



News Release

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Lessons our mothers would have taught us...had they known

(Vancouver, BC) Not only is Mother's Day a time to give flowers and appreciation, it presents an opportunity to think about the important lessons recently learned in women's health that could be passed on from mothers to daughters for generations to come.

According to Dr. Beth Donaldson, a women's health specialist and medical director at Copeman Healthcare, women's health programs are often most effective when care is tailored to specific stages of life.

"Beyond the teens, it is often helpful to think of health-care needs in terms of decades – matching care to address common complaints seen in one's 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s and beyond. Although prevention and early detection are important factors at every age, the following are simple guidelines to help women understand care needs at different stages in life," said Dr. Donaldson who oversees the specialized women's health program at Copeman Healthcare.

Lesson One: Start thinking about osteoporosis as early as your teens and 20s

By age 20, young women have accumulated 90 per cent of their bone mass, so calcium and vitamin D are crucial. Girls at this age need at least three to four servings of dairy a day and minimum 400-800 IU of Vitamin D. Teenage girls should also be strongly encouraged to take part in regular weight-bearing activities such as dance, soccer or other vigorous pursuits. Exercise is a lifelong habit so it's good to begin early.

Lesson Two: The birth control pill can do more than simply prevent unwanted pregnancy

The birth control pill has been shown to substantially decrease the chance of ovarian cancer over time. Young women with a significant family history of ovarian cancer should discuss this option with their physician as the pill may be useful in preventing this cancer prior to menopause.

Lesson Three: Prepare for a baby now even if you plan to have one later

Even though many women are delaying pregnancy until well into their 30s, they should be thinking about their fertility long before then. If having children is a goal, women need to be in sync with their menstrual cycle, medication use and family history in their early 20s. If your menstrual cycle seems to be irregular in any way, discuss this with your physician. Endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome and thyroid disorders can all present with changes in flow, regularity or menstrual pain and lead to fertility issues. Getting these sorted out early in life can increase your chances of conceiving naturally later on. Supplementation with folic acid, omega fatty-acids and adequate calcium are also important at this stage. Dietitians can recommend appropriate timing and quantities and review medications along with your physician.

Lesson Four: Heart disease prevention strategies should be adopted in your 30s

Heart disease is the number one killer of women overall, and prevention should commence in your 30s to lower your chances of developing the disease later in life. By this age, it's prudent to have a healthy nutritional foundation and well-developed exercise habits.

Lesson Five: Don't wait on the weight

It's an unfortunate fact that weight is much more difficult to shed in your 40s and 50s so it is ideal to be the weight you want to be before then.

Lesson Six: Manage perimenopause by making time for yourself

Your 40s are usually all about perimenopause and the changes that come with it. Most women do just fine, but keep in mind that you may start to suffer from hot flashes and mood changes long before you miss a period. Where possible, reduce your stress levels and try to ensure you are making your own health a priority. Although career, family and other responsibilities are competing for your time, you must remember you are no good to your family unless you look after yourself first!

Lesson Seven: Hormones have come a long way, baby

What's new in Menopause? If you have intolerable symptoms of menopause, ask your physician if you are a candidate for hormone therapy. Topical estrogen is widely used in a pump or mini sachet, and progesterone orally, vaginally or in IUD form. There are many simple options available for vaginal dryness.

Lesson Eight: Do the math

From 50 and beyond it's especially important to know your numbers. Know what your waist circumference, cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure are and keep them at optimal levels to be able to thoroughly enjoy the next decades and being a grandmother to your grandkids!

About Copeman Healthcare Centre

Copeman Healthcare clinics offer premium health services, programs of prevention and medically supervised lifestyle change. Integrated teams of physicians, registered dietitians, specialist nurses, kinesiologists, psychologists and neuropsychologists help clients achieve greater longevity, improved quality of life and physical and psychological wellness. Copeman Healthcare clinics are located in Vancouver, West Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. www.copemanhealthcare.com.

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