Smilow Cancer Hospital
Sexuality, Intimacy, and Menopause Program

The Sexuality, Intimacy, and Menopause Program is one of the only clinics of its kind in the country. By combining both medical and psychological interventions, it is designed to help women who experience sexual dysfunction after cancer. Sexual dysfunction after cancer is common, however, sexual side effects often go untreated after having successfully treated a patient's cancer. Our doctors look to manage not only the physical issues, but also any psychological concerns that may arise.

Founded by Dr. Elena Ratner, Associate Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences and Co-Chief for the Section of Gynecologic Oncology, and Dr. Mary Jane Minkin, Clinical Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences, the clinic began nearly a decade ago. Psychologist Dwain Fehon, PsyD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Chief Psychologist of Psychiatric Services at Yale New Haven Hospital, is a vital member of the team. He and his staff provide essential emotional care that helps improve relationships and personal health.

Many women have concerns related to intimacy and menopause because of cancer surgery or treatment. By combining medical and psychological interventions, our program is designed to help women who experience sexual or menopausal side effects due to cancer treatment. Drs. Ratner, Minkin, and Fehon consult with patients to address the difficult physical and emotional aspects of cancer care and treatment, and to create a personalized care plan for each patient.

We have developed a unique focus on menopause management for cancer survivors and “previvors,” healthy women who have their breasts or ovaries removed because of a genetic risk of developing cancer.
What types of patients do we see?

Women who experience:
- Changes in sexual function as a result of chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery for cancer
- Menopause symptoms as a side effect of their cancer treatment
- Early menopause or sexual changes after surgery for cancer risk reduction

What we provide:
- Menopause symptom management
- Resources for cancer survivors on maintaining sexual health
- Access to complementary and supportive services
- Access to individual and couples counseling

What to expect from your appointment:

Our team will first discuss your medical and cancer history as well as what type of treatment you have had. You will be asked about symptoms of menopause and sexual problems, such as hot flashes, night sweats, changes in sexual desire, painful intercourse, vaginal dryness, or changes in mood or sleep patterns. Depending on the symptoms you are experiencing, you may have a gynecologic exam. The team will then discuss options for management of your symptoms and improvement in sexual health. You will also have the opportunity to talk about emotional and relationship issues affecting your life. After initial evaluation, women can be followed in our program for symptom management and treatment. Women are welcome to bring partners to their appointment.

Appointments:

Patient appointments available on Thursdays
- New Appointments: (203) 785-7385
- Main Clinic Number: (203) 200-4176

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Dr. Mary Jane Minkin and Dr. Elena Ratner