



Module 1: General Overview

The Ob/Gyn Alliance *Ask the Experts* series is supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Xanodyne Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

BACKGROUND

Statistics indicate that two-thirds of Americans are overweight (BMI of 25 or more) or obese (BMI of 30 or more), providing evidence for how important it is for healthcare providers to address weight management with their patients. The need for education on women and nutrition is also evident in recent health statistics. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, unhealthy eating and inactivity cause between 310,000 – 580,000 deaths every year (McGinnis JM, Foege WH. "Actual Causes of Death in the United States." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1993, vol. 270, no. 18, pp 2207-2212).

To meet this growing need, the *Ask the Experts* series is designed to assist the Ob/Gyn physician in making a positive impact on the weight management and nutrition of their female patients by providing relevant and important information on women and nutrition in all life stages.

In a recent Ob/Gyn Alliance survey, physician members were asked to rank topics related to nutrition and women's health. The survey indicated that weight management is the primary topic of concern for physicians, followed by optimal diet, menopause, metabolic syndrome and pregnancy. The *Ask the Expert* series will address these topics and more. For example, nutrition becomes increasingly important when a woman becomes pregnant. This series will address the specific recommendations for women who are pregnant, including folic acid and iron requirements. Additionally, it will highlight recommendations for Omega-3 supplementation during pregnancy. According to the Ob/Gyn Alliance nutrition survey, only 36% of Ob/Gyn physicians prescribe Omega-3 within their practice.

Ob/Gyn Alliance members will benefit from the clinical knowledge and experience of the *Ask the Expert* series authors, Dr. Andrea Lukes and Beth Reardon -- two experts who are dedicated to nutritional education, particularly as it relates to women's health and pregnancy (see "Author Information") -- as well as the opportunity to ask questions of the expert panel at the end of each program module.

WHAT PHYSICIANS NEED TO KNOW

Physicians need nutrition information and education that enables them to engage and partner with their patients to promote a healthy lifestyle. Each month, the *Ask the Experts* series will feature guidelines, tips, and statistics to help physicians effectively educate, treat and refer their patients on a specific topic. Based on the Ob/Gyn Alliance survey results, these topics are as follows:

- Women and Nutrition - A General Overview
- Optimal Diet
- Weight Management

- Heart Disease
- Metabolic Syndrome
- Osteoporosis
- Mood Issues/Depression
- Breast physical condition
- Pregnancy
- Menopause
- Chronic Fatigue/Malaise
- Supplements

The *Ask the Experts* series will provide Ob/Gyn physicians with the tools and resources they need to make a positive impact on the health of their female patients.

WHAT PATIENTS NEED TO KNOW

Patients need simple, but comprehensive information on how they can modify their lifestyle to impact their weight management and overall health. As the *Ask the Expert* series progresses, practical information will be provided on each topic for you to share with your patients. To get started, try suggesting these few easy guidelines to help your patient maintain a healthy lifestyle:

- Consume a diet that is composed of wholesome, plant-based foods that is high in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Minimize the intake of refined and processed foods; particularly those containing hydrogenated and trans fats.
- Remember to eat mindfully and chew food thoroughly. Most American do not chew their food enough, releasing enzymes that promote healthy digestion.
- Moderation is key. Smaller, more frequent meals are recommended. Prepare healthful snacks for the home, car and office. Individuals tend to overeat and are more inclined to make poor choices when they are hungry.

ASK THE EXPERTS

At the end of each topic, we encourage members to *Ask the Experts*. To ask a question related to this or any future series topic, [click here](#) to submit an email to Dr. Lukes and Ms. Reardon.

Author Information:

B. Reardon and A. Lukes both serve on the Council for Nutrition created in 2006 and supported by Xanodyne Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Both are dedicated to education regarding nutrition, particularly as it relates to women's health and pregnancy.

Beth Reardon, MS, RD, LDN is the Director of Integrative Nutrition at the Carolina Women's Research and Wellness Center in Durham, NC. She is also an Integrative Nutritionist through Duke Integrative Medicine. She has published numerous articles relating to nutrition including ways to achieve optimal pregnancy outcomes through nutritional intervention.

Andrea Lukes, MD, MHSc, FACOG is the Founder and Chair of the Ob/Gyn Alliance. She has partnered with Beth Reardon to help create an educational channel for both providers and patients (TV segment in 2008 on Oxygen and ABC, formation of a Healthy Lifestyle Changes program through her private practice and research center - the Carolina Women's Research and Wellness Center). Dr. Lukes chaired a roundtable discussion among experts on prenatal nutrition in May, 2008, which will be featured for CME credit on CBCE (Beth Reardon and John Thorp, MD were invited faculty).