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HEALTH & BEAUTY

ASK THE

What is a viable, non-invasive way to get rid of unwanted body fat that does not respond to diet and exercise?



Amy Derick, MD

Body contouring is an excellent and safe choice for relatively fit people who, despite their commitment to healthy eating and regular exercise, still have love handles, back or belly fat and other unwanted lumps and bulges. The latest body contouring option is CoolSculpting by Zeltiq™, a technique that re-shapes bodies non-invasively – without recovery time, incisions or scars and with minimal pain. CoolSculpting uses an FDA-approved, scientifically proven technique called Cryolipolysis, which freezes and permanently destroys fat cells. An applicator delivers tailored cooling to the skin's surface that breaks down fat cells that are then gradually eliminated through the body's metabolism. During treatments, my patients often feel so comfortable, they read a book or take business calls. Most patients will see natural-looking body contouring in two to four months. This alternative has proven to be successful for numerous patients who wish to remove body fat without invasive surgery.

Amy Derick, MD, Medical and Cosmetic Dermatologist

My mother's walking style has changed and she appears off balance. What might be the problem?



Gail Rosseau, MD

If your aging parent is unsteady, has trouble with memory or even urinary incontinence, these signs may indicate a treatable condition. Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus is a disorder that affects people in their 60s and beyond, and is the result of an imbalance between the production and absorption of spinal fluid in the brain. The symptoms appear slowly, most often over a period of four years or more. Their gait becomes wide based and shuffling, and patients may complain that they feel as if their feet are "stuck to the floor." If these symptoms occur, patients or their family members should ask their doctor for an imaging study, CAT scan or MRI to rule out hydrocephalus. If this is confirmed, the patient should be referred to a neurosurgeon for further testing and definitive treatment.

Gail Rosseau, MD, F.A.C.S., NorthShore University HealthSystem Neurological Institute

I often have a hard time following the doctor's orders. It seems like the needles, drugs, tests and diet restrictions are actually worse than any disease. How can I make my doctor's appointments less painful for both of us?



Monica Peek, MD

A good doctor believes she is setting you up with a plan to help you live better. Ignoring that council will make her think you're not committed to your own care. Sadly, communication problems are widespread in medicine – not just in your primary care visit but also in every kind of clinical encounter, from the emergency room to cancer care. Any time a doctor asks you to change your lifestyle in a difficult way, prescribes medicines you can't afford or orders a test you don't want, speak up immediately. Rather than silently agree and then ignore the advice, ask if there are equally effective alternatives. There are many ways to stay healthy. If you can share in the decision-making process, you are more likely to feel an ownership of your doctor's recommendations. And, you're more likely to stay healthy in the long run.

Monica Peek, MD, General Internist, University of Chicago Medical Center

EXPERT

What can I do today to improve my heart health?



Lynne Braun, Ph.D

Heart disease is the number one killer of women, but there are many things you can do to make sure you stay in good health. The American Heart Association has identified seven steps to live a heart-healthy life: get active, eat better, control cholesterol, manage blood pressure, lose weight, reduce your blood sugar and if you smoke, stop. Visit www.heart.org/MyLifeCheck to take the AHA's free heart-health assessment. Your results will show where you stand on the seven recommended areas of focus and you can choose an action plan to fit your lifestyle and goals.

Lynne Braun, PhD, CNP, FAHA, Nurse Practitioner, Heart Center for Women, Rush University Medical Center

I have been told that my eggs are "too old" and I may need an egg donor to conceive. How common is that and how does it work?



Jane Nani, MD

While almost all women are fertile when young, fewer and fewer women retain their fertility as they approach their late 30s and early 40s due to the deterioration of egg quality and quantity as age increases. A woman is born with over a million eggs, has roughly 300,000 by puberty, and 300 of those will become mature and be released in ovulation. If you do not have viable eggs, egg donation may be the best and only option. An egg donor cycle is very similar to traditional IVF except that eggs are retrieved from a donor. Eggs are then fertilized with sperm from the intended parent father to make embryos, which are then transferred to the uterus of the intended parent mother. Egg donors are carefully screened, selected and matched with the assistance of specialized health professionals.

Jane Nani, MD, Fertility Centers of Illinois

What can I do to prepare my skin for the harsh winter weather?



Vesna Petronic-Rosic, MD

When the temperatures change, a change in your skin care routine is also necessary to maintain its overall health. Avoid long, hot showers because, although they feel good, they have a drying effect on the skin. Apply moisturizer every day to your entire body, one that is creamy and thick to help lock in the moisture. If you choose a moisturizer with retinol or lactic acid, regular use will keep the flakiness down in the long run, as well. Be sure to still put sunscreen on the exposed body parts; an SPF 15 or 30 should suffice. Lip balm or lipstick, both with at least an SPF 15, will protect the lips. Beware of licking them when they are dry; it will only make the problem worse.

Vesna Petronic-Rosic, MD, MSc, Associate Professor and Clinic Director, University of Chicago Section of Dermatology ■

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