

ASK THE EXPERT

WOMEN'S HEALTH AFTER 50

- by Dr. Diane Sanfilippo



Diane M. Sanfilippo OB-Gyn PC

ABOUT

My medical practice specializes in women's health care issues and providing preventive care. Individualized obstetrical care for expecting mothers and promoting a healthy lifestyle for all patients is a main focus of my staff. We have two Certified Women's Health Nurse Practitioners to handle routine exams and common problems quickly.

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WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE BIGGEST HEALTH CONCERNS FOR OLDER WOMEN TODAY?

Women today are very concerned about living healthier longer. Since many GYN cancers occur around mid-life, women want to know what they can do to lower their risks for cancer and detect it early. They are also interested in staying active, keeping their weight under control, and living well despite some of the changes that come with menopause.

HOW DO YOU USUALLY COUNSEL WOMEN ABOUT CANCER PREVENTION AND DETECTION?

I talk to my patients about knowing their family history and the various factors that may increase their risk for cancer. A lot of women don't know that their lifestyle can increase their risk. For example, most women don't know that obesity has been linked to uterine cancer and smoking can increase your risk of cervical and bladder cancer. Some GYN cancers are hereditary. Screening women with pap smears, mammograms and sonograms is essential for early detection, but genetic testing is sometimes indicated as well.

DOES MENOPAUSE CAUSE WEIGHT GAIN?

Not by itself. With age our metabolism does slow down and we require fewer calories. We may also become less active due to other life changes such as retirement, children moving out, and health issues. If women aren't aware of this and don't take measures to prevent it, they will see the numbers on the scale creep up every year.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HORMONE REPLACEMENT?

I think it is an excellent option for the right patients. Hormone therapy can ease a variety of menopause symptoms and improve quality

of life. There are many types of hormone therapy and women do have choices. Because of certain side effects and health risks, it needs to be used with caution and usually for a limited time.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE FOR WOMEN OVER 50?

Too many women put themselves last all the time. They let their own health care be delayed until problems multiply or become worse. I see many women who have not been to a doctor in several years for one reason or another. Many times these patients have had symptoms for months or even years. Another obstacle can be access to affordable reliable health care. Older women are more reluctant to do things online such as electronic medical record systems and insurance benefit management making access even more limited.

Dr. Sanfilippo completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Rochester before completing Medical School at the University of Buffalo. She is Board Certified and a member of the American Congress of OB/Gyn. She has been in practice in the Buffalo area for 18 years.

Lancaster has been home to Dr. Sanfilippo (who turned 50 in July) since moving from Williamsville with her husband and first son in 1997. Two more sons in 1998 and 2004 have kept her busy away from the office. She loves to garden and looks forward to sprucing up the new office in the coming years. When not in the office, at the hospital, in her garden, or driving the kids around, Dr. Sanfilippo enjoys reading, baseball, bowling and going to Buffalo Bills games.