

Comprehensive Care the Hallmark of New Women's Health Center

As women approach midlife, care-taking responsibilities tend to dominate their days. They may be taking care of their children—or their children's children—their spouses, their parents, or some combination of all those, all while working and managing a household. What they likely aren't doing is taking care of themselves or focusing on their own needs. Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women wants to change all that.



The team at Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women knows what women need: They need expert care, a multidisciplinary approach, and convenience. But beyond that, what women really need is to be seen as the individuals they are and to be treated with care and respect.

"Women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s often put the needs of others before their own—especially when it comes to health care," says Susan L. Beck, DO, FACOS. "Many women in this age group struggle with menopause, pelvic disorders, breast cancer, depression, opioid abuse, and more. In the typical doctor's office environment, there's never enough time to assess everything that needs attention."

Expert Providers and Convenience Under One Roof

Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women opened its doors in April, providing women of all ages access to specialty care, complementary medicine, comprehensive risk assessments, and wellness



information in one conveniently located and newly renovated space in the Mercy West clinic building.

Carrie A. Holmes, MD, describes the center as a multidisciplinary model

founded to help address women's health issues.

"As providers, we strive to treat patients holistically and with evidence-based care," she says. "Our goal is to ensure women are living their best possible lives."

Services offered at the center include integrative medicine consultations, medical imaging, menopausal consultations, mental healthcare, osteoporosis prevention, pelvic health, plastics and aesthetics, preventive heart health, and breast health, among others. Complementary services, such as massage therapy, acupuncture, and chiropractic care, are also available.

Leisha Barcus, Center Director, says the added convenience of having all such services available under one roof is another benefit to patients.

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The Role of a Nurse Navigator

At the Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women, the role of nurse navigator is filled by Shirley Beaver, PhD, RN, NEA-BC. She describes her role as that of a liaison between patients and providers, guiding women through the health care journey by coordinating appointments, explaining complicated health concerns, and providing education on various health

topics. She also connects patients to support networks and community services as necessary.

"I spend a lot of time just talking with patients," she says. "Often, they feel more comfortable speaking with me than to a doctor, and important information—about intimacy issues or incontinence, for example—may come up. We can get to root causes more quickly, and we can treat issues women may have normalized for themselves."

Screenings Options

At Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women, health screenings play a significant role in evaluating a woman's overall health.

"The Fit 4 You Screening is one of the center's most popular. It assesses heart and stroke risk, includes cancer and bone health screenings, and provides individualized preventive advice on subjects like vitamins and immunizations. The Midlife Health Assessment is designed to provide support and specialized information about pre-menopause, peri-menopause, and menopause symptoms," Barcus explains. "We sit down with each patient and review results and what they mean. A team of providers makes recommendations should issues requiring treatment be uncovered."

Mercy Katzmann Breast Center

Mercy Katzmann Breast Center, a part of the Women's Center, is dedicated to providing access to all breast care

services, from imaging and analysis, to chemotherapy and radiation, to surgery and post-surgery aesthetic intervention.

"We do it all," says Kara Urlis-Comer, RN, BSN, Director of Operations. "Should a tumor be malignant, we'll walk with you every step of the way, from imaging to diagnosis and treatment and beyond."

The Breast Center employs many cutting-edge technologies to deliver the best possible outcomes with a minimum of upheaval to the patient's life. Mammotone biopsy devices, 3-D mammography, Biozorb® markers, Magnetic Seed Localization, and PlasmaBlade® and Hidden Scar™ surgeries are among the innovations employed by Breast Center physicians.

"Breast medicine is evolving rapidly. We want women to know that not every lump is cancer, and if it is, catching it early is key," Urlis-Comer says. "We can cure breast cancer up to 95 percent of the time when we catch it in its earliest stages. So don't dismiss the warning signs, but don't let fear get the best of you either. Get it checked out, and we'll be here for you." ●



**COMFORT HEALTH
CENTER FOR WOMEN**

A service of Mercy Medical Center—Des Moines

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