

# *Table of Contents*

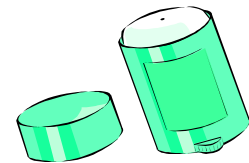
Hygiene & Grooming	2
Some Examples of Women's Clothing	3
Some Examples of Women's Clothing	4
The Female Body	5
Menstruation	6
How To Use A Tampon	7
Menopause	8
Pregnancy	9
Pap Tests	10
Breast Self Examinations	11
Mammograms	12
Birth Control	13
Birth Control	14
Sexually Transmitted Infections	15
Sexually Transmitted Infections	16
Sexually Transmitted Infections	17
Sexually Transmitted Infections	18
Nutrition	19
Balancing Your Life	20
Mental Health	21
Abuse	22
Transition House	23
Women's Rights /The Law	24
Sources of Information and Further Readings	25

*This booklet was created to offer newcomer women information that may help them start a new life in Canada. Women should feel comfortable asking for more information that is not in this booklet from a settlement worker, doctor, nurse or social worker and any other person they feel comfortable talking with.*

# Hygiene & Grooming

**Washing:** It is important to wash every day with soap and water and put on clean clothes. Body odour is considered offensive in Canada.

**Deodorant:** Most women use deodorant or anti-perspirant under the arms to help to smell good. It is used after you have washed with soap and water.



**Perfume/Cologne:** Some women use perfume or cologne to smell good. Using too much perfume is not good. It is wise to use a small amount of perfume or cologne once a day. Some workplaces and offices are “scent free” which means that you should not wear perfume or cologne when you are in a “scent free” place.

**Teeth:** It is important to brush your teeth so you don’t have bad breath and tooth decay. Be sure to use toothpaste and some people also use mouth wash after they have brushed their teeth.

**Hair:** In Canada, women have many different hair styles. Some women have short hair and some women have long hair. Some women pay money to have their hair cut, curled or coloured.

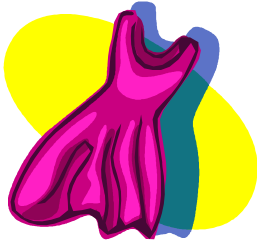
**Nails:** Some women prefer to keep their nails cut short and other women prefer long nails that they paint with nail polish. Nails should always be kept clean and trimmed.



**Make-up:** Women can choose to wear make-up. Make-up can be purchased at drug stores, grocery stores and department stores.

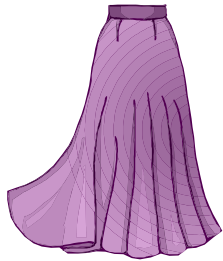


# *Some Examples of Women's Clothing*



**Dress:** Dresses can be worn anytime by women. Some women only wear dresses and other women only wear a dress on special occasion or to work.

**T-shirt:** The t-shirt used to be for men only, but today women can wear white t-shirts or choose from a colourful variety.



**Skirt:** A skirt can be worn with a blouse or a t-shirt.

**Blue Jeans:** This form of pants can be worn by men or women. Blue jeans are casual and not always appropriate for workplaces.



**Blouse:** A blouse can be worn with a skirt or with pants and is appropriate for everyday wear or work.

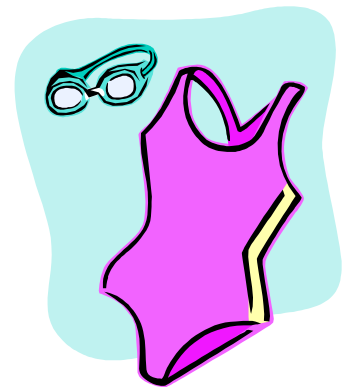
# Some Examples of Women's Clothing

**Bra:** The bra or *braziere* is used to provide support for your breasts under clothing. It is usually not socially acceptable to go braless or not wear a bra under your clothing. Bras come in different sizes. The number in the bra size is the size of your chest and the letter in the bra size is the cup size or size of your breasts. *For example:* 36 C (36 is the chest size and C is the cup size).



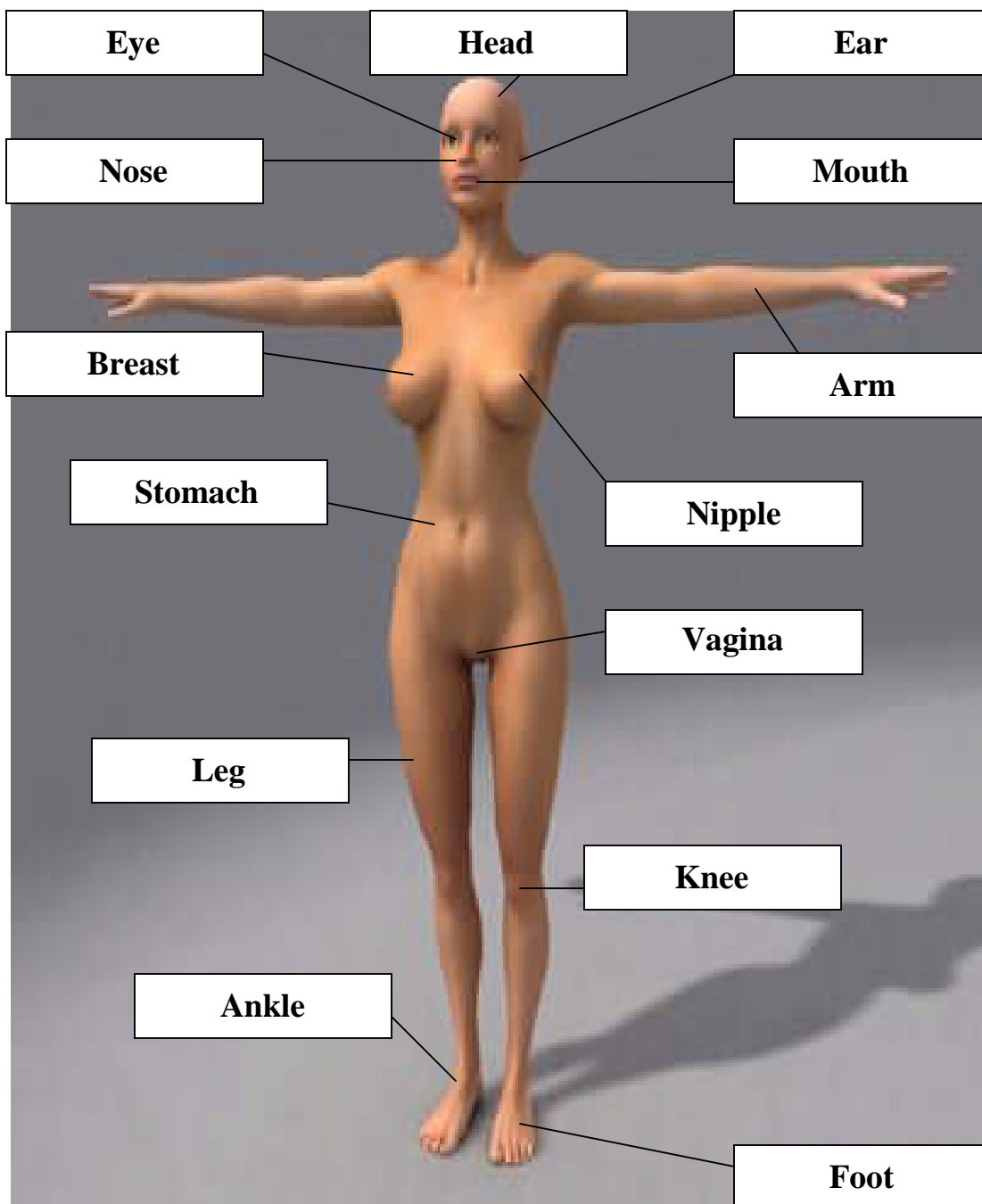
**Panties:** These are also called underwear and are worn under clothing.

**Bathing suit:** This can also be called a swim suit and is worn when a women wants to swim in a swimming pool or at the beach.



**Bikini:** This is a two piece bathing suit that has a top like a bra and a bottom like panties. Some women prefer to wear a bikini when they swim.

# *The Female Body*



# Menstruation

Menstruation or your *period* is the shedding of the lining of the uterus each month or monthly bleeding. Most women start having a period when they are approximately 11–15 years old and stop having periods when they are in their 40's or 50's. An average cycle is 28 days and women bleed for 5–7 days out of each cycle. During this time an egg is released into the fallopian tubes. If the egg is fertilized, a pregnancy takes place. If the egg is not fertilized then the women has a period.

There are many ways to absorb the menstrual blood each month but these are some of the more common ways:



**Sanitary or *maxi* pad:** This can be used by placing the pad in your panties. The pad comes with a sticky side that should be placed against the panties to keep the pad from moving around. Pads need to be changed often because they can create an odour if they are worn too long. Pads are thrown away in the garbage. Never flush a pad down the toilet.



**Tampons:** a tampon is used by inserting it into the vagina. The cardboard tampon applicator is thrown away in the garbage but the tampon itself can be flushed down the toilet when it has been removed. Tampons should be changed every 4 – 8 hours to avoid Toxic Shock Syndrome, a disease that can be caused by leaving a tampon in your body for too long.

# How To Use A Tampon



1 Wash your hands and unwrap a fresh tampon. Stand or sit in a comfortable position: some women find it easiest to crouch down with knees apart or to stand with one foot on the toilet seat or bath. Hold the applicator (where the ridges are on the tube) with the thumb and middle finger of one hand. able position: some women find it easiest to crouch down with knees apart or to stand with one foot on the toilet seat or bath. Hold the applicator (where the ridges are on the tube) with the thumb and middle finger of one hand.



2 With the other hand spread the folds of skin around the vaginal opening. Place the tip of the outer tube of the tampon applicator (not the end with the cord hanging out) in the opening of your vagina.



3 The vagina slants upwards towards your back. So, gently slide the applicator in an upwards and backwards direction. (It sometimes helps to slightly rotate or twist the applicator from side to side). Stop pushing when your thumb and finger touch your body.



4 Still holding the applicator on the ridges, push the bottom of the small tube completely up inside the big tube. This slides the tampon out of the applicator and into your vagina.



5 Hold tightly onto the two tubes that are now one inside the other. Gently take out both applicator tubes together. (Wrap them in tissue and put them in a bin. The cardboard tubes can also be flushed away.) You'll see that the cord of the tampon is now hanging down outside your body.

# Menopause

Menopause is the end of menstruation. Menopause is part of a woman's natural aging process when her ovaries produce lower levels of the hormones estrogen and progesterone and when she is no longer able to become pregnant.

Unlike a woman's first menstruation, which starts on a single day, the changes leading up to menopause happen over several years. A woman can say she has begun her menopause when she has not had a period for a full year.

The clearest signs of the start of menopause are irregular periods (when periods come closer together or further apart), and when blood flow becomes lighter or heavier.

Other signs may include some of the following:

- weight gain;
- hot flashes;
- insomnia;
- night sweats;
- vaginal dryness;
- joint pain;
- fatigue;
- short-term memory problems;
- bowel upset;
- dry eyes;
- itchy skin;
- mood swings; and
- urinary tract infections.



Most of the time, these symptoms will lessen or go away after a woman has finished menopause.



# Pregnancy

Pregnancy can be a joyful time in your life or the most difficult time. There are choices that can be made for unplanned pregnancies:

**Abortion:** The medical removal of the embryo or fetus from the womb.

**Adoption:** giving your baby to another couple to raise.

When you are pregnant it is important to eat well, exercise, do not smoke and do not drink alcohol. This will help you to deliver a healthy baby.



In Canada, most babies are born in a hospital. When you think you may be pregnant, it is important to find a doctor and receive medical care. In Moose Jaw you can call the Women's Health Unit at 694-0200 and ask for a tour of the labour and delivery area.

A doctor will set up appointments to see you monthly in the first to sixth month, every two weeks in the seventh and eighth month and every week in the ninth month.



Some things the doctor will check at each visit:

- checking the baby's heart rate
- checking your blood pressure
- checking your urine
- measuring your weight gain

For information on pregnancy you can contact the local Public Health office 691-1500 or visit any of Moose Jaw's medical clinics for books and information on pregnancy & childbirth.

# *Pap Tests*

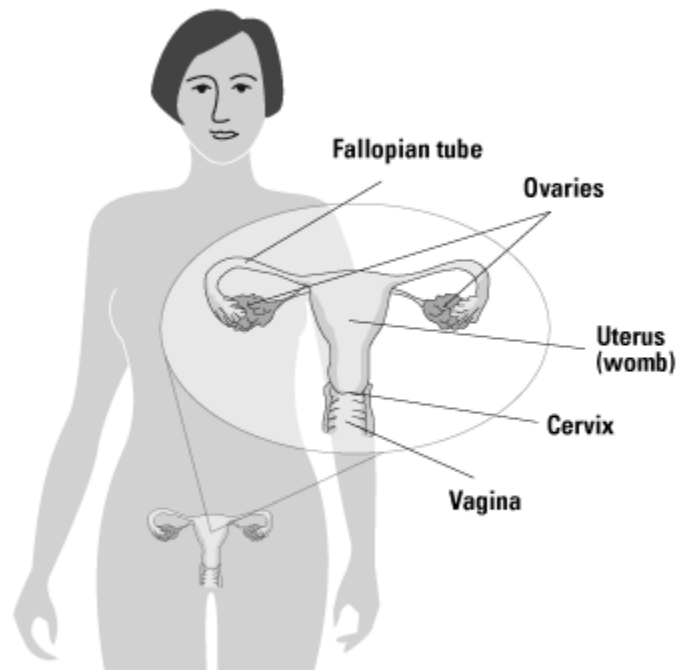
The Pap test, also called a Pap smear, checks for changes in the cells of your cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina. The Pap test can tell if you have an infection, abnormal (unhealthy) cervical cells, or cervical cancer.

A Pap test can save your life. It can find the earliest signs of cervical cancer – a common cancer in women. If caught early, the chance of curing cervical cancer is very high. Pap tests also can find infections and abnormal cervical cells that can turn into cancer cells. Treatment can prevent most cases of cervical cancer from developing.

It is important for all women to have pap tests, along with pelvic exams, as part of their routine health care. You need a Pap test if you are:

- 21 years or older
- under 21 years old and have been sexually active for three years or more

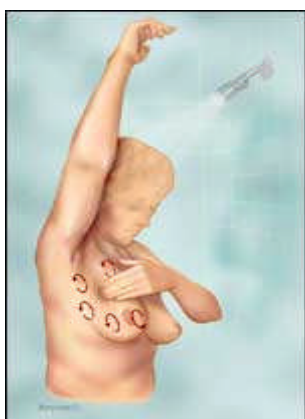
There is no age limit for the Pap test. Even women who have gone through menopause (when a woman's periods stop) need regular Pap tests.



## *Breast Self Examinations*



**Step 1:** Begin by looking at your breasts in the mirror with your shoulders straight and your arms on your hips. Look for any redness, soreness, rash, or swelling or dimpling, puckering, or bulging of the skin.



**Step 2:** Now, raise your arms and look for the same changes.

**Step 3:** While you're at the mirror, gently squeeze each nipple between your finger and thumb and check for nipple discharge (this could be a milky or yellow fluid or blood).



**Step 4:** Next, feel your breasts while lying down, using your right hand to feel your left breast and then your left hand to feel your right breast. Use a firm, smooth touch with the first few fingers of your hand, keeping the fingers flat and together. Follow a pattern to be sure that you cover the whole breast. You can begin at the nipple, moving in larger and larger circles until you reach the outer edge of the breast.



**Step 5:** Finally, feel your breasts while you are standing or sitting. Many women find that the easiest way to feel their breasts is when their skin is wet and slippery, so they like to do this step in the shower. Cover your entire breast, using the same hand movements described in Step 4.

# Mammograms

A mammogram is a safe, low-dose x-ray picture of the breast.

Mammograms are taken during a mammography exam. There are two kinds of mammography: exams—screening and diagnostic.

A screening mammogram is a quick, easy way to detect breast cancer early, when treatment is more effective and survival is high. Usually two x-ray pictures are taken of each breast. A physician trained to read x-ray pictures—a radiologist—examines them later.

It is generally agreed that screening mammography decreases deaths from breast cancer in women 50 and over. There is a range of opinion about the value of screening mammography for women under 50.

## 6 Steps to Breast Health

1. Get regular exams.
2. Schedule the mammogram for when your breasts will be least tender.
3. Give and get important information when you schedule the mammogram.
4. Know what to expect.
5. Come prepared.
6. Follow up on your results.



For more information contact The Canadian Breast Cancer Society at

1-800-567-8767.

# Birth Control

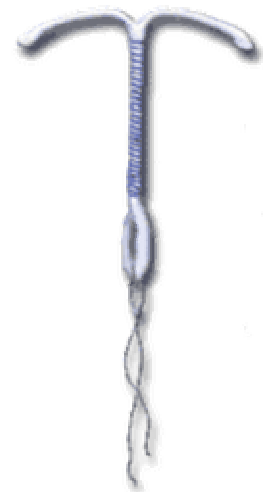
**Depo-Provera:** Is an injection of a hormone called progestin. It is similar to the body's natural hormone progesterone. Depo-Provera injections prevent a woman's ovaries from releasing eggs. Depo-Provera is more than 99 percent effective and is generally considered the most effective reversible method of birth control.



**The Patch:** The patch contains the same forms of progesterone and estrogen found in many birth control pills. A new patch is applied each week and the hormones are absorbed through the skin. Studies show that it is about as effective as birth control pills when both methods are used correctly.



**IUD:** An IUD is small device that fits inside the uterus to prevent pregnancy. IUDs available in Canada are made of copper and plastic and shaped like a T. There are several theories of how they work, but we believe that they prevent sperm from fertilizing an egg. To a lesser degree, they may also prevent a fertilized egg from attaching to the wall of the uterus. If there are no complications, an IUD can be left in place from two to five years. They are 96 to 98 percent effective against pregnancy



# Birth Control

**The sponge:** Is a soft round piece of polyurethane foam containing several different spermicides. It can stay in your vagina up to 12 hours.

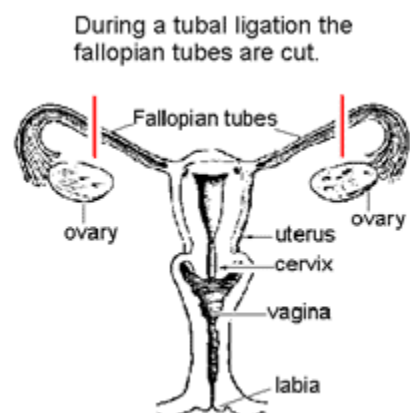


**Withdrawal:** Means a man removes his penis from a woman's vagina before he ejaculates. This prevents most sperm from entering the vagina. It is not a very effective means of birth control. About 20 percent of women will become pregnant using this method over the course of a year, even if their partner is always successful at withdrawing in time.

**Birth Control Pills:** Your doctor can prescribe birth control pills to prevent pregnancy. When taken properly, birth control pills are 99 percent effective. Birth control pills contain low doses of both estrogen and progesterin.



**Tubal ligation:** Is a surgical procedure that makes a woman infertile. It is performed in a hospital. This is a permanent form of birth control for women who do not wish to have any more children.



# *Sexually Transmitted Infections*

**Chlamydia:** is transmitted through vaginal, anal and oral sex and can be transmitted from mother to child during childbirth. It is known as the 'silent disease', because more than 50 percent of infected males and 70 percent of infected females have no symptoms and are unaware of their condition. Symptoms of infection for women can include:

- A vaginal discharge
- A burning sensation when urinating
- Pain in the lower abdomen, sometimes with fever and chills
- Pain during sex
- Vaginal bleeding between periods or after intercourse.

**Genital Herpes:** Herpes simplex virus, the virus that causes genital herpes, belongs to the same family of viruses that cause cold sores, chickenpox, shingles and other diseases. Genital herpes can be transmitted during vaginal, anal or oral sex even if the infected person has no open sores or any other symptoms of infection. Although it is rare, pregnant women can pass the infection onto their babies during or after birth.

- Sores inside or near the vagina, the cervix, on the external genitals, near the anus or on the thighs or buttocks.
- Tender lumps in the groin (lymphadenopathy).

**Gonorrhea:** Gonorrhea is a bacterial infection (commonly known as "the clap") that is transmitted through oral, genital or anal sex with an infected person. It can also be spread from mother to child during birth. For women who do experience symptoms of infection, these can include:

- A burning sensation when urinating
  - A vaginal discharge that is yellow or occasionally bloody
- Women with mild or no symptoms are still at risk of serious complications from the infection.

# *Sexually Transmitted Infections*

**Human Papillomavirus (HPV):** HPV is likely one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Canada. It is estimated that 75 percent of Canadians will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime. Some types of HPV can cause genital warts while other types can lead to cancer. Genital warts, (also called Condylomata) are one symptom of HPV infection. Genital warts may look like a small cauliflower or they may be flat. In women, the warts may appear on the vulva, cervix, rectum or thigh area. In men, they may appear on the penis, scrotum, rectum or thigh area. The types of HPV that cause genital warts do not cause cancer but it is possible to be infected with more than one type of HPV.

**Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV):** Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) is a previously rare sexually transmitted infection (STI) in Canada, which has recently re-emerged. If left untreated, LGV can lead to painful health problems, and in rare cases, genital mutilation and death. Symptoms of LGV start to appear 3 to 30 days after infection. A painless sore or lump may appear where the bacteria entered the body – in the vagina, penis, rectum, cervix or mouth. Because the sore or lump can be painless, often internal, and clears up without treatment, you may not know you are infected.

During the second phase you may experience flu-like symptoms, including:

- low-grade fever
- chills
- fatigue
- muscle and joint aches.



# *Sexually Transmitted Infections*

**Syphilis:** is a sexually transmitted bacterial infection that was rare in Canada five years ago. However, infection rates are now on the rise. These rising rates are an indication that people are not consistently using safer sex methods. In primary syphilis, a painless open sore or ulcer appears at the site where the bacteria first entered the body, usually the genital area, throat or anus. Symptoms can occur within a few weeks or a couple of months after infection. Because the ulcer is painless, you may not know you have been infected. While the sore may go away on its own without treatment, the infection remains and progresses to secondary syphilis.

In secondary syphilis, the symptoms can include:

- patchy hair loss
- a rash on the soles of the feet, the palms of the hands or elsewhere on the body
- fever
- swollen glands
- and muscle and joint pain

Again, these symptoms usually disappear without treatment.

**HIV/AIDS:** The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV attacks the immune system, resulting in a chronic, progressive illness and leaving infected people vulnerable to opportunistic infections and cancers. The median time from infection to AIDS diagnosis now exceeds 10 years. AIDS is fatal. There is no cure.



# *Sexually Transmitted Infections*

## HIV is transmitted through:

- unprotected sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal, oral)
- shared needles or equipment for injecting drugs
- unsterilized needles for tattooing, skin piercing or acupuncture
- pregnancy, delivery and breast feeding (from an HIV-infected mother to her infant)
- occupational exposure in health care settings

## HIV can not be transmitted through:

- casual, everyday contact
- shaking hands, hugging, kissing
- coughs, sneezes
- giving blood
- swimming pools, toilet seats
- sharing eating utensils, water fountains
- mosquitoes, other insects, or animals.

## What Can You Do?

Following these suggestions may help you to protect yourself from contracting an STI:

- learn about safer sex methods,
- use condoms consistently and correctly,
- get tested for STIs if you are sexually active,
- and if you are diagnosed and treated for an STI, be sure to follow your health care provider's treatment and follow-up recommendations. You can easily be reinfected if your partner is not treated as well.

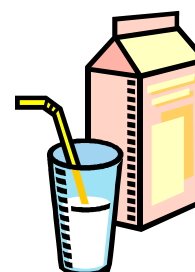


# Nutrition

Healthy eating throughout life is important for all women. There are many issues that affect women specifically in which nutrition plays a role, such as pregnancy, osteoporosis, and menopause. Pregnancy places an increased nutritional demand on women. Pregnant women need to pay special attention to their intakes of calcium, iron and folic acid. Folic acid supplements should also be taken by all women of childbearing age, as it may play a role in the prevention of neural tube defects. Women are at higher risk of developing osteoporosis later in life so it is important to consume calcium and vitamin D rich foods throughout your life.

<b>Grain Products</b> <b>5-12</b> SERVINGS PER DAY	<p>1 serving</p> <p>Hot Cereal 175 mL 3/4 cup</p> <p>Cold Cereal 30 g</p> <p>1 Slice</p> <p>1 Bagel, Pita or Bun</p> <p>2 servings</p> <p>Pasta or Rice 250 mL 1 cup</p>
<b>Vegetables and Fruit</b> <b>5-10</b> SERVINGS PER DAY	<p>1 serving</p> <p>Fresh, Frozen or Canned Vegetables or Fruit 125 mL 1/2 cup</p> <p>Salad 250 mL 1 cup</p> <p>Juice 125 mL 1/2 cup</p> <p>1 Medium Size Vegetable or Fruit</p>
<b>Milk Products</b> <b>Servings per Day</b> Children 4-9 years: 2-3 Youth 10-16 years: 3-4 Adults: 2-4 Pregnant and Breast-feeding Women: 3-4	<p>1 serving</p> <p>Milk 250 mL 1 cup</p> <p>3"x1"x1" 50 g</p> <p>2 Slices 50 g</p> <p>175 g 3/4 cup</p>
<b>Meat and Alternatives</b> <b>2-3</b> SERVINGS PER DAY	<p>1 serving</p> <p>Meat, Poultry or Fish 50-100 g</p> <p>1/3-2/3 Can 50-100 g</p> <p>Beans 125-250 mL</p> <p>1-2 Eggs</p> <p>100 g 1/3 cup</p> <p>Peanut Butter 30 mL 2 tbsp</p>
	<p><b>Other Foods</b></p> <p>Taste and enjoyment can also come from other foods and beverages that are not part of the 4 food groups. Some of these foods are higher in fat or calories, so use these foods in moderation.</p>

The Canada food guide recommends 2-4 servings of milk or milk products for adult women and 3-4 servings of milk or milk products for pregnant and nursing women.



# *Balancing Your Life*

- Remember that it is a full-time job if you stay home and look after your house, husband and children.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Ask your husband or children to help with preparing meals and cleaning the home.
- Some women work outside of the home and it can create stress when you are not at home all day to prepare food and clean.
- Make time for yourself. Take one hour to do something that you enjoy such as reading a book or making a craft.
- Make sure you eat good food and get exercise each day.
- See your doctor for regular check-ups and tests.



# *Mental Health*

**Stress:** this occurs when something happens in your life or to you and your body, mind and behavior all respond to the event. Stress can be negative like problems with your spouse or at work or stress can happen at a positive time in your life like the birth of a baby.

**Depression:** Depression becomes an illness, or clinical depression, when the feelings described above are severe, last for several weeks, and begin to interfere with your work and social life. Depressive illness can change the way a person thinks and behaves, and how your body functions. Some of the signs to look for are:

- feeling worthless, helpless or hopeless,
- sleeping more or less than usual,
- eating more or less than usual,
- having difficulty concentrating or making decisions,
- loss of interest in taking part in activities,
- decreased sex drive,
- avoiding other people,
- overwhelming feelings of sadness or grief,
- feeling unreasonably guilty,
- loss of energy, feeling very tired,
- thoughts of death or suicide.



Help is available for women who have stress, depression or other mental health illnesses. Contact the local mental health clinic. In Moose Jaw the mental health number is 691-6464 or look at the Canadian Mental Health Association website at [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

**Practice Mind + Body Fitness!**

# *Abuse*

**Abuse:** refers to the violence or mistreatment that a woman may experience at the hands of a marital, common-law or same-sex partner. Spousal abuse may happen at any time during a relationship, including while it is breaking down, or after it has ended. There are different forms of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. It includes using physical force in a way that injures someone – or puts them at risk of being injured– including beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking, or assaulting with a weapon.
- **Sexual abuse and exploitation** includes all forms of sexual assault, sexual harassment or sexual exploitation. Forcing someone to participate in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity, or using ridicule or other tactics to try to denigrate, control or limit their sexuality or reproductive choices is sexual abuse.
- **Emotional abuse** includes verbal attacks, such as yelling, screaming and name-calling. Using criticism, verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation or exploitation to dominate another person are other forms of emotional abuse. Criminal harassment or "stalking" may include threatening a person or their loved ones, damaging their possessions, or harming their pets.
- **Economic or financial abuse** includes stealing from or defrauding a partner. Withholding money that is necessary to buy food or medical treatment, manipulating or exploiting a person for financial gain, denying them access to financial resources, or preventing them from working (or controlling their choice of occupation) are also forms of economic abuse.
- **Spiritual abuse** includes using a person's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control them. It may include preventing someone from engaging in spiritual or religious practices, or ridiculing their beliefs.

# *Transition House*

There is a place in Moose Jaw for abused women and their children called Transition House. You can call the Transition House staff anytime of the day or night and they come to get you and take you and your children to safety. The staff at Transition House can provide you with some of the following:

- A safe and secure place to stay
- Food
- Clothing
- Laundry facilities
- Toiletry items

If you cannot return home, the Transition House staff can refer to you financial aid services and help you get legal aid so you can have your own safe place to live.

Women will not be deported if they leave their spouse because of abuse.

To contact the Transition House in Moose Jaw, call  
693-6511

24 hours a day, seven days a week



# *Women's Rights*

In Canada, women have the same rights as men. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states *"Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons"* Some of the basic rights women can enjoy in Canada are:

- freedom of conscience and religion;
- freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- freedom of association.

Women also have the right to vote in elections as long as they have become a Canadian citizen before or the day of the election.

## *The Law*

Under the Criminal Code of Canada, everyone is innocent until proven guilty and entitled to legal counsel and a fair trial. If you are newcomer who does not speak English you have the right to ask for an interpreter for any legal issues you have. If you do not have money to pay for a lawyer you apply for legal aid service.

In Moose Jaw the Legal Aid Commission can be contacted at:

**110 Ominica Street West**

**694-3700**



## *Resources & further information*

Google: [www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca)

Health Canada: [www.healthcanada.ca](http://www.healthcanada.ca)

Wikipedia: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

Public Health Agency of Canada: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>

Tampax: [www.tampax.com](http://www.tampax.com)

Canadian Women's Health Network: [www.cwhn.ca](http://www.cwhn.ca)

Breast Cancer: [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org)

Canadian Cancer Society: [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

Women's Health Matters: [www.womenshealthmatters.ca](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca)

Government of Canada: [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)

Canadian Mental health Association [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

Department of Justice Canada [www.justice.gc.ca](http://www.justice.gc.ca)

**Funding for this publication provided by:**



