

FALL 2024

HEALTHY *TIMES*

Menopause Myths

Hala Madi, MD, OB/GYN

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More Milestones

Joel Beiswenger, President and CEO

“This is yet another milestone that marks our success and the drive to better not only our own organization but the communities we serve.”

JOEL BEISWENGER



Yet another beautiful Minnesota summer is coming to an end. I know this time of year leaves some yearning for continued warm sunny days, but all good things do pass eventually. That passage of time is constantly flowing, and that flow brings moments, both good and bad. We have been fortunate to have many good moments this year, especially over the last several months.

Many have probably noticed the structure slowly being built on the west side of our hospital. This is our upcoming cancer center. We broke ground on a rainy day in early May 2024. This is a historic moment for Astera Health. We as an organization have recognized the plight of those suffering from cancer and we aim to bring comfort, convenience, and life-saving services to the area. No more long drives and losing precious recovery time with friends and family. Our Foundation is currently raising funds to support the operations of this new facility. I humbly ask all those able to please donate.

On the topic of our Foundation, the charitable wing of Astera Health is about

to turn 30 years old. This is yet another milestone that marks our success and the drive to better not only our own organization but the communities we serve. We invite you to visit the Foundation web page at AsteraHealth.com to learn about the different ways you can give, including our volunteer program. And find more information about activities involving the 30th Anniversary of the Astera Health Foundation.

I also want to welcome general surgeons David Stover, MD, and Beth Jarrett, MD. They are the newest additions to the Astera Health team and will undoubtedly usher in a new era of surgical excellence in our region. Please join me in welcoming them to our community and thank them for choosing to provide care at Astera Health.

The winter months approach, and it's easy to hibernate and forget about being an active participant in your own wellness. Please remember to get your yearly check-up, and don't hesitate to reach out with questions and concerns. We are always here for you as your trusted partner for life.



Scenes from the 2024 Golf Classic, which was held on May 31. Thank you to all sponsors, teams and volunteers for a day of golf and good fun. All funds support the cancer center.

Let's Celebrate

30 YEARS



Aster Health FOUNDATION

On August 19, 1994, a generous group of community members came together to form the charitable wing of Astera Health (Tri-County Hospital at the time). After three decades much has changed, except for the drive to always put patients first. The Foundation offers the opportunity for individuals and organizations to make donations that ultimately support the operations and patient care at their local hospital and clinic.

Tax-deductible gifts from generous supporters improve education, technology, patient care, equipment, and much more.

Meet the board members:

- Jolene Johannes – Board Chair and Major Gifts Chair (Stargazer Society)
- Jeff Browne, Ross Zieglmeier, Monica Merickel – members at large
- Paul Drange – Astera Board representative
- Kim Beiswenger – Community Relations Chair
- Stacy White – Employee Giving (Celestial Givers) Chair
- Mac Nelson – Annual Giving (Gemini Circle) Chair
- Cindy Hockert – Auxiliary President

To celebrate 30 years of giving, the Foundation is asking for generous donors to give \$30, one dollar for each year of Foundation philanthropy. Every donation goes to the new cancer center that will change the landscape of care for our region. This new facility will provide services that many patients currently have to travel long distances to access, like radiation.

More than **1,000** donors donated over **\$4 million** dollars for on-going support and health education to students, organizations, and citizens in our service area.

Over **400** scholarships, estimated at **\$750,000** and **\$840,000** in grants have been awarded.



Give \$30 for 30 Years!

"Donating to this cause could change the lives of people suffering from cancer. Giving just \$30 could push us closer to our goal while honoring the people that passed because of this terrible disease." – MADISON HORN



“I encourage women to educate themselves and talk openly with their providers. Understanding what’s happening in your body is the first step to managing it well.”

HALA MADI, MD, OB/GYN

Menopause Fact or Fiction

An interview with Dr. Hala Madi, MD, OB/GYN

Many people have questions about perimenopause and menopause. Amy Yaeger, Director of Strategic Marketing and Business Development interviewed Dr. Hala Madi, MD, OB/GYN to help us understand what these terms mean and what some common myths and facts are.

What is perimenopause and menopause?

A: Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause. It starts in a woman's 30s or 40s. During this time, a woman's body starts to produce less estrogen. Menopause is when a woman has not had a menstrual period for 12 months. This usually happens around age 51.

Some people believe that menopause means more broken bones. What do you think about that?

A: Bone loss is normal after age 35, but in the first four to eight years after menopause there is more rapid bone loss in women because of decreased levels of estrogen. Osteoporosis can be a result, which does increase your risk of bone fracture, especially in the hips, wrists and spine.

Can you explain why some women have hot flashes during menopause?

A: Hot flashes are a common symptom of menopause. They happen because the body's temperature control is affected by changing hormone levels. It's like your internal thermostat gets a bit confused.

Are there ways to manage hot flashes?

A: Yes, there are. Wearing light clothing, staying in cool places, and avoiding spicy foods can help. Some women find relief with hormone therapy, but it's best to talk to a provider about the right option.

Should I take natural supplements to treat my symptoms?

A: Very few plant and herbal supplements have been included in studies, nor are well regulated. They can also interfere with other medications you may be taking. Talk to your provider before starting any supplements.

Many women hear bad things about hormone replacement therapy (HRT) during menopause. What is it, and is it safe?

A: Hormone replacement therapy, or HRT, involves taking estrogen and progesterin to replace the hormones being lost during perimenopause or when the body no longer makes them after menopause. It can help relieve symptoms like hot flashes, night sweats, reduce cancer risk and prevent bone loss. It's important for women to discuss the benefits and risks with their providers to make the best decision for their health.

Is it true that women going through menopause always gain weight?

A: Weight gain can happen, but it's not a guarantee. It's often due to a slower metabolism and changes in hormone levels. Staying active and eating healthy can help manage weight.

Some believe that menopause affects a woman's ability to enjoy sex. Is that true?

A: Menopause can cause changes like vaginal dryness, which might make sex uncomfortable. But there are treatments available. It's important for women to talk with their providers about any concerns for solutions like moisturizers, lubricants, or medications that are right for them.

If I haven't had a period in years, do I really need a check-up every year?

A: Yes, you should have an annual check-up no matter how old you are. Looking at your overall health, updating your vaccines, screening for cancer, updating your medical record and key health metrics are very important. Pap smears are recommended until age 65 and mammograms until age 75.

Do all women experience the same symptoms during menopause?

A: No, every woman's experience is unique. Some have many symptoms, while others have very few. Common symptoms include hot flashes, night sweats, mood changes, and trouble sleeping.

Thank you, Dr. Madi, for clearing up these myths. Any final advice?

A: My pleasure! I encourage women to educate themselves and talk openly with their providers. Understanding what's happening in your body is the first step to managing it well.

Masterpieces
AND Menopause
with Hala Madi, MD, OB/GYN
September 11
6 p.m. at The Depot in Wadena
Space is limited!
REGISTER NOW
ART BAR 39

Common symptoms of perimenopause:



» **Irregular Periods:** Changes in menstrual cycle length, flow, or frequency.



» **Hot Flashes:** Sudden feelings of warmth, often intense, typically on the upper body.



» **Night Sweats:** Hot flashes that occur during sleep, leading to sweating and discomfort.



» **Mood Changes:** Increased irritability, anxiety, or feelings of sadness.



» **Sleep Problems:** Difficulty falling or staying asleep, often due to night sweats or other hormonal changes.



» **Vaginal Dryness:** Decreased estrogen can cause dryness, itching, or discomfort during intercourse.



» **Decreased Libido:** Lowered interest in sexual activity, sometimes related to vaginal dryness or hormonal changes.



» **Urinary Tract Changes:** The urethra can become dry, irritated or inflamed which can cause more frequent urination or increase risk of urinary tract infections.



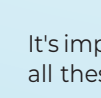
» **Fatigue:** Persistent feelings of tiredness and lack of energy.



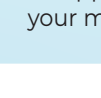
» **Memory Problems:** Difficulty concentrating or remembering things, often referred to as "brain fog."



» **Weight Gain:** Changes in metabolism can lead to increased weight, especially around the abdomen.



» **Hair Changes:** Thinning hair or increased hair loss.



» **Breast Tenderness:** Soreness or discomfort in the breasts.



» **Headaches:** More frequent or severe headaches, often related to hormone fluctuations.

It's important to remember that not all women will experience all these symptoms, and their severity can vary widely. Make an appointment in MyChart with your provider today to start your menopause conversation or call 218-631-3510.

Join us for Masterpieces and Menopause



Create canvas art and discuss menopause with Dr. Hala Madi, MD, OB/GYN.

Appetizers and beverages will be served. \$25 per ticket – space is limited.

SCAN TO REGISTER



Sprains and pain shouldn't keep you from the things you love

Astera Health has expanded its orthopedic offerings! After much demand, a walk-in clinic has been added to better serve the surrounding communities. No need to wait for an appointment! If you have a sudden bone or muscle-related injury, simply stop into ReadyCare to see one of our orthopedic specialists.

Issues we can help with!

- » Ankle sprains and strains
- » Broken bones without open wounds over the fracture location
- » Broken collarbone
- » Dislocations
- » Hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, and shoulder injuries
- » Joint swelling or pain
- » Knee sprains or strains
- » Hand and finger lacerations
- » Lower extremity (foot, ankle, knee, and hip) injuries
- » New injury to a muscle, bone, or joint
- » Sports-related injuries

Orthopedic walk-in care is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. on a first-come, first-served basis. There are no reservations or appointments.

Patients must enter through the ReadyCare/Emergency entrance at the Astera Health Campus. Check-in at the ReadyCare desk.

The Orthopedic Walk-In Clinic is not a substitute for emergency room care. Please dial 9-1-1 or visit the emergency room if you need immediate medical assistance.

Hips, Shoulders, Knees and Woes!



Ben Robertson, MD

Join orthopedic surgeon Dr. Ben Robertson for a journey through the world of orthopedics and joint replacements at Astera Health. Learn more about the services and tools that change lives every day at Astera Health.

September 18 at 6 p.m.

Central Lakes College
Brainerd Campus



**FREE
Event!**

SCAN TO REGISTER



Tooth to Heart: Dental care and the whole body

A trip to the dentist isn't always a fun experience. However, regular visits to the dentist along with routine dental care could save your life. The mouth is the opening to the human body, it's filled with bacteria that aid in digestion and has several other biological functions. Unfortunately, our teeth and gums take a beating. Poor dietary choices and oral hygiene can have widespread negative side effects.

According to Mayo Clinic University, most germs that occupy the mouth don't pose a major threat, but, without regular brushing and flossing, those same bacteria can wreak havoc on the body. It starts with tooth decay and gingivitis but could very well end in a heart condition.

In an article published by the Mayo Clinic, infections starting in the mouth can cause issues in other places like the digestive tract or respiratory system. Notably, the heart and cardiovascular system suffer greatly from poor dental health.

Endocarditis is a major concern for people who forgo dental care. Endocarditis is typically caused by germs spreading from a different part of the body to the heart. It's an inflammation of the inner lining of the heart and can be fatal if left untreated. Experts also suspect that bad dental care can be linked to heart disease and clogged arteries. This could even lead to more severe problems like a stroke.

To prevent cardiovascular complications, it's recommended to brush and floss at least twice a day. See a dentist regularly and avoid tobacco products. It's also important to limit the intake of sugary foods that can accelerate decay.

To learn more about cardiovascular health services or to schedule an appointment with a family medicine provider, please call 218-631-3510.



Welcome new general surgeons

David Stover, MD

Dr. Stover is a new addition to the Astera Health surgical team. He started in May 2024 after working in Fargo for 24 years. He brings a wealth of experience and was very impressed with Astera Health's dedication to patient care. Outside of surgery, Dr. Stover enjoys the outdoors and fishing. He can usually be found enjoying a good book or relaxing by the lake.

Beth Jarrett, MD

Dr. Jarrett started her journey with Astera Health early in July 2024. She enjoys taking a hands-on approach to problem-solving. During medical school, she planned to pursue studies focusing on pediatric genetic diseases but soon fell in love with surgery. Dr. Jarrett gave up the sunny beaches of Hawaii to come back to Minnesota. She loves scuba diving and electronic dance music.



POSTAL CUSTOMER

Mark your calendars!

Upcoming Events

Masterpieces and Menopause – Dr. Hala Madi, OB/GYN

Sept. 11 at 6 p.m. at The Depot, Wadena

Bite Size Conversation – What is Medicare Advantage?

Sept. 16 at 12 p.m. at Astera Health Campus

Hips, Shoulders, Knees and Woes! – Dr. Robertson, Orthopedic Surgeon

Sept. 18 at 6 p.m. at Central Lakes College, Brainerd Campus

3rd Annual Pink Flannel and Fizz

Oct. 4 at 5 p.m. at Astera Health Legacy Campus

Blood Drive

Oct. 7 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Astera Health Campus

Bite Size Conversation – Alicia Elliott – Seasonal Affective Disorder

Oct. 8 at 6 p.m. at Astera Health Campus

Bite Size Conversation – Rehab Staff – Falling Back

Oct. 21 at 12 p.m. at Astera Health Campus

