

TCW

**TODAY'S
CHICAGO
WOMAN**

April 2006

Expert Q&A



KORNELIA KROL, M.D.
Board-certified
Obstetrician/
Gynecologist
Saint Joseph Hospital

Do ovaries have to be removed during a hysterectomy? In the past, a woman 45 or older having a hysterectomy (removal of uterus) was advised to have her ovaries removed to decrease any future risk of ovarian cancer. Today, however, studies show women benefit more from keeping their ovaries following a hysterectomy until much later in life, such as after age 65. A woman's ovaries produce significant amounts of testosterone that converts into estrogen, especially after menopause.

The benefits of these hormones include a decreased risk of coronary heart disease, lower risk for osteoporosis and osteoporotic fractures, improvement in a person's health and well-being, and decreased sexual dysfunction. Women whose ovaries are removed as a precautionary measure during a hysterectomy don't have the benefits of these naturally present hormones, which can place them at greater risk for cardiovascular disease and osteoporotic hip fractures. Talk to your health care provider about your risk for ovarian cancer and gynecologic health.



JUDY WEITZMAN,
Motivation Plus, LLC

To lose weight, should I be counting calories or fat grams? Both! You can calculate the percentage of calories from fat by looking at the column marked Percent Daily Value for total fat and simply adding up these percentages. When trying to lose weight, fat should make up no more than 20 percent of your daily diet. While keeping tabs on both calories and fat grams is a good idea, calories

are most important for weight loss. One pound equals 3,500 calories, no matter how the calories are broken down into fats, carbohydrates, etc. So if you consume 500 fewer calories per day for a week, you will lose a pound. But this means not being fooled into expecting that you'll simply lose weight with the low-fat and fat-free versions of many common foods. If you don't watch how much you eat—calories and portion sizes—and you take in more calories than you expend, regardless of whether these calories come from fat, proteins, or carbohydrates, you will gain weight. Any unused energy is converted and stored as excess body fat.



NADA L. STOTLAND,
M.D., M.P.H.
Professor of Psychiatry
Rush Medical College

How do I know whether I'm just having a hard time or have a real depression? Depression is a real disease, with very clear signs and symptoms validated by medical research—not a bad time or a bad day. Women's busy lives and responsibilities can make any of us tired and cranky sometimes, but the diagnosis of depression requires five of the following symptoms, most of the day, every day, for at least two weeks: Sadness or irritability, change

in appetite (too much or too little), change in sleep (too much or too little), loss of the ability to enjoy things, feeling helpless and hopeless, feeling guilty, loss of concentration, loss of energy, and thoughts of death. The helpless and hopeless feelings and guilt associated with depression can keep us from seeking help; we feel we don't deserve it and we can't do anything about it. If our lives are going well, we feel we're being unappreciative. If we're having troubles, we think it's no wonder we are feeling down. It takes mental effort to break out of those feelings and get treatment (either psychotherapy or medication) so that we can improve our situation. Speak to your family doctor or a mental health professional, get treatment, and get better. ■

Compiled by Paula Kashtan.