertility
- laboratories and facilities that meet the highest national accreditation standards
- complete evaluations for both partners, including an evaluation from a board-certified urologist specializing in male-factor infertility
- convenient office locations with private parking,

private waiting areas and comfortable, patient-friendly rooms

- psychological and financial counseling.

"Additionally, the center's newest location in Hamden, convenient from both I-91 and Route 15, offers many of the same infertility services as our Farmington clinic," says Dr. Nulsen.

For more detailed information about the center, visit www.fertilitycenter-uconn.org.

THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED REPRODUCTIVE SERVICES

FARMINGTON LOCATION:
263 Farmington Avenue
Dowling South Building
Farmington, CT 06030
860-679-4580

HAMDEN LOCATION: NEW!
2080 Whitney Avenue
Suite 250
Hamden, CT 06518
203-230-4400

PHYSICIANS:
*John C. Nulsen, M.D.
*Donald B. Maier, M.D.
*Claudio A. Benadiva, M.D.
*David W. Schmidt, M.D.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATE WOMEN PRESENTS

Slow Your Clock Down: The Complete Guide to a Healthy Younger You

Monday, September 20,
6 to 8 p.m.

Presenter: Judith Reichman, M.D.,
Women's Health Expert and
Medical Correspondent for
NBC's "Today" show. Followed
by a book signing.

DISCOVERY SERIES

Always Informative, Always Free
All programs begin at 7 p.m.

Memory Disorders: Medical and Legal Issues

Thursday, September 30

Presenters:

- Patrick Coll, M.D., Medical Director of the UConn Center on Aging
- Attorney Sandra Sherlock-White, Elder Law Expert

The Answer to Cancer: How to Develop a Personal Strategy for Cancer Prevention

Thursday, October 14

Presenters:

- Carolyn D. Runowicz, M.D., Director of the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center
- Sheldon Cherry, M.D., Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City

This program will follow a book signing from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Sponsor: The Charlotte Johnson Hollfelder Foundation

Planning for Pregnancy

Thursday, November 4

Diabetes Update

Thursday, November 18

For a complete listing of community programs, visit www.uhc.edu. To register for any of the above, call UConnLink at 800-535-6232.

INTRODUCING...

David W. Schmidt, M.D., has specialized in reproductive endocrinology since 2001. He is the lead physician at the Hamden location of the Center for Advanced Reproductive Services, which is part of the UConn Health Center. Dr. Schmidt's clinical interests include *in vitro* fertilization, ovulation induction and endoscopic surgery. Dr. Schmidt is a graduate of the UConn School of Medicine. He completed a residency in obstetrics and gynecology and a fellowship in reproductive endocrinology and infertility at the UConn Health Center.



David W. Schmidt, M.D.

Sarah G. Dainiak, M.D., a specialist in internal medicine, provides patients a complete range of primary care services at the Simsbury office on 381 Hopmeadow Street. Dr. Dainiak is a graduate of the UConn School of Medicine and completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at Yale University School of Medicine.



Sarah G. Dainiak, M.D.

HELP IN GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Many people take a good night's sleep for granted, but millions of Americans suffer from sleep disorders, including obstructive sleep apnea, narcolepsy, sleep walking, insomnia, periodic limb movement and teeth grinding. Sleep deprivation as a result of these conditions has been linked to health problems and safety issues. Signs and symptoms of serious sleep disorders may include loud snoring, choking or gasping for breath while sleeping; inability to fall or stay asleep; fear or anxiety about sleeping, bad dreams, and sleepwalking; excessive movements during sleep; morning headaches; high blood pressure; excessive daytime sleepiness or falling asleep at inappropriate times; and memory or learning problems and mood swings.

"Talk to your physician if you experience any of these symptoms. A sleep study to uncover the root causes may be recommended," says Daniel McNally, M.D., Director of UConn's Sleep Disorders Center and a diplomate of the American Board of Sleep Medicine.

UConn's Sleep Disorders Center

UConn's Sleep Disorders Center uses state-of-the-art equipment to measure a variety of sleep-time activities, including brain activity,

eye movement, muscle activity, breathing and more. Treatments for sleep disorders may include medications, stress reduction therapy, medical devices and lifestyle changes, including weight loss. The Sleep Disorders Center works with each patient to find the treatment that works best for that individual.

For more information or to make an appointment with a UConn physician, call UConnLink at 800-535-6232 or visit us on the web at www.uhc.edu.

