



CHI Health™

# better you

*IMAGINE THAT.*

Fabulous 40s,  
50s and beyond

Outsmart  
this silent  
killer

Not your  
mother's  
menopause

August 2022  
CHIhealth.com

# Fabulous 40s, 50s and beyond



For years, you've taken care of everyone else. Now it's time to focus on you and your health.

“Along with diet, exercise and sleep, yearly wellness exams are the cornerstone of prevention. A collaborative relationship with a trusted provider is critical – especially as we age,” said Andrea Rabe, APRN, WHNP, CHI Health Women's Health Nurse Practitioner.

Talk to your provider like you would your friends and be honest about what's going on. They can help you navigate this next stage, all the changes, and even highlight things you may have overlooked.

“It's more than menopause and mammograms,” Rabe said. “Bone strength and density hits its peak and starts declining in our 40s. Calcium and vitamin D, which a surprising number of women are deficient in, can minimize bone loss and work to prevent things like osteoporosis.”



Take a short quiz, and find your provider at [MyProviderMatch.com](https://MyProviderMatch.com)

## Hot flashes & blue moods?

Sadness, caused by hormonal dips, is one of the most common emotional symptoms of peri- through post-menopause. Confronting the aging process, wrinkles and all, doesn't help.

“When estrogen levels become imbalanced, so can your mood. New feelings of irritability, aggression, anxiety and especially sadness, can make it hard to cope. It doesn't help that the kids are growing and leaving home. Women are left mourning their youth and trying to find a new sense of purpose amongst all the change,”

said Amanda Stuelpnagel, MD, CHI Health Ob-Gyn.

Hormonal therapy, replacement estrogen/progesterone/progestin in cream, patch or pill form, can be an effective treatment.

“Menopause is natural, but it doesn't have to be unbearable,” Dr. Stuelpnagel said.

If you're increasingly unable to cope, and/or your sadness lasts for more than two weeks, seek help immediately.



[CHIhealth.com/HRT](https://CHIhealth.com/HRT)







# Don't settle for pelvic floor problems

Uncontrollable bladder pain (during urination, bowel movements or intercourse), muscle spasms, urinary and fecal incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse are all common problems women face as they get older.

## Common, but not normal.

“Pelvic floor disorders become more prevalent with age and loss of estrogen. Women think of them as inevitable problems,” said Michael Feloney, MD, CHI Health Urologist/Urogynecologist. “While these issues can be embarrassing to talk about, I promise your provider wants to hear about them and can help you.”

At CHI Health, the Pelvic Health Center has a multidisciplinary team of specialists that includes:

- Ob-Gyns
- Urologists
- Urogynecologists
- Gastroenterologists

- Primary Care Providers
- Registered Dietitians
- Physical & Occupational Therapists
- Mental Health Therapists
- Relationship Therapists
- Surgeons

“This unique model of care is crucial to treating patients holistically,” Dr. Feloney said. “Pelvic floor disorders are multifaceted and can be emotional, and they often require a combination of treatments. We can start with topicals, different therapies, injections, medications and lifestyle changes. There are surgical solutions, but it’s not the only fix.”

The most important thing, Dr. Feloney said, is not to suffer in silence.

“These are quality of life issues and they can be managed or even reversed. Just because our grandmas wore adult diapers, doesn’t mean women today have to. Be honest with your providers about what’s working, and what isn’t.”

In just five minutes, you can take control of your health. Scan the QR Code to take the pelvic health risk assessment.



## Physical therapy... down there

Like all muscle groups, the pelvic floor sometimes needs help to function properly. CHI Health has specialized physical therapists who understand the sensitive and private nature of these disorders. Treatment techniques are controlled by you and based entirely on your comfort level.



“We spend a lot of appointment time educating patients. We have 3D models to help them visualize the problems and understand the process of treating them,” said Kelly Fairfield, PT, CHI Health Pelvic Health Navigator and Physical Therapist.



Curious about pelvic floor rehabilitation and what to expect from a physical therapy session? Check out our patient’s guide: [CHIhealth.com/PTGuide](https://CHIhealth.com/PTGuide)

Don’t delay the care you need. Call 402-717-7358 to speak with our dedicated Pelvic Health Navigator.

# Let's beat breast cancer



## It's the most common cancer among women, but the prognosis keeps improving.

"Updates in research and care have improved outcomes at all stages," said Paige Harwell, MD, CHI Health Breast Surgeon. "But if we catch it early, stage 0-1, there's a 99 percent chance that with treatment, you'll be cancer free in five years."

That's why experts stress that women over 40, with average risk, should have a mammogram screening at least once a year.

"Don't wait until you feel a lump," Dr. Harwell said. "Our mammograms can detect masses so small you might not even be able to feel it yet."

On the flip side, Dr. Harwell stresses that women who do feel a lump should call their provider immediately, and

not wait until their annual screening.

"If it's cancer, it will evolve whether you know your diagnosis or not," Dr. Harwell said. "We know it's scary to find out, but it's even riskier to not know."

When detected early on, a less invasive lumpectomy may be all that's needed to remove the tumor. Once cancer has grown and spread, more invasive surgeries and chemotherapy may be required.


"No one is too busy for a mammogram," Dr. Harwell said. "Because if the alternative is late stage cancer treatment, a mammogram is a small interruption to your life."

Find out how your lifestyle and medical history may put you at risk for breast cancer. Scan the QR Code to take the breast cancer health risk assessment now!



## Screenings save lives

"Screenings and prevention recommendations can vary based on your personal risk level," said Carla Church, DO, CHI Health Family Medicine Provider. "That's why your annual wellness exams are important, because aside from the basics like your weight and blood pressure, that's when we learn about your lifestyle, family and medical history. From there we can figure out your risks and create a personalized prevention plan."

 **For women of all ages, Dr. Church suggests the following annually:**

- Full physical
- Fasting labs to test blood sugar, liver and kidney function, cholesterol
- Gynecological assessment
- Mental health exam
- Update vaccinations: COVID-19, shingles, flu

 **Screenings based on age and average risk level:**

- Diabetes: 35-45 years old
- Breast Cancer: 40-50 years old
- Colon Cancer: 45 years old
- Bone Density: around 65 years old

Screenings and prevention don't have to break the bank, visit: [MDSave.com/CHIhealth](https://MDSave.com/CHIhealth) for ways to save!



# Ovarian cancer: Outsmart this silent killer

Unlike other cancers, there is no early detection test for ovarian cancer.

This disease impacts an estimated 1 in 78 women, which is why it's so important to listen to your body, schedule regular doctor's appointments, know your family history and understand what symptoms to look out for.

"Make sure your Ob-Gyn or primary care provider is aware of all the symptoms you're experiencing so they can help you understand what's normal and what's not normal," said Lesley Conrad, MD, CHI Health Gynecologic Oncologist.

If any of the following are new and unusual for you, and have occurred for more than two weeks, it's time to make an appointment:

- Bloating
- Difficulty eating

- Pelvic/abdominal pain
- Urinary frequency or difficulty
- Menstrual irregularities

A number of risk factors are unavoidable, like a family history of cancer, certain genetic markers and aging/menopause. It's important to maintain a healthy weight because obesity has also been shown to increase your risk of ovarian cancer, among other diseases.

Experts stress that while these risk factors may increase your chances of developing the disease, it's not a guarantee. Women with no known risk factors may also get ovarian cancer.

"Every woman should be mindful, because the earlier we can diagnose ovarian cancer, the more likely we are to have a cure through the treatment we provide."

 [CHIhealth.com/OvarianCancer](https://CHIhealth.com/OvarianCancer)



## Find peace of mind in your DNA



While most cancers develop randomly or because of environmental factors and lifestyle choices, we know five to 10 percent of all cancers are hereditary. Genetic mutations can be passed down through generations, and identifying them early could save your life.

"Getting tested is not meant to scare people," said Kate Hunley, APRN, WHNP-BC, CHI Health Genetics Counselor and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner. "It's intended to be empowering, to be something you can act upon so that cancer doesn't have to be your fate."

Whether your results show a need for earlier or more frequent testing,

targeted therapies or preventative surgeries, CHI Health has genetics counseling teams across the state to help you make sense of your options, and develop a plan that's right for you.



**Call to learn more, and make an appointment today:**

**Omaha/Council Bluffs**  
402.398.6071

**Kearney**  
308.865.7985 ext 5

**Lincoln**  
402.219.5080

**Grand Island**  
308.398.5450



# Take the mystery out of menopause

You can probably remember the time your mom had “the talk” with you - the one about your period. Or maybe it was an awkward health class. For a lot of girls, someone was there to explain this monthly event. But can you remember ever having a talk about menopause?

“You don’t have to suffer in silence like women used to do,” said Melissa Lambert, WHNP, CHI Health Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner. “If you’re not managing it well or having symptoms, your provider wants to help you get through that.”

## Walk the journey with your Women’s Health Provider

For women about to go through this phase of life, understanding why your body goes through it can take the mystery out of menopause.

“Menopause is what happens when your ovaries run out of eggs. The follicles are gone, they are used up and your ovaries can no longer produce estrogen and progesterone,” said Molly Beran, MD, CHI Health Ob-Gyn.

According to Dr. Beran, the average age of menopause is 51, but women can experience it up to 10 years before or after that.

“Most women are going through it between 45 and 55, and the menopausal transition itself takes place over three to five years,” Dr. Beran said.

A woman is considered to be menopausal when she's gone at least 12 months without a menstrual cycle. But what about the time in between?

Perimenopause is the phase in which symptoms start happening – like the hot flashes or irregular periods we've all heard about. As Lambert explains, those symptoms start when your hormone levels change.

“When estrogen levels get lower, women may experience hot flashes, brain fog, irritability and vaginal dryness,” Lambert said. “If these symptoms are happening all the time to the point where they're disrupting life or causing issues with daily activities, that's when I like to discuss medication or other options with my patients.”

One of the most common treatment options is hormone replacement therapy, or HRT. For some women, taking a combination of estrogen and progesterone can provide relief. For women who have had a hysterectomy, estrogen can alleviate symptoms. Antidepressants can also help decrease hot flashes in certain cases.

The female body is complex, but menopause doesn't have to be. Making your health a priority is the first step in getting through it.

“If you want to be healthy in menopause, you have to be healthy in your daily life,” Dr. Beran said.

Talking to close family, friends and your women's health provider is also an essential step in making sure you keep feeling like you.

“We're here to give advice and help with medications and symptoms that come along,” Lambert said. “It's a natural process – but that doesn't mean it's an easy process. You're not alone.”

 [CHIhealth.com/Menopause](https://CHIhealth.com/Menopause)

## Win the weight battle

For women going through menopause, lower estrogen levels can make it hard to stay lean or lose weight.

“You can be in control of how you feel,” said Lauren Anderson, MD, CHI Health Ob-Gyn. “Weight challenges can seem like an uphill battle, but know that the change has to start with you.”



### Eat good, feel good

- Research shows a plant-based diet or the Mediterranean diet can be largely beneficial for women going through menopause.

#### Fuel up:



Protein - Shoot for 1.0 g/kg/day with seafood, chicken, eggs, full-fat cheese, legumes



Whole Grains - Brown rice, quinoa, farro, oats, whole grain pastas



Non-starchy vegetables - Broccoli, cauliflower, carrots



Healthy fats - Olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, hummus



Fruits - A wide variety - get antioxidants from blueberries, cranberries, raspberries



Supplements - Calcium (1200 mg a day), Vitamin D (2000 IU a day), Omega-2 (8 oz per week), increase intake of vitamin C, vitamin E

#### Drink up:



Your body needs at least half of your body weight in ounces of water daily!

#### Pass up:



Fried foods, highly processed foods, simple carbs like chips, crackers, cookies, white pastas, juices high in sugar

### Out-muscle menopause symptoms

Exercise is especially important in women over 40 as it helps offset some of the hormonal changes that come with perimenopause.

30 minutes x 5 days a week of moderate to intense aerobic exercise



- Walk, jog, swim, bike, exercise classes, high intensity interval training

Strength training x 2 days a week



- Weight training
- Resistance training

Incorporate flexibility activities



- Yoga
- Stretching



Want more from our menopause experts? Search “CHI Health Better You” on whatever platform you listen to podcasts on for our 8 part series.



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## Hospital Locations

### NEBRASKA

#### Grand Island

CHI Health St. Francis

#### Kearney

CHI Health Good Samaritan

#### Lincoln

CHI Health St. Elizabeth

CHI Health Nebraska Heart

#### Nebraska City

CHI Health St. Mary's

#### Omaha

CHI Health Creighton  
University Medical Center  
- Bergan Mercy

CHI Health Immanuel

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CHI Health Plainview

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CHI Health Schuyler

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CHI Health Mercy Corning

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CHI Health Mercy  
Council Bluffs

#### Missouri Valley

CHI Health Missouri Valley

[CHIhealth.com](http://CHIhealth.com)

# What do women want? Care when you need it.

Weekend UTI? A new symptom causing concern? You don't have to wait. CHI Health Clinic has options that fit your busy lifestyle.

### *Same-day appointments!*

#### CHI Health Clinic

Call and see a provider on the same day.

[CHIhealth.com/women](http://CHIhealth.com/women)

### *No appointment needed!*

#### CHI Health Clinic Priority Care (8 am-8 pm daily)

Walk-in and never pay more than a regular office visit, including copays.

[CHIhealth.com/priority-care](http://CHIhealth.com/priority-care)

### *24/7 care from anywhere!*

#### CHI Health Virtual Quick Care

Consultations/prescriptions for minor illnesses.

[CHIhealth.com/virtual](http://CHIhealth.com/virtual)

402.717.1255

### *Looking for a Women's Health provider?*

Choose a provider close to where you live or work!

Your perfect match is just a few clicks away.

Take the short quiz on [MyProviderMatch.com](http://MyProviderMatch.com)

to find a provider that fits your needs.

