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The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada / La Société des obstétriciens et gynécologues du Canada

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, October 18, 2005

## World Menopause Day Challenge for Women: Talk to your Doctor Today

**Ottawa** October 18, 2002 – Today is “World Menopause Day,” and the **Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada** joins the International Menopause Society in issuing a challenge to women worldwide: have one of the most important discussions of your life.

“World Menopause Day acknowledges the millions of women who enter this vital stage of life every day, yet *still* aren’t aware of the wonderful opportunities this offers for enhancing health and quality of life,” said **Dr. André Lalonde, Executive Vice-President, SOGC**, “When women reach this time they still have one-third of their lives remaining and should look forward to many more healthy years. But first women need to know their personal health risks, and women need to discuss their options such as good nutrition, exercise, and pharmacological therapies including hormone replacement therapy.”

The World Menopause Day challenge calls on every woman age 45 and older to talk to her physician about her individual health history, her risks for diseases, the benefits and risks of hormone replacement therapy, and steps she can take now to take charge of her health.

### ***What Happens at Menopause?***

During this period of life, women’s bodies reduce production of ovarian hormones, and this may be associated with symptoms such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and sleeplessness. Hormone loss over the long term may also be associated with a number of serious diseases, including osteoporosis and heart disease. Consider the following information:

- Hot flashes, sometimes accompanied by sweating and flushing, are the body’s response to declining estrogen levels. During a hot flush, which typically lasts from 30 seconds to 5 minutes, the heart beats faster and skin temperature rises.
- Painful sex due to dryness or shrinkage of the vaginal tissues may be caused by the fall of estrogen levels.
- One half of all women over 50 will at some time have a fracture caused by osteoporosis.
- Recent surveys have found that **more than half** of all women don’t know that menopause is associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Yet, cardiovascular disease - largely heart attacks and strokes - is the leading cause of death in the world today.
- Research suggests that menopausal women are up to **THREE TIMES** more likely



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than men to have Alzheimer's disease and estrogen loss may play a role. New research is examining a possible link between estrogen and brain functions, including the development of Alzheimer's disease.

"Menopause can be a confusing time and the options may seem complicated," added **Dr. Jennifer Blake, co-author of the Consensus Statement on Menopause.** "But every woman needs to decide what's right for her. It will make all the difference."

This February, 2006 the SOGC will issuing its Consensus Statement on Menopause. Visit [www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org) for more information.

**About the SOGC:**

*About the SOGC: Founded in 1944, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada is comprised of over 2,700 professional members, including gynaecologists, obstetricians, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. A leading authority on reproductive health care, the SOGC produces national guidelines for both public and medical education on important women's health issues. The Society's mission is to promote optimal women's health through leadership, collaboration, education, research and advocacy in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology. [www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)*

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**Media Contact:**

Kelly Nolan, Director, Communications and Public Education

Tel : (800) 561-2416 or (613) 730-4192 extension: 330

Mobile : (613) 323-1187

Fax: (613) 730-4314

E-mail address: [knolan@sogc.com](mailto:knolan@sogc.com) Website: [www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)