



Women's Health and Epilepsy Program



Beth Israel Deaconess
Medical Center



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL

Comprehensive Epilepsy Center
330 Brookline Avenue
Shapiro Clinical Center, 8th floor
(617) 632-8930
bidmc.org/neurology

The Comprehensive Epilepsy Center at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center is designated as a Level 4 Epilepsy Center, the highest level by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers.

The center offers specialized care to better serve women with epilepsy at various stages of life who face unique challenges and have specific needs. In particular, hormonal changes from puberty to menopause, as well as changes during pregnancy may have major effects and implications on epilepsy management.

To address these specific needs of women with epilepsy, the Women's Health and Epilepsy Program utilizes a multidisciplinary team approach that includes:

- Neurologists
- Neurosurgeons
- Obstetrician gynecologists/
Maternal Fetal Medicine
- Neuropsychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Neurogeneticists
- Neuroendocrine/Endocrinologists
- Epilepsy nurses
- Social workers

Patient and Family Education

A central goal of the Women's Health and Epilepsy Program is to educate patients and families so they can make informed decisions about their care, and can take charge of their medical condition. Our epilepsy nurses play an integral role in this process and ongoing education includes:



- Contraception
- Menstrual cycle
- Family planning
- Fertility treatments
- Pregnancy and Medication adjustments
- Labor and Delivery
- Breast feeding
- Post-partum care
- Menopause
- Hormone replacement
- Bone health

Special Concerns of Women with Epilepsy

- Changes in epilepsy control throughout the menstrual cycle
- Effective birth control methods that are less likely to interfere with epilepsy management
- Planning a healthy pregnancy
- Genetic counselling
- Fertility treatments and interactions with epilepsy treatment
- Antiepileptic medication management during pregnancy
- Postpartum care and breastfeeding
- Menopause
- Bone Health

Bone Health

Prolonged treatment with some antiepileptic medications is known to increase one's risk for decreased bone density (osteopenia, osteoporosis) and hence increased risk for fractures, even in men. Together with our endocrinologists in the Osteoporosis Prevention Center, we will coordinate appropriate monitoring, diagnosis and treatment for our patients.

Menopause

Symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, disrupted sleep and hormone therapy may affect seizure control. Our team will work together to find the optimal regimen for seizure control while minimizing these symptoms.

Special Concerns with Pregnancy

For women who are planning to become pregnant, choosing the right antiepileptic medication(s) before pregnancy is important to optimize seizure control and minimize any potential risks to the developing baby.

The initial consultation will consist of a comprehensive evaluation by an experienced epileptologist who specializes in women's health and epilepsy and works closely with obstetricians in Maternal Fetal Medicine, and other members of the multidisciplinary team to provide comprehensive care.

Treatment decisions are made jointly with the patient and optimal medication regimens take into consideration the epilepsy syndrome, severity of epilepsy, comorbidities, and safety profile of the medications. Patients are followed closely in our unique joint Neurology/OB clinics.



Our multidisciplinary team includes:

Epileptologists

Trudy Pang, MD
Lu Lin, MD
Susan Herman, MD

Neurosurgeon

Jeffrey Arle, MD, PhD

Obstetricians/
Maternal Fetal Medicine

Melissa Spiel, MD
Brett Young, MD
Siripanth Nippita, MD

Epilepsy Nurses

Diane Sundstrom, RN, BSN
Matthew Reed, RN

Neurogeneticist

Patricia Greenstein, MD

Neuropsychologist

George Lin, PhD

Psychiatrists

Adam Stern, MD

Neuroendocrinologist

Andrew Herzog, MD

Endocrinologists

Alan Malabanan, MD

Sinha Partha, MD

Mala Sivanandy, MD

Social work

Lissa Kapust, MSW, LICSW

The goal of the Women's Health and Epilepsy Program at the Comprehensive Epilepsy Center at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center is to care for women and address unique challenges and health needs throughout a woman's life cycle. We will work hard together to minimize the impact of epilepsy and maximize patient's quality of life. The Women's Health and Epilepsy Program actively engages in research with the hope of improving epilepsy care for women.



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