

Spirit of WOMEN'S HEALTH

THE FOURTH IN A FIVE-PART HEALTH SERIES



by Andrea Kahn

As a woman, caring for yourself can often take a backseat to caring for others.

Between work, kids, and aging parents, there may seem to be no space for yourself. With each passing year, however, the risks of health problems—from breast cancer to heart disease to spinal problems—increase. And in the end, the only way to truly be there for others is to be there for yourself.



OCTOBER: BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

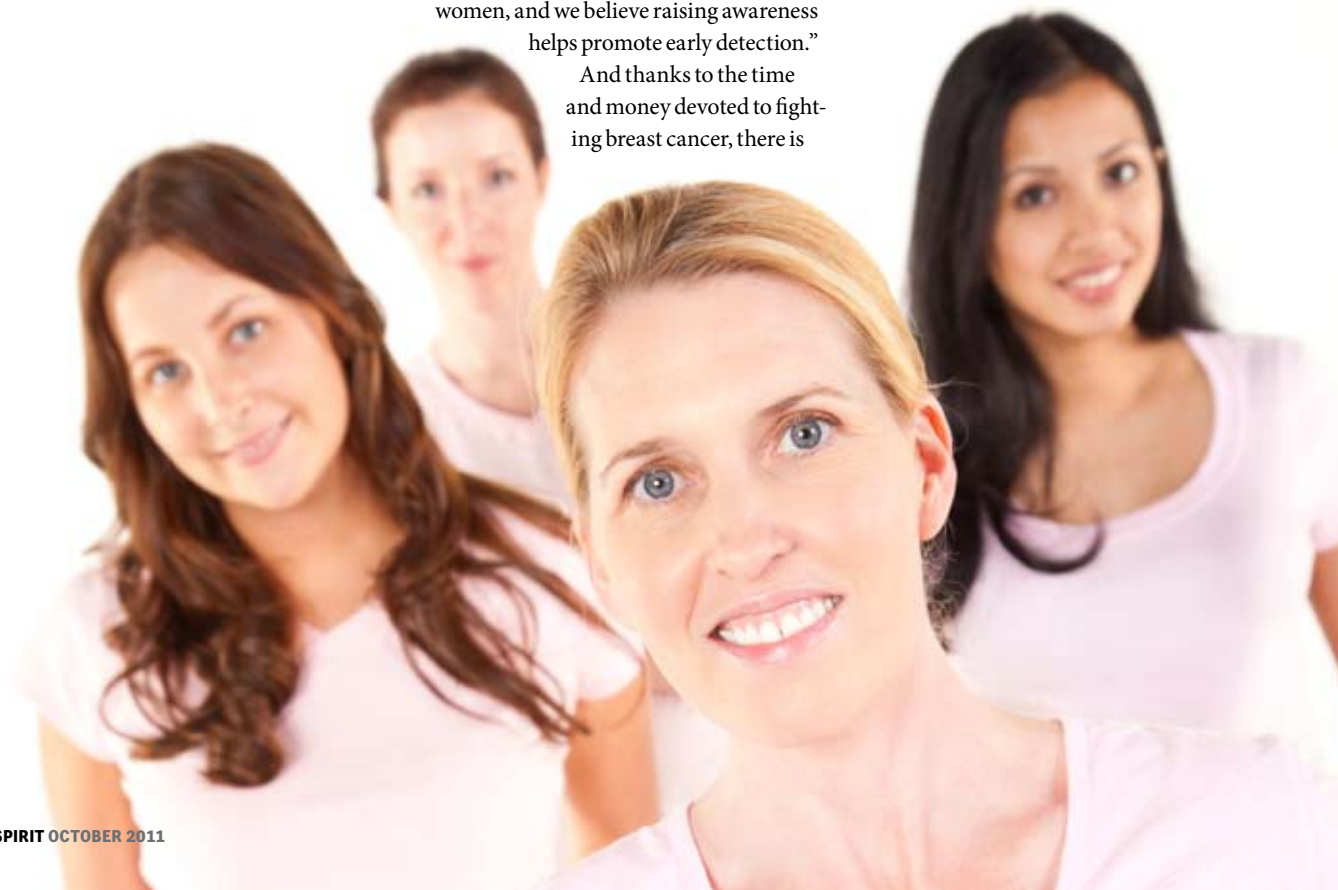
Most of us know breast cancer's grim statistics: The chance of a woman having invasive breast cancer at some time during her life is about one in eight, according to the American Cancer Society. This year alone, about 39,520 women are expected to die from the disease.

There is good news, however, as people across the nation galvanize to battle the deadly disease. For National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, you can find the symbol of the fight against breast cancer—the pink ribbon—on everything from clothes and shoes to yogurt and cat litter. Oil-Dri, makers of Jonny Cat® and Cat's Pride® litters, which boasts a pink ribbon sticker on its products through October, donates money to the Coleman Foundation Comprehensive Breast Cancer Center at Rush Hospital in Chicago, where the company is based. "We are cat lovers, but we are people lovers too, which is why we got behind this cause," says Jayne Weiske, consumer marketing and product manager. "Our consumers are primarily women, and we believe raising awareness helps promote early detection."

And thanks to the time and money devoted to fighting breast cancer, there is

constant progress. One exciting advancement: A revolutionary technology, used in Europe, has recently become available in the United States. The Intraoperative Radiation Therapy, or IORT Novac7, allows patients to receive one dose of radiation during surgery, as opposed to multiple radiation treatments over several weeks. "IORT has many advantages, including the ability to destroy microscopic tumor cells left behind by surgery before the cells have a chance to divide or migrate to other areas of the body," says Oneita Taylor, M.D., a radiation oncologist at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Tulsa, Oklahoma, one of only a handful of hospitals in the nation to offer Novac7. "Also, the radiation is applied directly to affected tissue, helping to avoid exposure to healthy tissue."

There are also great strides being made in breast reconstruction following a mastectomy. A traditional mastectomy leaves a scar across the reconstructed breast and removes the nipple and areola. The



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nipple-sparing mastectomy, which has only recently become accessible to most mastectomy patients, preserves the breast skin and nipple area, leaving no ugly scar. Breast tissue is removed while the “shell” of skin is left behind. The envelope is then micro-surgically filled with tissue from the abdomen or buttocks—providing immediate reconstruction at the time of the mastectomy explains Frank J. DellaCroce, M.D. of the Center for Restorative Breast Surgery in New Orleans.

BREAST CANCER PREVENTION: REDUCE YOUR RISK

An ounce of prevention, of course, is worth a pound of cure. Most women know to get their annual mammogram after age 40. But while

mammograms can detect early stages of cancer, they don’t prevent it. Prevention begins with various factors you can control. “Eat a healthy diet loaded with fruits and vegetables,” recommends Steven F. Hotze, M.D., founder of The Hotze Health & Wellness Center in Katy, Texas and author of the book *“Hormones, Health, & Happiness.”* Hotze points to The China Study, which found a strikingly lower rate of breast cancer among those eating primarily plant based-food. “Taking other proactive measures like balancing your hormones with bioidentical hormones, daily exercise, maintaining optimal vitamin D levels, and eliminating toxins, have all been shown to dramatically reduce a woman’s risk,” Hotze adds.

Take these additional steps to reduce your risk of developing breast cancer:

- **Limit alcohol.** The more alcohol you drink, the greater your risk of developing breast cancer.
- **Control your weight.** Being overweight increases the risk of breast cancer. This is especially true if weight gain occurs later in life, particularly after menopause.
- **Breastfeed.** The longer you breast-feed, the greater the protective effect.
- **Avoid exposure to environmental pollution.** Some research suggests a link between breast cancer and exposure to vehicle exhaust and air pollution.

[Source: Mayo Clinic]



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NAVIGATING PERIMENOPAUSE

Women know all too well the power of hormones. From puberty to pregnancy to childbirth to menopause, the emotional and physical changes caused by hormonal fluctuations can be huge. Women may not realize, however, that declining hormones in the years leading up to menopause can wreak havoc on their mind and body.

“From the late 30s until a woman reaches menopause is an interesting time for a woman’s body,” says Andrea Klemes, D.O., an endocrinologist and medical director of MDVIP, a national network of physicians that offers an alternative to traditional healthcare, focusing on personalized preventive care and long-term wellness. Menopause is, officially, the time when a woman has not had a period for a year. Perimenopause—the years leading up to menopause, when a woman’s body

slowly makes less and less of the hormones estrogen and progesterone—can go on for months or years. “Women may ignore the symptoms of hormonal changes in perimenopause—moodiness, weight gain, sleep problems, sexual dysfunction,” notes Klemes. “But it’s an important time to sit down with your doctor and look at what’s happening.”

Estrogen protects pre-menopausal women from heart disease. When estrogen begins to decline, the risk of heart disease skyrockets; the most common form of death in post-menopausal women, in fact, is heart attack. Bone density also begins to decrease as do vitamin D levels, making it important to get a bone density scan and make sure your vitamin D levels are adequate. Thyroid disease is also more common in this age group.

Not all uncomfortable symptoms during this time can necessarily be attributed

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PERIMENOPAUSE

During the perimenopausal period some subtle—and some not-so-subtle—changes in your body may occur. Some things you might experience include:

- **Menstrual irregularity.** Early perimenopause is defined as a change in your menstrual cycle length of more than seven days. Late perimenopause is characterized by two or more missed periods and an interval of 60 days or more between periods.
- **Vaginal and bladder problems.** Low estrogen levels may leave you more vulnerable to urinary or vaginal infections. Loss of tissue tone may contribute to urinary incontinence.
- **Decreasing fertility.** As ovulation becomes irregular, your ability to conceive decreases. However, as long as you’re having periods, pregnancy remains a

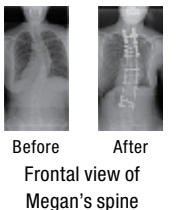


REAL PATIENTS. REAL STORIES.

“With a *straighter spine*, I’m a more flexible mom.”



After years of crippling pain from scoliosis, Megan Wygocki had enough. “I was having trouble breathing. I couldn’t play with my kids. At times I couldn’t even get out of bed,” she says. Finally, Megan went to the Baylor Scoliosis Center. “It took me 15 years to find a doctor, but only 15 minutes to trust him,” she says. At Baylor, posterior spinal fusion surgery straightened her spine. “For the first time,” she says, “I could walk my son to school. Now, simple things make me extremely happy.”



For more information, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit www.TheBaylorScoliosisCenter.com.

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possibility. If you wish to avoid pregnancy, use birth control until you've had no periods for 12 months.

- **Loss of bone.** With declining estrogen levels, you start to lose bone more quickly than you replace it, increasing your risk of osteoporosis.
- **Changing cholesterol levels.** Declining estrogen levels may lead to unfavorable changes in your blood cholesterol levels, including an increase in low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol—the “bad” cholesterol—which contributes to an increased risk of heart disease. At the same time, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol—the “good” cholesterol—decreases in many women as they age, which also increases the risk of heart disease.

SCOLIOSIS WARNING SIGNS

There are several different signs to help determine if you or someone you love has scoliosis. Should you notice any one or more of these signs, schedule an exam with a doctor.

- Shoulders are different heights—one shoulder blade is more prominent than the other
- Head is not centered directly above the pelvis
- Appearance of a raised, prominent hip
- Rib cages are at different heights
- Changes in look or texture of skin overlying the spine (dimples, hairy patches, color changes)
- Leaning of entire body to one side

You want, of course, to feel as good and as strong as possible, every day—for yourself, as well as for others. Whether it means eating a healthier diet and starting an exercise regimen, getting more sleep, or consulting a doctor about your specific health issues, each time you take a positive step in caring for yourself, you're making strides toward a more vibrant—and longer—life.

to perimenopause. Heavy or irregular bleeding may well be a sign of declining hormones—or of a polyp or uterine cancer. Make sure to check with your doctor to find out exactly what's going on.

“A woman may be feeling anxious or tired because she's doing too much, and needs to prioritize,” says Klemes. “Or it could be her hormones. It's important to figure out what's causing the symptoms.”

Exercise, especially the weight-bearing kind, can naturally increase depleted hormones such as testosterone and lower stress hormone levels. Also consider antidepressants, which have been shown to help with hot flashes and anxiety.

Lila Nachtigall, M.D., director of the women's wellness program at New York University Langone Medical Center and professor of obstetrics and gynecology at New York University Langone Medical Center, says that hormone therapy (HT) is the safest and most effective treatment for the many symptoms of menopause, adding that 80 percent of women need HT for only about two years to relieve symptoms. “HT also helps to protect bones, the biggest loss of which occurs during the five years after menopause,” she says.

Women who should not take estrogen plus progestin for menopause are those who have had estrogen-dependent breast cancer, those with a previous history of clotting or who have had a stroke or heart attack.

Get your *life* back!

Women should feel healthy, vibrant and strong throughout their adult lives. If you have been told “*it's in your head*” or “*live with it*,” read on.

MAGGIE'S STORY

Maggie came to Hotze Health & Wellness Center after suffering for seven years from depression and fatigue, which developed after giving birth to her second child. She also had a lifelong history of cold hands and feet and sensitivity to cold. She was experiencing significant hair loss, was constipated and had severe muscle aches. Even after sleep, Maggie never felt rested.

Maggie had experienced recurrent sinus infections and headaches over the past seven years, for which she had taken antibiotics. She also complained of recurrent abdominal cramping and bloating associated with the ingestion of sugar and bread products, which she craved.

Since her last pregnancy, Maggie's menstrual cycles had been irregular. She had gained 30 pounds over the past seven years and had difficulty losing weight. She had lost all sexual desire, and felt that she was in a “brain fog.”

Maggie had sought the care of numerous physicians. They told her that she was “depressed” and prescribed antidepressants. A friend of hers, who was a patient at Hotze Health & Wellness Center, told her that there was a natural alternative treatment for her problems, so Maggie came to us for an evaluation.



MAGGIE'S TREATMENT

Maggie's name could easily be erased from her chart and replaced with the names of thousands of other women in midlife whom we have evaluated. Maggie had been made to feel by her doctor that she was a hypochondriac and emotionally inadequate. We explained to her that her symptoms were very common to women in her age group and were easily treated. She had an imbalance in her female hormones that adversely affected her body's ability to use thyroid hormones. It was the change in her hormones that triggered her allergy disorder, which in turn led to recurrent sinus infections. The antibiotics which she had taken for her infections also killed normal bacteria in her body and allowed yeast problems to occur.

Maggie was prescribed natural bioidentical hormones, natural thyroid supplementation, and was treated for allergies with sublingual immunizing drops given under the tongue daily. Within two months, Maggie's depression and fatigue had disappeared. She was able to discontinue her antidepressants. She told us, “I have not felt this good in years. Thank you for giving me my life back!”

IF YOU ARE SICK AND TIRED OF FEELING SICK AND TIRED, then contact the Hotze Health & Wellness Center today to see if we can help. It would be our privilege to serve you.

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MANAGING “THE CHANGE”

Taking care of yourself is especially important during the ups and downs of perimenopause. Here are some tips to help you feel your best:

CUT OUT COFFEE

A study at Duke University Medical Center reports that people who drink four or more cups of coffee a day showed elevated blood pressure and significantly higher levels of stress hormones all day and into the evening. Caffeine in excess can destroy the adrenal glands' ability to regulate stress hormone levels, particularly during menopause. Try substituting with decaf coffee and herbal teas.

TAKE YOUR VITAMINS

All menopausal and post-menopausal women should be taking a multivitamin along with extra vitamin D and calcium to strengthen bones—a woman over 50 should get at least 800 units of vitamin D daily. Studies have also found that women who took vitamin D with calcium are less likely to gain weight during menopause.

LIGHTEN UP

Watch a funny movie, or better yet, check out *Menopause: The Musical* (www.menopause.the-musical.com), playing throughout the country. The show pokes fun at hot flashes, memory loss, mood swings, wrinkles, night sweats and eating binges, with the perspective that menopause is not an end, but a beginning.

CATCH SOME Z'S

How much sleep do you get a night? If you're like most women, it's a lot less than the eight hours necessary to function optimally; the National Sleep Foundation has found that the average woman aged 30–50 sleeps only six hours and 41 minutes during the work week.

Another NSF Sleep in America poll of all adults revealed that when it comes to sleep, women have it worse than men. Biological conditions unique to women, such as the menstrual cycle, pregnancy and

BALANCING YOUR HORMONES

While fluctuating and declining hormones can cause all kinds of problems, getting hormones in balance can do wonders for a woman's health and well-being.

Rebalancing a woman's body through bioidentical hormones, made from plants like Mexican yams and soybeans, can help reverse all kinds of hormonal and metabolic changes—from atrophying muscle mass, to declining energy and libido and even memory loss, says Jacob Rosenstein, M.D., a neurosurgeon and founder and medical director of the Southwest Age Intervention Institute in Arlington, Texas. The institute offers a personalized, evidence-based approach to regaining vigor and vitality using hormones, supplements, nutrition and exercise. By age 30 our hormones start to decline by 1 to 3 percent a year, notes Rosenstein; by 50, they've declined anywhere from 20 to 50 percent. “But when a woman's estrogen, progesterone and testosterone are in balance, she can feel like she did when she was 30.”

Hormonal balance, however, is just one part of the puzzle. As women age, they need to exercise regularly and eat more protein and fewer carbohydrates to avoid gaining weight. “Hormones are the catalyst that enables the body to undergo changes,” says Rosenstein. “You have to eat and exercise correctly; by burning off fat and building muscle you get the benefits.”

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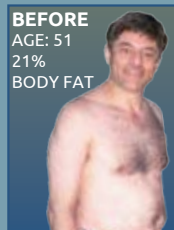
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menopause can affect how well a woman sleeps.

Think snoring is a man's problem? Think again. Nearly 25 percent of all women snore regularly, says Craig Schwimmer, M.D., M.P.H., a board-certified otolaryngologist and founder and director of The Snoring Center, which provides minimally invasive, office-based treatment for snoring and sleep apnea, with locations in Dallas, Houston and Fort Worth.

A third of Schwimmer's patients are female, he says, adding that, "Women are embarrassed by their snoring; men will deny it." The hormonal changes that occur during perimenopause and menopause, as well as weight gain and changes in weight distribution, can bring on snoring, or cause it to worsen, he

says. It can even push a basic snorer into sleep apnea, a disorder characterized by snoring interrupted by episodes of obstructed breathing that includes gasping or choking. While apnea is more common in men, it increases in women after age 50.

"There is a frighteningly high incidence of sleep deprivation in women," says Schwimmer. "It takes a big toll; but addressing the problem can be life-changing."

STRAIGHTEN UP

Olympic swimmer Janet Evans, and actresses Liza Minelli, Isabella Rossellini and Daryl Hannah have scoliosis. This spinal deformity, nearly one and a half times as common in females as it is in males, usually starts at around age 10, when the spine curves and rotates as it grows. It has

no known cause, but women who are diagnosed with scoliosis as a child or adolescent face a curve progression rate of seven to eight times higher than men.

When scoliosis isn't too severe or painful, noninvasive treatments include core strengthening with a physical therapist, Pilates, and anti-inflammatory medication. However, once the curvature is over 50 degrees, or when it's causing pinched nerves, surgical intervention is generally the only way to find relief. And while back surgery can be scary, it's often better to do it sooner, than later.

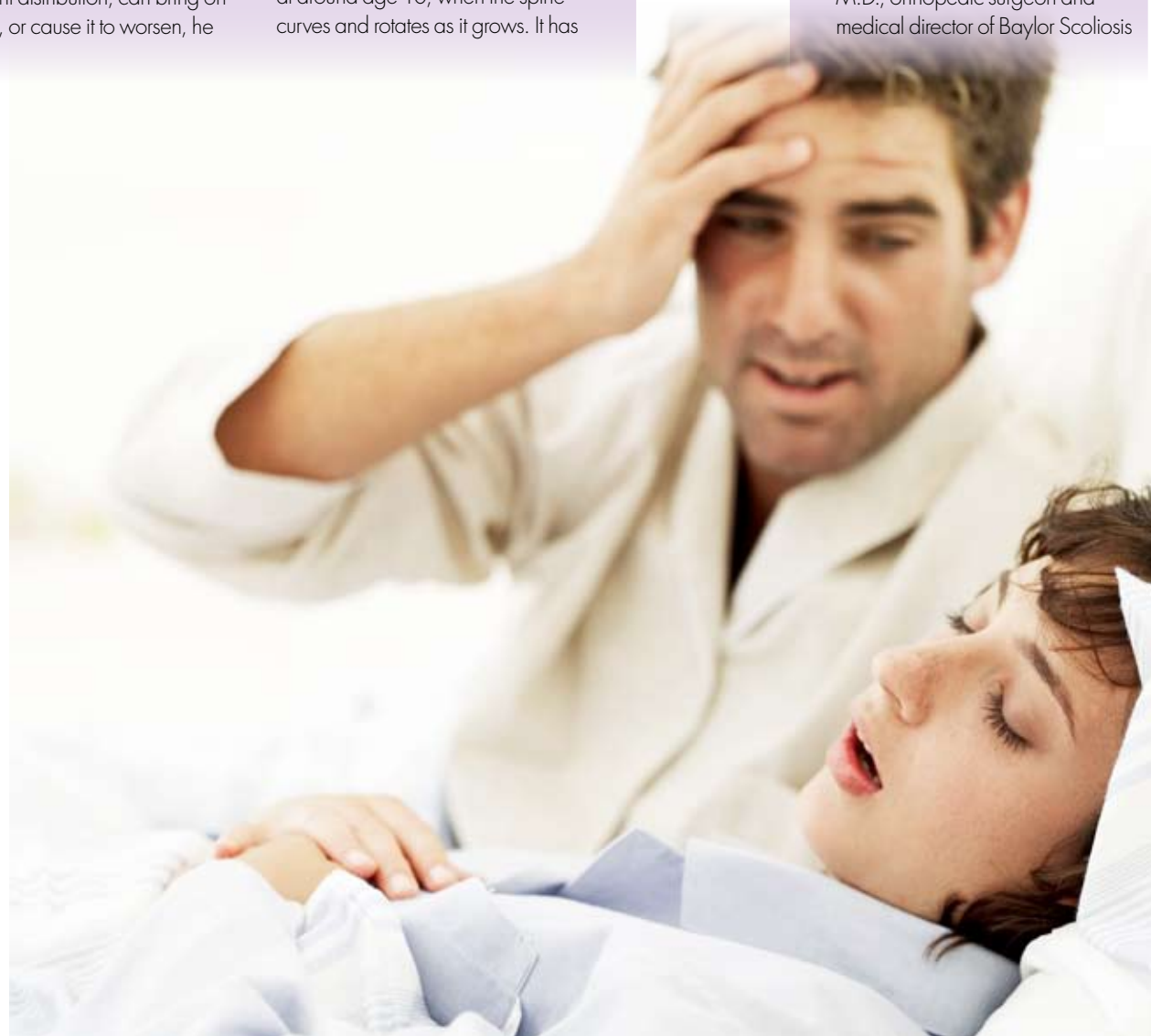
"The younger and healthier a woman is, the less severe her recovery will be," notes Richard Hostin, M.D., orthopedic surgeon and medical director of Baylor Scoliosis

Center in Plano and Ft. Worth, Texas. "Waiting until a woman is older and in worse shape means the surgery and recovery will be more difficult."

Fifty-seven-year-old Nancy Swift was nervous about back surgery, but never regretted it once she experienced the change in her quality of life.

"I knew my back hurt, but I didn't

realize how much pain I was in until after the surgery, because then I understood what it was like to be free from pain," says Swift, a patient at Baylor Scoliosis Center. "I have even noticed a marked difference in the frequency and severity of my asthma symptoms now that my back and chest are in alignment."



Early detection
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