



A Woman's Health: Unique in Than Ever Imagined

It should come as no surprise to anyone that men and women are different. But did you know?...

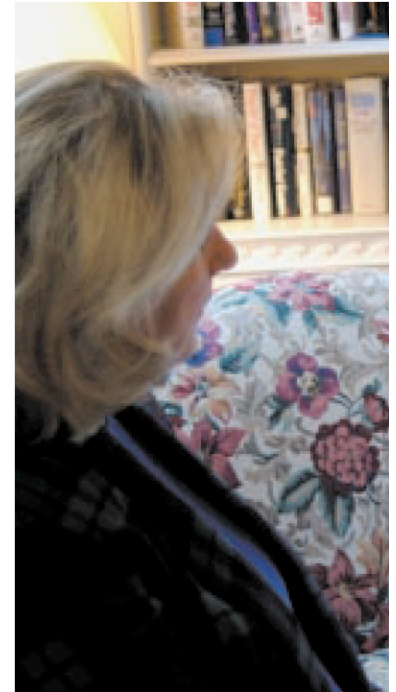
- Women's immune systems are generally heartier and more robust than men's (a fact that will come as no surprise to any wife or mother).
- Women with chronic diseases often report that their conditions get worse during their menstrual periods.
- Women have significantly lower levels of serotonin, the brain's mood-maintaining chemical, which probably explains why women are two to three times more likely than men to suffer from depression.
- Women with diabetes are 50 percent more likely to suffer a diabetic coma than men.
- Women over 50 suffer fractures three to four times more frequently than men of the same age group.
- Women metabolize drugs differently than men.
- Women feel pain more acutely.
- Women are more vulnerable to autoimmune disorders.
- Women wake from anesthesia more quickly.

Why? "The truth is, we are just starting to ask the question 'why?'" and to probe more deeply into the differences between women's health and men's," says Kathleen Rylance, ND, APN, CNP, nurse practitioner at the Posy Krehbiel Prevention and Wellness Center at Lake Forest Hospital's Hunter Family Center for Women's Health.

Researchers are just beginning to unravel the

have been found in the prevention, manifestation and treatment of disease. Medical researchers now know that results obtained from studies on men do not always apply to women, and that many diseases affect women disproportionately, predominantly, and differently than men. As the gaps in knowledge narrow and women become more aware of their own biology, lives will ultimately be saved.

Heart disease is a vivid illustration of gender-based differences. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in postmenopausal women, and more than one-half of all coronary deaths occur in women. Yet many women do not realize they are at risk, and they do not understand that they may experience a heart attack differently than a man would. Instead of the traditional chest pain, women tend to experience sudden and overwhelming fatigue, shortness of breath, abdominal or mid-back pain, indigestion and nausea, explains Diane Goodman, RN, BC, CCRN, clinical educator and pain resource nurse. Not knowing these warning signs dramatically lowers a woman's chances for speedy treatment and survival.



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