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## Red Hot Mamas Guide Women Through Menopause

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One woman described the hot flashes of menopause as if "someone put a mink coat on you, shoved you in a sauna and slammed the door.

"And the other thing about hot flashes is when you are done with one, you are freezing," she said.

The woman was among several on a video hosted by actress Cheryl Ladd and screened for a group of women at The Foundry at World's Fair Park at one of the Prime Plus/Red Hot Mamas meetings St. Mary's Health System sponsors monthly.



Sylvia Smith of the Cedar Bluff Road area asked questions and took notes during a luncheon at The Foundry, where St. Mary's Health System and Prime Plus/Red Hot Mamas speakers gave information about dealing with menopause.

Photo by: Lisa Marcum



Women from all areas of Knoxville and surrounding counties met at The Foundry in downtown Knoxville to hear a seminar, sponsored by St. Mary's Health System, Sept. 25, dealing with menopause. St. Mary's is partnering with Prime Plus/Red Hot Mamas, an organization focused on providing information and support to help women manage menopause.

Photo by: Lisa Marcum

The idea behind the program is that menopause may be something all women have to face, but they don't have to face it alone. Through the monthly meetings with guest speakers, they can have the support of other women dealing with the same issues they are, get detailed information about menopause and guidance on finding professionals who can help.

"Every month, we deal with a different issue," said Linda Cox-Collier, regional marketing manager for St. Mary's and coordinator of the program. "We started in November 2006, and this is our 10th program. We've done heart disease, skin-care; we've done osteoporosis, sleep, nutrition."

The program is free, including a meal. The meetings are always 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., and usually are held at The Foundry, but the date varies each month depending on what else The Foundry has scheduled, Cox-Collier said.

"Starting in 2008, I'm going to try to get it always on the same day," she said.

To put on the program, St. Mary's partners with Prime Plus/Red Hot Mamas, a national health organization focused on providing information and support to help women manage menopause. At the program's Sept. 25 meeting, the guest speaker was Karen Giblin, president and founder of Red Hot Mamas.

Giblin told about how she started Red Hot Mamas after having to undergo a total hysterectomy that pushed her into menopause at 42.

She was a public official in Connecticut at the time and many of her women constituents started asking her questions about menopause. Giblin said she saw the need for the organization that became Red Hot Mamas.

Giblin and Sharon Davis, nurse practitioner at St. Mary's, provided information and answered questions about menopause.



Red Hot Mamas T-shirts were given to all who attended the Sept. 25 seminar/luncheon at The Foundry. From left are Shirley Swisshelm of Karns; Virginia Anagnost of West Knoxville; Sharon Priest of South Knoxville; Karen Giblin, founder of Red Hot Mamas; Diana Sandstrom of West Knoxville; and Rosiland Irwin of North Hills subdivision in North Knoxville.

Photo by: Lisa Marcum

Both said a Women's Health Initiative study several years ago that said estrogen therapy could increase breast cancer risk was not conclusive. Estrogen therapy is appropriate for many women and each woman considering it should discuss it with her physician, they said.



A day for "just the girls." From left, Mary Catherine Landry of Fountain City, Rosiland Irwin of North Hills subdivision, Carol Sewell of Halls, and Kendra Lynch and Teresa Teague of Fountain City spent the afternoon of Sept. 25 at The Foundry at World's Fair Park. The women are all friends who decided to attend a Prime Plus/Red Hot Mamas seminar hosted by St. Mary's Medical Center dealing with managing menopause.

Photo by: Lisa Marcum

They also mentioned things women can do to lessen the severity of hot flashes, night sweats and other menopausal symptoms, including stop smoking, avoid caffeine, eat a high-fiber diet and get more exercise.

Teresa Teague, Fountain City resident, said she has been a regular at the Red Hot Mamas meetings.

"There are four of us who come from Fountain City United Methodist Church," she said. "This is my seventh time."

Teague said she has gotten a lot of good information, met others dealing with the same problems and even won some nice door prizes such as a massage and a facial.

"It's helped me because I didn't know anything about menopause. I'm 48 and I've started having hot flashes," she said.

"This has introduced me to doctors I can go to to maybe have hormone therapy or to find out things I can do to help my back, skin problems and things like that," Teague said.

For information on the Prime Plus/Red Hot Mamas meetings, call St. Mary's at 865-545-8813. More information is online at [www.redhotmamas.org](http://www.redhotmamas.org) and at [www.stmaryshealth.com](http://www.stmaryshealth.com).