

Like clockwork

from Dr. Laura Corio, M.D.

Women's Health Issues

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7 Questions You Need to Ask Me

Recently I was asked by America Online what questions I wish my patients would ask me. Even my patients who diligently show up for their pap smears and pelvic exams don't always feel comfortable asking me embarrassing questions or sharing intimate details. But the more we talk the more I can help you! Here are some questions you should ask me the next time you come in along with the type of answers you can expect from me.

What method of birth control is best for me?

We'll discuss all of the lifestyle and health factors that go into making such an important decision, as well as your personal beliefs. If you're already on a birth control regiment, it doesn't hurt to check in with me from time to time to see if there are any new methods to consider. This is a topic worth revisiting from time to time to make sure we've got it right.

Am I being tested for human papillomavirus (HPV)?

I test everyone and here's why: By age 50, 80% of women have contracted HPV so every woman should be tested.. Any time you are exposed, it may go into a latent stage which is difficult to detect – and it could come back at any time. If your test comes back negative and you are in a monogamous relationship, then you are good for three years. If you haven't been tested in a while and you've made some changes in your sex life, let's talk.

Should I get a breast sonogram?

Despite recent guideline changes I'm still recommending that women over 40 have a yearly mammogram; I'll talk more in depth about this in an upcoming newsletter. If you have dense or lumpy breasts, or a family history of breast cancer, I will recommend adding a sonogram along with, or as a replacement to, your yearly mammogram. Sonography detects four times as many cancers as physical examinations and twice as many cancers as mammography. Don't stop your self breast exam either! If you don't know how to do one, ask me and I will show you.

Why do I have pounding headaches on a regular basis?

Many women don't think to ask me this question but it's possible you may be experiencing menstrual migraines, especially if you are in perimenopause or entering menopause. If your headaches are the result of fluctuating hormones, we can reduce the number and severity with the proper hormone and supplement regiment.

What do you need to know about my sex life?

This is a toughy and I understand why. Sharing the most intimate details of your sex life with me isn't fun but it helps me look out for the signs and symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases including chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, pelvic infection and more. Based on your sexual history, I may order more frequent Pap smears, annual HIV tests and hepatitis C tests. And of course, anything you tell me stays between us.

What happened to my libido?

Another toughy but there is nothing to be ashamed of! There are many psychological and physical reasons why your passion meter is stuck on zero and there is no reason you have to accept it. We can discuss any medications you are taking, stress levels and even contraceptives to see if we can get to the bottom of the issues. I'll also do a thorough physical work up to make sure there's nothing physical holding you back. If need be, I'll point you to a specialist or sex therapist.



Do you have a question?

There is nothing you can't ask me and anything we talk about stays between us. Asking the right questions can end needless discomfort and may even save your life!



Dr. Corio's Resources

Laura Corio on the Web:

<http://www.thatsfit.com/2009/02/13/how-do-you-mend-a-broken-heart/>

<http://www.power-surge.com/transcripts/corio.htm>

<http://www.webmd.com/menopause/guide/menopause-resources>

PEARLS

The Question: What is a Pap Smear and what does it test for?

The Research: The Pap test, also called a Pap smear, checks for changes in the cells of your cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus (womb) that opens into the vagina (birth canal). The Pap test can determine whether or not you have an infection, abnormal (unhealthy) cervical cells, or cervical cancer. It can find the earliest signs of cervical cancer - a common cancer in women. If caught early, the chance of curing cervical cancer is very high. Treatment can prevent most cases of cervical cancer from developing.

Dr. Corio Says: Getting regular Pap tests and HPV tests is the best thing you can do to prevent cervical cancer. Have your first Pap test beginning about 3 years after you begin to have sexual intercourse, but no later than age 21. After age 21, you should be tested every 2-3 years unless we find a reason to order one more frequently. Once you hit 65 and you've had at least three normal Pap tests consecutively and no abnormal Pap tests in the last 10 years, we may decide together to stop having Pap smears performed. If you are at high risk for cervical cancer at any age, I'll likely recommend more frequent screenings.

The Question: I know you wrote a book on perimenopause. What exactly does that term mean?

The Research: Perimenopause, or menopause transition, is the stage of a woman's reproductive life that begins several years before menopause, when the ovaries gradually begin to produce less estrogen. It usually starts in a woman's 40s. Perimenopause lasts up until menopause, the point when the ovaries stop releasing eggs. In the last one to two years of perimenopause, this decline in estrogen accelerates. At this stage, many women experience menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, anxiety or depression.

Dr. Corio Says: You don't have to live with the symptoms. There are often things, such as hormone treatment, herbal supplements and vitamins we can try to make the perimenopause years easier. If you have symptoms, let's discuss them as soon as possible. Abnormal periods are something we should especially monitor to ensure they aren't being caused by some other condition.

Sources: webmd.com, Mayoclinic.com, obgyn-ny.com

Doctor & Office Hours

Doctor's Hours

Monday	12:00 PM-6:00 PM
Tuesday	9:00 AM-3:00 PM
Wednesday	9:30 AM-2:30 PM
Thursday	8:00 AM-2:00 PM

Office Hours

Monday	10:00 AM-5:00 PM
Tuesday – Friday	9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Make an Appointment

Call 646-422-0730 during our normal office hours.



News Flash

As if you needed another reason to quit smoking: A new study has found that second hand smoke is particularly dangerous to your children. Toddlers and obese children suffer far greater blood-vessel damage and other harm from secondhand smoke than other children, which could put them on the path to heart disease later in life, according to scientists from Ohio State University. The link was twice as great in toddlers who were obese, researchers said. And they found that all toddlers had a four times greater risk of secondhand smoke exposure when compared with adolescents, despite having similar reported home exposures. This may be because toddlers tend to be in closer proximity to their smoking parents for extended periods of time. At least a quarter of children in the United States are exposed to secondhand smoke.