



women's health

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UMHS Women's Health Program—Dedicated to the health and wellness of women

FECAL INCONTINENCE

Regaining Control of Your Life

Do you have a medical problem that you are embarrassed to talk about? Too often, people's embarrassment keeps them from finding out about possible solutions for their medical conditions. Fecal incontinence (FI)—the inability to control one's bowels—might not be something you feel comfortable discussing with your friends, but health care providers can provide answers for this condition that affects approximately 7 percent of women. The condition becomes worse with age and tends to occur more frequently in women whose muscles were damaged during childbirth.

Researching the Problem

In 2006, Dee E. Fenner, M.D., professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and director of Gynecology at the University of Michigan Medical School, was senior author on an award-winning paper that studied FI. The researchers found that women in the study who had FI were also more likely to have: a higher number of deliveries, urinary incontinence, a previous hysterectomy, another medical condition such as major depression or diabetes, or a history of operative vaginal delivery involving forceps or a vacuum-assisted device.

Developing the Program

Fenner was also one of the founders of the Michigan Bowel Control Program at the University of Michigan Health System that addresses many conditions in addition to FI. She says, "We developed the program so we can bring different specialties together to address problems. We make it easy for the patients to have coordinated evaluation and care." Treatment for FI takes a variety of approaches—specialized physical therapy, medications and surgery. Sometimes the solution is as simple as diet modification.

Offering Successful Treatments

Fenner says the program's patients are very happy to find out that there are solutions. Before treatment, many of her patients were previously afraid to leave their homes. After treatment, they no longer have to spend their time worrying about whether there is a bathroom close by. Fenner says, "Treatment frees them up to enjoy their lives. They have the ability to leave their homes and be more social."

For more information about the Michigan Bowel Control Program, visit www.med.umich.edu/bowelcontrol/ or call 877-GO-BOWEL.



Let's Talk About Sex

There's no need to suffer in silence—sexual dysfunction is common and can be successfully treated

People are willing to seek answers for non-sexual problems with their physical health, but they often forget that sexual health is an important (and treatable) part of their physical health. A well-known study (published by Rosen, Laumann and Paik in 1999) showed that approximately 43 percent of women have some type of sexual difficulty during their lifetime.

Sallie Foley, LMSW, director of the Center of Sexual Health at the University of Michigan Health System, often has patients who seek help after they have been dealing with a problem for more than a year or sometimes even more than a decade.

Foley says that throughout their lives

about what they will experience.

Low lubrication can be another reason that sex is painful. There are certain times that women may experience this, like after the birth of a baby or sometimes the time of the month is a factor. There are topical lubricants to help with this problem.

Help Is Available

There are many resources available to help educate women about their sexual health including Web sites (www.med.umich.edu, www.sexualhealth.com, www.webmd.com), books (see reading list on page 4), and sex therapists. Sex therapists, like Foley, are licensed mental

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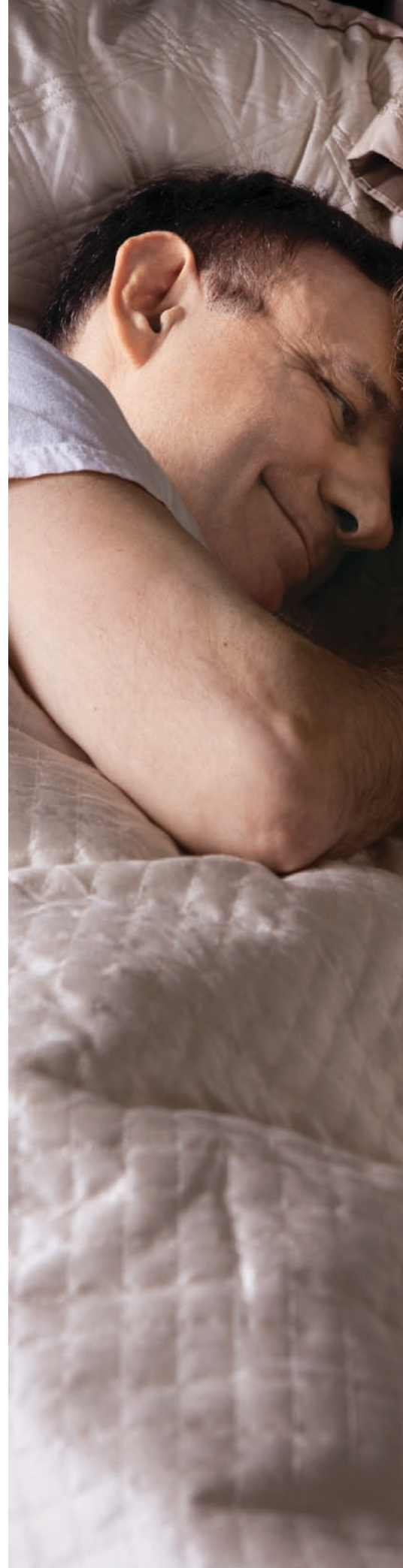
women are used to thinking of their genitals as functioning parts of their bodies—through periods, pregnancies and even menopause. Some women don't question having pain during sexual experiences, but the truth is that sex should not be painful. Pain during sex is an indication that something is wrong.

Women can experience pain during sex for many reasons—some of them are medically based and others are not. Foley says that muscles are smart. If they have experienced some pain during sex, they may be tense the next time. She compares it to how people tense up when they're driving on an icy road. They may have some anxiety

health workers who can answer questions other counselors and physicians might not be able to answer. Counseling at the UMHS Center for Sexual Health is covered by most insurance. For patients without insurance, there is a sliding scale of payment.

If you're one of the 43 percent of women who experience some type of sexual dysfunction, you are not alone. Help is available to improve your sexual health and your physical health.

Find out about the Center for Sexual Health by visiting www.med.umich.edu/sexualhealth and or call **734-763-4963** to make an appointment.





Help is Here

The University of Michigan Health System Center for Sexual Health is dedicated to patient care, teaching and research. The center has two programs that address the treatment of sexual difficulties for women: Sexual Health Counseling Services and the Sex Matters Clinic (for individuals and couples over 60). Patients do not need a physician referral for individual or couples counseling. The center is located at East Ann Arbor Health Center, and patients check in at the internal medicine desk. Visit the center's Web site www.med.umich.edu/sexualhealth/about/faq.htm to learn more about the services that are available.

YOU'RE NOT alone



Did you know that...

- 11 million women in the United States experience urinary incontinence.
- 75 percent of women have a yeast infection during their lives and 50 percent have more than one.

Whatever your question—for you or someone in your family—the University of Michigan Women's Health Resource Center provides help. The WHRC offers the following services:

- Computer access to reliable consumer health information Web sites
- A lending library with more than 500 books
- Pamphlets, handouts, articles and newsletters on hundreds of health and wellness topics
- Educational classes and seminars
- Connection to UMHS programs, services and physicians

The WHRC is located on the first floor of the Taubman Center in the waiting area of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic. The Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. To contact the WHRC, call **734-936-8886**, or submit a question online at <https://www.med.umich.edu/secure/whrc/question.htm>. Your request for information is confidential.

Navigating the Waves of Life: Keys for Stress Management



If you are squeezed by the pressure of life challenges and the stress that goes with it, you're not alone. There is an epidemic of stress in our society and it takes a toll on health and well-being. Yet, with a few practical stress management tools you can learn ways to stay afloat and even glide through the waves of life rather than feeling tossed about.

Date: Thursday, November 29, 2007

Location: Washtenaw Library Learning Resource Center

Time: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The Presenter: Sandra Finkel, M.P.H. Manager, Stress Management Services & Cardiovascular Executive Health Program, Cardiovascular Medicine at Domino's Farms Seating is limited, so please contact the Women's Health Resource Center at **734-936-8886** to register.

Reading List



Sex Matters For Women: A complete guide to taking care of your sexual self by Sallie Foley, Sally Kope and Dennis Sugrue



Ten Steps To Completely Overcome Vaginismus: The practical approach to pain free intercourse by Mark and Lisa Carter



Visit www.med.umich.edu/sexualhealth/resources/read.htm for a longer list of books categorized by topic.

For More Information: Please visit the Women's Health Program Web site at www.med.umich.edu/whp or the U-M Web site at www.med.umich.edu/1libr/1libr.htm.

To Receive Future Issues: To be placed on the *Women's Health* mailing list, or for more information on the Women's Health Program, call the Women's Health Resource Center at 734-936-8886. If you no longer wish to receive *Women's Health*, please e-mail womenshealth@glcomm.com and ask to have your name removed from the mailing list.

Mission: To provide the highest-quality health care to women through coordinated service, collaborative research, extensive education and outreach.

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Take a Crane Check

This summer, Ann Arbor's medical campus skyline welcomed a new landmark. One 300-foot tower crane is the tallest crane in North America that is not tied back to a structure. (A second crane is expected to go up in December.) The unique crane foundation type is part of the building project for the new University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and Women's Hospital.

Find out more about how you can support this project and advance health care for women by calling the Children's and Women's Health Development Team at **734-998-7702** or send an e-mail to mott-development@med.umich.edu.



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www.med.umich.edu/whp

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