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# Focus on Health

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## Fewer Wrinkles

A recent study of some 3800 women at UCLA showed that those who took estrogen were 25% less likely to have dry skin than non-users and had 30% fewer wrinkles.

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Watch for special  
issue about  
estrogen and  
progesterone  
studies.

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## Healthview Colon Scan

Ultrafast CAT scans to screen for colon cancer (virtual colonoscopy) passed muster in the first multicenter study to assess it, but just barely. The scans, which require the same bowel prep as a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy, were generally accurate in detecting polyps 8 mm. or larger, but they missed the majority of polyps 5 mm. or smaller. The clinical significance of missing small lesions has yet to be determined.

## Non-Oral Estrogen Is No Risk for Increased Blood Clots

A review of the literature reveals no evidence of an increased risk of blood clots (thrombosis or thromboembolism) in non oral estrogen users as compared to controls. Non-oral estrogen (Estradiol cream, pellets, or patches) does not get a "first pass" through the liver, which adversely effects blood clotting factors. Oral estrogen (Premarin, certain birth control pills, Estrace) does increase the tendency toward blood clotting, and it is dose related. The higher the dose of oral estrogen, the greater the risk.

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## Women's Symptoms of Heart Disease

Early symptoms of heart disease in women differ from those of men, but are similar in both white and black women. The most common five symptoms are fatigue, sleep disturbance, shortness of breath, indigestion, and anxiety. All these symptoms are also very common in women with hormone imbalance. A health view (ultra-fast CAT Scan) around age 40 picks out those women whose symptoms may mean heart disease rather than hormone imbalance.

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## Rising Drug Costs

The high price of prescription drugs in the United States continues to be an ever increasing problem. Drug companies are spending 3 billion dollars a year on ads aimed at the public rather than the prescribers, and passing that cost on to consumers. Pharmaceutical manufacturers maintain that this media exposure educates consumers about treatment options. However, a 30 second ad is incomplete and may be misleading.

As part of the professional services I feel should be provided by me to my patients, screening of the voluminous medical literature has become more and more important. Please read this now if you have time before I see you, so that we can further discuss whichever topic especially interests you.

Perhaps you have seen an item that I have not included in this list or have not seen myself. If so, feel free to bring it to my attention.

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