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# Focus on Health

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John R. Woodward, M.D.,P.A.  
Gynecologic Endocrinology,  
Gynecologic Urology

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## FIBROIDS AND HYSTERECTOMY

**B**y the age of 50, 70% of white women and 90% of African American women have uterine leiomyomas (fibroids). A researcher likened widespread use of hysterectomy for fibroids to “chopping off the patient’s head to treat headaches or brain tumors”.

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## YEAST INFECTION?

**A** study from North Carolina indicates that most women with vulvar itching and burning do not have candida (yeast) infections. This is the reason that telephone diagnosis and treatment of patients with chronic complaints of itching, burning, and inflammation should be avoided. Allergic, contact, or irritant dermatitis is more likely the culprit.

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.

John R. Woodward, M.D.,P.A.  
7777 Forest Lane, Suite A338  
Dallas, Texas 75230  
(972) 566-7870

## BREAST CANCER AND "STATIN" DRUGS LINKED

**A** large new study from the University of Pittsburgh shows that “statin” drugs (Lipitor, Pravachol, Zocor, etc.) not only lower cholesterol levels and heart attack risk, they also decrease the risk of developing breast cancer by three-fourths. Users of other cholesterol lowering drugs such as Niacin were two thirds less likely to develop breast cancer.

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## DARK CHOCOLATE, DARK WINE AND NOW DARK BEER

**L**ike chocolate and wine, the darker the beer the better it may be for your heart, according to a University of Wisconsin study. Guinness Stout, a dark beer, proved to be about twice as effective as Heineken, a light beer, at preventing blood platelets from clumping and initiating clots. The beneficial effect comes from flavonoids which are antioxidants. Optimal effect occurs at a blood alcohol level of 0.06%. At 0.08%, one is legally drunk. The other downside? The extra calories from beer, wine, and chocolate could increase the incidence of obesity, a risk factor in itself. An unrelated study at Harvard Medical School may explain the so-called French paradox, the fact that the French do well despite a high fat, high calorie, high carbohydrate intake. A chemical called resveratrol found in red wine, appears to mimic a low calorie diet, and could extend life expectancy by 30% if used as a medication.

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## WEIGHT GAIN AND BIRTH CONTROL

**T**he latest article on hormone contraception (birth control pills) and obesity states that a comprehensive literature search of studies does not support a causal association of birth control pills with weight gain, although there have been recurrent anecdotal reports to the contrary.

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