



Fall 2007

Newsletter

10 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO YOUR HEALTH

The physical differences between men and women go further than plumbing – and these differences have an impact on our health. Women, on average, are smaller than men; consequently we have smaller organs doing the same work. Women have a higher percentage of body fat than men, and fat is good at slowing down the body's processing of a number of substances. Women have different body and brain chemistries than men, from hormones to enzymes – and our chemistries change from age to age, week to week, month to month. Women's brains are wired differently than men's, and react differently to different stimuli. Women have "enhanced" immune systems compared to men, making us better able to deal with some kinds of germs. Women also have a lower percentage of water in our bodies compared to men. Here are 10 ways that these and other differences, including social and lifestyle factors, affect our health:

- 1. Heart Disease** – According to Statistics Canada 43% of women's deaths today are from heart disease. Heart disease typically strikes women 10 years later than men, and women are more likely than men to have a second heart attack. Women's heart attack symptoms are often less severe and more ambiguous than symptoms men usually experience; for instance insomnia, fatigue, anxiety, shortness of breath, coughing, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, vague aching, tightness or pressure in the chest, or pain in the back, shoulder, arm, neck or jaw.
- 2. Depression** – Women are two to three times more likely than men to suffer depression at some point in our lives. Brain chemistry, hormones, and a variety of social and lifestyle factors all lead to a higher risk of depression. Women have different symptoms and different behaviour when depressed compared to men, as well.
- 3. Osteoporosis** – 80% of the people living with osteoporosis are women. 25% of women over 50 years of age have osteoporosis.
- 4. Smoking** – Women develop diseases as a result of tobacco smoke – cancer, heart disease, COPD, diabetes etc. – after smoking less for a shorter amount of time than men. Women who smoke, or are exposed to second-hand smoke, also have to deal with lower bone density, increased risk for delayed pregnancy and fertility problems, a lower average age at menopause than non smokers, and more unpleasant menopause symptoms. Women are also less successful at quitting, and experience more severe withdrawal symptoms.
- 5. Sexually Transmitted Diseases / Infections** – Women are two times more likely than men to contract an STD / STI when we are exposed to one. Women are put at greater risk of exposure because our circumstances can make it difficult or impossible for women to choose both our sexual partners, and the level of protection to use during sex. The majority of sexually transmitted infections usually have no obvious symptoms in women; often we will not know that we have an infection until it has caused a serious problem.
- 6. Anesthesia** – Women tend to wake up from general anesthesia more quickly than men, but recover from its effects (grogginess, nausea, chill etc.) more slowly.
- 7. Drug Reactions** – Women's bodies react differently to drugs than men's bodies, even common ones like antihistamines and antibiotics. Women also have a greater risk of drug interaction because we are likely to be taking more prescriptions, supplements, and over the counter drugs than men.

8. Autoimmune Disease – 75% of people living with autoimmune diseases are women. It is thought that this is in part because our "enhanced" immune systems provide more opportunities for something to go wrong.

9. Alcohol – Women have more alcohol related problems after drinking less alcohol less often than men. We become dependant on alcohol more easily. We are at greater risk for breast cancer, hypertension, stroke, infertility, miscarriage, heart and brain damage, premature births, and we are more vulnerable to assault, sexual assault and unplanned pregnancy when we drink too much, whether we are dependant or not.

10. Pain – Women are more sensitive to pain than men, and 72% of chronic pain sufferers are women. However, women's pain is more likely than men's to be considered emotional or "all in our head" and therefore not real. Men often receive more painkilling medication than women for the same condition. When women have both depression and pain, we are more likely to have our pain considered a symptom of our depression, rather than a cause of our depression.

If you would like to see the sources for this information, or find out more about any of the subjects in this article, contact Melanie at 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111



EATING DISORDER AND BODY IMAGE PROGRAMS

Turning Points

Thursday evenings, 7:00 to 8:30pm
September 13th to October 25th.

A 7 week education and support program for people who have symptoms of Anorexia and Bulimia.

No More Dieting: Overcoming Overeating

Thursday evenings, 7:00 to 8:30pm
November 1st to December 13th.

A 7 week education and support program for people who are struggling with binge eating, weight preoccupation and body image but *do not* have symptoms of Anorexia or Bulimia.

Making Changes

Wednesday evenings, 7:00 to 8:30pm
September 19th to December 5th.

A 12 week group for those who have completed an education and support program and are ready to address the thoughts, feelings and behaviour changes necessary to recover from an Eating Disorder.

All programs take place at the Women's Health Care Centre, 157 Charlotte Street. For more information or to register call:

705-743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111

"Try this technique to help wean yourself from perfectionism: Force yourself to allow someone else to do something you know you can do better, and don't comment. Just live with it. How liberating! The dishwasher got stacked wrong... and the sun still set!"

~ Loretta LaRoche, *Squeeze the Day: Ways to bring joy and juice into your life*, 214



WELCOME TO OUR NEW NUTRITIONIST!

We are pleased to welcome Melanie Smith to the Women's Health Care Centre. Melanie is a registered dietician who also works at the Peterborough County City Health Unit. She will be an important resource to our Eating Disorder Program.



BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT SERVICE

Through this service mothers and pregnant women have access to an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and Registered Nurse, Heidi, who can help them address any breastfeeding questions or concerns they may have.

Concerns women frequently have with breastfeeding include things like: slow weight gain, milk supply fluctuations, pumping for premature babies and multiples, mastitis, yeast infections, getting a good latch, blocked ducts, engorgement, overactive let down, colicky babies, etc. Once the specific problems are identified, a plan of care is determined with continued follow-up as necessary.

There is no fee for this service and women can arrange to see Heidi by calling the Women's Health Care Centre at: (705) 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111



THINGS I CAN DO THIS FALL

- Become more mindful: What does this moment feel, sound, look, smell and taste like?
- Try something new. Explore.
- Become more aware of my body's signals for hunger and fullness, and trust them. I don't *have* to clean my plate and I *can* have another helping.
- Make time to eat regular meals and snacks and sit down for them as often as possible. Give myself permission to relax and enjoy eating instead of grabbing something on the run.
- Learn about myself. Search out my centre.
- Build regular physical activity into my day, doing activities I really enjoy at a level that is comfortable for me.
- Allow time for relaxation every day: time that is not spent doing something I have to do, or should do, but something I love doing. (Especially if what I love doing is nothing at all.)
- Look for chances to have fun.
- Let go: of perfection, of frustration, of responsibility for things I have no control over.
- Get enough sleep. "Enough" sleep is not a particular number of hours; it is however much sleep my body needs to feel awake and alert.
- Pay attention to the beauty around me.
- Stand up for myself, my wants, and my needs. Support others standing up for themselves, their wants and their needs.
- Make changes in my lifestyle slowly and gradually – that's the only way they will become permanent.
- Forgive myself when I fall back on old habits: I am only human, and tomorrow is a brand new day!

Information from: the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit and Northumberland County Body Image Coalition, Nedic, WHCC



BROWN BAG LUNCHES

Wednesdays 12:05 to 12:50

October 10 Books to Help You Become a Savvy Patient

October 17 Letting Go of Stress

October 24 Bone Appetite: Bone Health and maintaining strong bones

October 31 "In The End..." Stories and Storytelling

At the Women's Health Care Centre, 157 Charlotte Street (beside Wild Rock Outfitters). Bring your lunch; coffee and tea will be served. Please call 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111 for details or to register.



OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

In Canada, 1 out of every 9 women is expected to develop breast cancer. (Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation)

Here are some of the breast cancer resources available locally:

The **Canadian Cancer Society** provides a variety of services including educational presentations, emotional support and transition. (705) 742-3823 or 1-800-463-0432

CCS's Cancer Information Service provides information on a wide range of cancer-related topics, and will mail out information packages at no charge. 1-888-939-3333

Hospice Peterborough provides care and support for individuals and their families living with cancer, advanced illness or grief. (705) 742-4042

The **Look Good, Feel Better Program** is a free program to help women deal with appearance and self-esteem issues related to cancer and treatment. Information on skin care, makeup, wigs, etc. PRHC, (705) 743-2121, ext. 2361 (Oncology)

The **Ontario Breast Screening Program** has breast examination and mammography for women aged 50 and over; doctor's referral is not required. PRHC, Rogers Street Site. 1-800-974-4461 or (705) 740-8166. Medical Centre (705)876-4505, General referral 1-800-668-9304

The **Peterborough Breast Cancer Support Group** is for individuals whose lives have been touched by breast cancer. (705)745-7579

Central East Community Care Access Centre Will work with you to manage your health care needs at home and determine your eligibility for long term care. (705) 743-2212 or 1-888-235-7222

Peterborough County-City Health Unit has general information and referral. (705)743-1000 or 1-877-743-0101

Survivors Abreast is a dragon-boat team of breast cancer survivors in various stages of treatment and recovery. 171A Rink St., Suite #216, Peterborough, ON K9J 2J6, or Carol Mutton at carolmutton@persona.ca.

Willow Breast Cancer Support and Resource Services provides free expert knowledge, understanding and support through a variety of services and programs. 1-888-778-3100

Women's Health Care Centre, PRHC, has an extensive lending library, which includes materials on breast cancer related subjects. (705) 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111.



WOMEN'S CANCER FORUM 2007

Cancer Prevention and Screening: What You Need to Know

November 1st, 2007; 7-9pm

Knights of Columbus Hall

Cost: \$5.00

Learn the latest on breast, cervical and colo-rectal cancer screening and prevention. Speakers, displays and draws. Space is limited. To register, call: 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111.

There is no joy in perfection.

- Eve Ensler; *The Good Body*