

## Food, Lifestyle and Information Overload

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

IWD - Celebrations	2
In loving memory of Sue Piller	2
From the Executive Officer's Desk	2
Chairperson's Editorial	3
New Online Chlamydia Testing	3
Endometriosis and Fertility	4
Dates to Remember	4
Donations to WHW	4

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### Food – what is it?

Wikipedia (where would we be without the internet?) describes food as being a substance that is composed of carbohydrates, fats, proteins and water that can be consumed for protein or pleasure. This is a pretty simple and easy to understand definition. Why then, can something so easily explained cause us so much angst, worry, confusion, and be responsible for becoming the entrapment for eating disorder sufferers and the causes of the nation's growing obesity epidemic?

In an effort to de-bunk some myths and to provide easy to understand and practical information WOMEN'S Healthworks have recently entered into a partnership with

Nutrition Australia to combat and make sense of some of the media hype about **food**. Would you be interested in finding out how food can contribute in building resistance to chronic disease, and how healthy food combinations can be made with ease and with a minimal budget?

Over the coming months WOMEN'S Healthworks, in partnership with Nutrition Australia are planning to provide some information sessions and workshops about how to enjoy food again and how to understand the media hype and all of the messages we get bombarded with on a daily basis about food.

The first workshop we will be offering is outlined in the Calendar of Events and is titled 'Cooking for One' – do the scenarios below sound familiar?

#### Case study 1: Gloria, 48 struggling to downsize

*Gloria has three children in their twenties and since her children have moved out, Gloria has found that she needed to downsize the meals to cook for just her husband and herself. Much to her frustration she found this quite difficult. Two years ago, Gloria and her husband separated and now Gloria finds herself lacking motivation to 'go to all the effort' to cook a meal just for herself. Most nights she just has a cup of tea and some toast while watching the evening news.*

#### Case study 2: Simone, 25, never learnt how to cook.

*Simone is a 25 year old single girl. Simone started university two years ago, moved out on her own and now finds she doesn't have the cooking skills she needs to prepare meals for herself. She relies on frequent take away meals but wishes she could learn to cook, to save her money and eat more nutritious meals.*

**Food is an important part of a balanced diet.**  
(Fran Lebowitz)

If you are a woman of *any age* and interested in participating in the **Cooking for One** workshop, whereby you can hear about and participate in the preparation of healthy food options, and cook for improvement in your own health, please see the calendar of events about registering your interest. Also, included inside this issue is a survey aimed at collecting information about topics of interest and the content of future workshops we are planning to provide. It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete this survey and return it by dropping it back into the centre or alternatively, using the reply paid procedures on the enclosed survey.

### In loving memory of Sue Piller

It is with much sadness that we acknowledge the passing away of our dear friend and colleague Sue, who died on 31.01.10 of cancer.

Sue, a Life Member of WOMEN'S Healthworks was such a wonderful woman, a dedicated and tireless worker who made a significant contribution to women's health and held in the highest esteem by her friends and colleagues.



WOMEN'S Healthworks have dedicated a plaque in honour of Sue, which now overlooks reception, so we feel that she will always be present at WHW.

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2010

*'Come Along and Sing,  
Let the Friendships Begin!'*

In celebration of International Women's Day 2010, WOMEN'S Healthworks (with the support of the City of Joondalup), held the first meeting of a Joondalup Women's Choir on the 8 March 2010.

Nearly 60 women attended the day and all enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and learn the lyrics and melodies to a number of well known favourites including 'I am Woman' and 'Mamma Mia'! Heather Denholm was the choir leader for the day and did so with enthusiasm and decorum.



Such a fabulous time was had by all, it is now our intention to further establish and support the development of this choir.

Feedback from the day has informed us that the majority of those who registered interest to attend regular choir gatherings, stated that Monday mornings are the preferred day/time.

If you are keen to find out more, please register your interest at reception on 9300 1566 or email [info@womenshealthworks.org.au](mailto:info@womenshealthworks.org.au)

### From the Executive Director's Desk



#### Economic Health & Wellbeing for Women

A person's economic health and well-being has a major impact on their life chances, including their health outcomes. Unfortunately, women continue to experience disadvantage on virtually every indicator of economic health and well-being, including their ability to financially support themselves through a longer life span than men and more years of disability.

Did you know on average Australian women are paid 17% less than men???? Apparently the pay gap is so big that on average Australian women would have to work 63 days more a year to secure the same income ...

And in Western Australia we have by far the highest gender pay gap in the country at 27.4%

Why you may ask?  
Is it an undervaluation of women's work?  
Surely not I hear you say ...

**... on average Australian women are paid 17% less than men!**

#### Consider this ...

Most of the factors underpinning the gender pay gap are found in the community services sector. Community sector work has traditionally been seen as "women's work" and their wages have been restricted as a result.

Does it surprise you to know that the Health and Community Services industry is the second largest employer of WA women, and is the most female-dominated industry in WA?

Both State and Federal government departments play a significant role in maintaining the pay inequity for the Non-Government Sector (NGO) of the Health and Community Services workforce through the level of funding they provide to them for both core services and specific program and project tenders/submissions.

If the Rudd Government is serious about redressing the pay gender inequity it will ensure that all of its funding to NGOs is sufficient for them to remunerate their workforce equal to the public sector workforce in similar positions.

We watch with interest the current campaigns raising this important issue.

If you wish to show your support on this issue see the equal pay campaign website <http://www.payup.org.au/>

Mandy Stringer

**Welcome** to the Body Esteem Program - Kathleen Chinn, who joins the program as a co-facilitator of the Binge/Overeating Self-Help Group and also to Natalie Salisbury who will be a trainee co-facilitator with the Anorexia/Bulimia Self-Help Group.

## The Importance and Value of Community Based Mental Health Services:

### How - When - Why



WOMEN'S Healthworks (WHW) is a well placed community health service which provides confidential primary and allied health services for women. Women come to WHW with a variety of needs - reproductive health; counselling on a family or mental health issue or for joining a physical activity or social support program.

As a society, we all have a responsibility to help break down the stigma that mental health evokes. A mental health issue is like any other illness we may experience in our lives. This is an important distinction we all need to make and then talk about it in that way with family, friends and people in our community. As a consequence of that, individuals may find it easier to access services in the early stages of a mental health illness.

There has been much talk in WA about a Mental Health Commission with its own budget and the capacity to link people in the community to services and to have a say about how those services are delivered.

*As a society, we all have a responsibility to help break down the stigma that mental health evokes.*

*The case for more funding for WHW to*

*deliver community based mental health services:*

WOMEN'S Healthworks is well placed, with over 20 years experience, good reputation with effectiveness to deliver a range of valuable services such as the following:

**Body Esteem Program:** Currently we have funding for only six months from the Mental Health Division of the WA Health Department. This program is exemplary in terms of the service it provides to women and their families who have an eating disorder, and it supports women in the community to sustain their recovery.

**The Village Program:** This program has proved invaluable to women and their families who experience the effects of drug and alcohol misuse and associated mental health problems. This program was funded through the previous government's Attorney General's Department from the proceeds of crime money. WHW has adapted this program to meet the criteria for funding provided by a grant from the Commonwealth Bank staff community fund. Whilst we are most grateful to the staff from the Commonwealth Bank for these funds, is it really appropriate that a bank provide funding for such a vitally important service? What will happen when that funding runs out; why do we pay our taxes?

**Low Cost Counselling Service:** Currently women have to wait anything up to 8 weeks to access our low cost or no cost, counselling service. Clearly in the case of a woman suffering from depression this is highly unsatisfactory. It may mean the difference between life and death for someone.

Unfortunately we are all too aware of the high profile case of the channel 10 news reader Charmaine Dragun, who committed suicide because of her depression, her story is not an isolated one. WHW needs a discrete amount of mental health funding to extend our under resourced counselling services.

WHW has endeavoured to seek a meeting to discuss our needs with the Parliamentary Secretary, Helen Moreton who is assisting the Mental Health Minister, Graham Jacobs, but unfortunately this meeting has been cancelled three times. We are hopeful that we will meet in the not too distant future and will report back to you on our discussions.

We make this public plea to the Barnett Government. **Please don't neglect the mental health needs of women and their families in the northern suburbs.** Our needs are dire in terms of funding. We can continue to make a difference - but only if we have the funds to do so.

*Robin Terry*  
Chairperson

#### Where to get help for mental health issues:

- Your doctor
- Your local community health centre
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Find a GP near you who specialises in mental health issues through the beyondblue website: [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)
- beyondblue info line 1300 224 636
- SANE Mental Health Information Line 1800 187 263 (weekdays 9am to 5pm) or their website [sane.org](http://sane.org)

#### New On-line Chlamydia Testing

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that is common in young people. The Chlamydia on-line testing program has been set-up to make it easier to get tested and treated for Chlamydia. To use this service you must have a mobile phone and be able to visit a PathWest Laboratory Collection Site.

This service is confidential and your test result will only be sent to the Sexual Health clinic at Fremantle Hospital. A nurse will phone you if your result is positive. After giving your specimen at the PathWest Laboratory collection site, your test result should be available in 3 working days within the Perth metropolitan area and 5 working days in country areas. The specimen will only be tested for Chlamydia and gonorrhoea, which are both STIs.

You can ring the Sexual Health Clinic on 1800 628 909 - this number will get you straight through to the nurse who can talk confidentially about your concerns or alternatively, you could book an appointment with one of our female doctors if you have any questions or concerns.

**Telephone 9300 1566 for an appointment.**

## Endometriosis and Fertility

*Kathryn, 29, had recently been diagnosed with endometriosis. Not knowing much about the condition, she started asking her friends and co-workers if they knew anything about it. One woman said her sister had endometriosis and was infertile. Kathryn had always wanted children one day and was devastated to think that this was no longer possible.*

Endometriosis affects up to 10 per cent of women of child-bearing age. It is a condition where endometrial tissue, which normally lines the uterus, grows outside the uterus by mistake and attaches to other tissues or organs. Symptoms of endometriosis include heavy, painful or irregular periods, abdominal, back or pelvic pain, bowel or bladder problems, and premenstrual symptoms. For some women, the most distressing symptom is reduced fertility - having endometriosis can make it difficult to get pregnant.

Some newly diagnosed women may worry that they may never have children. This is not necessarily true - only 30 per cent of women with endometriosis experience fertility problems. In these cases, having the endometrial tissue removed surgically via a

laparoscopy can increase the chances of falling pregnant naturally. If surgery is unsuccessful, in vitro fertilisation (IVF) can be an option, however it is important that the endometriosis is properly treated first as IVF treatments can aggravate the condition.

The good news is that women with endometriosis who do become pregnant often report that their symptoms are alleviated during pregnancy as they are no longer menstruating. Unfortunately, the effect is usually temporary and symptoms will often reoccur after the baby is born and periods return. Hormonal therapies (such as the Pill) may be used as a maintenance treatment option after pregnancy however this is not suitable for women trying to conceive.

If you have endometriosis or experience the symptoms of endometriosis, see your health practitioner for advice about appropriate treatment options.

*For more information about endometriosis, visit [www.endometriosis.org.au](http://www.endometriosis.org.au). or contact The Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health on 1800 151 441 or visit [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au).*

### FOR SALE



Women's Healthworks have water bottle holders for sale. They have an adjustable strap and fit most water bottles and are ideal when walking.

Call into WOMEN'S Healthworks to purchase your bottle holder.

### Dates to Remember

- | 2-8 May Heart Week
- | 9 May Mothers Day
- | 2 May Australia's Biggest Morning Tea
- | 2 June Foundation Day
- | 11 June Go Red for Women Day
- | 11-17 July National Diabetes Week
- | 1 - 7 Aug National Healthy Bones Week

### Website

Remember to check our website for more information on our services, up to the minute details on what's happening NOW.

[www.womenshealthworks.org.au](http://www.womenshealthworks.org.au)



### Yes, I want to help women in my community!



Please accept my donation of:

- \$25    \$10    \$50    \$100    My choice \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheque/money order payable to **WOMEN'S Healthworks**

or debit my    Visa    Mastercard

Card Number

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

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**Your support is appreciated - THANK YOU!**

Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible

**I would like to receive my newsletter via email**