



WOMEN'S MONTH AND BEYOND: LET'S BEAT THE SCOURGE OF UNPLANNED AND UNWANTED PREGNANCY, CANCER, AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

WOMEN'S MONTH MARKS THE ANNIVERSARY OF AN IMPORTANT PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY, WHEN 20 000 PROFOUNDLY COURAGEOUS WOMEN MARCHED TO THE UNION BUILDINGS TO PROTEST AGAINST OPPRESSIVE APARTHEID LEGISLATION THAT FORCED THEM TO CARRY PASS BOOKS.

This was a powerful act of defiance against attempts by the Apartheid government to subjugate and control the movement of Black people in urban areas. During those difficult days, this act by women also proved to be a catalyst for more acts of resistance that ultimately helped overthrow the Apartheid system.

Today, women face a different struggle in the form of their vulnerability to a range of health challenges, such as unplanned and unwanted pregnancy, maternal and child mortality, breast cancer, cervical cancer and Gender-Based Violence.

These are challenges that we need to overcome as a matter of urgency. As a Department that is cognisant of the importance of putting women's health at the centre of the agenda, we have introduced a number of new and specialised programmes that are preventative and curative in nature, focusing on the health realities and needs of women, both young and old.

This includes programmes that champion the prevention, early detection and treatment of ailments



such as cervical and breast cancer, and the promotion of family planning and healthy lifestyles.

No woman should die because of diseases that are preventable and treatable. That is why we are determined to promote Primary Health Care and raise the level of health literacy in our society.

We will continue to promote good, life-saving habits such as disease prevention, and early screening and testing, because if diseases are picked up early, they become easier and cheaper to treat, cure or manage.

Crucially, our programme of action as a Department also extends to securing the buy-in of women when it comes to family planning, so that we reduce the number of unwanted and unplanned pregnancies, and illegal termination of pregnancy.

We have a dire and urgent

responsibility to make ours a society that is protective of its women; a society that nurtures women; and a society that allows them to spread their wings and soar, so that they can fulfil their potential.

We owe that to the memory and legacy of Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu, Sophia Williams De Bruyn, Victoria Mxenge, Rahima Moosa, Phila Portia Ndwandwe, Winnie Mandela, and many other women of virtue who dared to stand up against the grinding machinery of Apartheid, so that we could reap the handsome fruits of freedom that we enjoy today.

VIVA MBOKODO, VIVA!!!

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W - WARRIOR

EVERY WOMAN IS A WARRIOR IN HER OWN RIGHT, WE HAVE FOUGHT UNSEEN BATTLES AND CONQUERED!

O - OPTIMISTIC

THE WORLD NEEDS MORE OPTIMISTIC WOMEN, TO FACE EVERY CHALLENGE WITH A POSITIVE MINDSET AND ATTITUDE.

M - MINDFUL

A MINDFUL WOMAN CARRIES A GENTLE SOUL, ALWAYS ALERT OF THE FEELINGS OF THE ONES AROUND HER.

E - ELEGANT

THE WORLD NEEDS TO RAISE MORE ELEGANT WOMEN AND WITH ELEGANCE COMES CONFIDENCE.

N - NURTURE

THE BIGGEST SPARK A WOMAN COULD EVER HAVE AND DISPLAY IS A CARING HEART AND THE NATURAL INSTINCT OF NURTURING THE ONES AROUND THEM.

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KZN DOH WOMEN REFLECT ON WOMEN'S MONTH

AS THE COUNTRY COMMEMORATES WOMEN'S MONTH, KZN HEALTH CHAT BULLETIN SPOKE TO A FEW WOMEN IN THE DEPARTMENT AND GOT THEM TO REFLECT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MONTH, AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A WOMAN.

THIS IS WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY...



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

I am Nompumelo Naledi Manyoni. I was born at KwaSwayimane, but grew up at Impendle. I now stay at Henley Dam.

I hold a National Diploma in Public Management, a B.Tech in Public Management obtained from the Durban University of Technology.

I also have Post-grad Certificate in Education (PGCE).

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE DEPARTMENT?

I work at Human Resources Management Services (HRMS), within the service conditions component. I have been in this environment for 15 years. We do inspection and auditing on leave administration in compliance with the Department's leave policy. We also prepare submissions relating to people who need to act in vacant posts, deviations from advice of Health Risk Manager (Ill health, retirement, payments of overtime claims, night shift allowance, and working on public holidays). We are also responsible for the day-to-day capturing of leave; implementation of leave without pay; payment of leave gratuity, among others.

WHAT DOES WOMEN'S MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

Women's Month is a chance to honour and recognise the impact that woman have on society. We wear so many hats, from daughter to wife and mom, caregivers, directors you name them. It's a great time to highlight the achievement of women that have come before us. Women that are still doing it today and to also give little girls like my daughter a vision to say, "Hey, I can do that." They become inspired when they see others before them who've done amazing things. Viva Mbokodo Viva.!!!"

GIVEN A CHANCE, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ENSURING THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE ONE FOR WOMEN?

It's important to create awareness, so that both males and females are educated about behavioural ethics, and to develop the right culture which supports safety for women. I'd also incorporate education programmes for male employees so that they become aware of the issues that women have to grapple with everyday, and become kinder to women. This can be executed by continuous training for male employees on how to conduct themselves when working with their female counterparts.

A list of "Do's and Don'ts" should also be made available for all male employees. I think it's important to provide equipment and safety aids for women, and to put in place strict measures to prevent any kind of violence or harassment of women. I also recommend that woman should become well-versed on basic human rights, and also be trained to protect themselves when such incidents occur.

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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

My name is Philisiwe Mbhele and I was born and raised in a small town called Melmoth, in the north of KwaZulu-Natal.

I'm 29 years old.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE DEPARTMENT?

I'm an Intern at Monitoring & Evaluation: Debt Management section. I'm passionate to learn new skills in this section.

WHAT DOES WOMEN'S MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

It's a time to pay tribute to women from the liberation Struggle, for the sacrifices they made, also means recognizing the country's history of racial oppression, women's oppression, and how far we've come. In the past, women had limited work opportunities, but they fought hard for their recognition. Today, you find women in higher positions, such as Health MEC Nomagugu Simelane. So, this is an opportunity to celebrate womanhood, but to also encourage those who are being abused to speak out.

As women, we must not normalise the harassment of women, but promote and protect the rights of women and children in our society. Women must be respected all the times. Lastly, and I can't stress this enough: women must report all cases of assault, abuse and harassment.

GIVEN A CHANCE, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ENSURING THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE ONE FOR WOMEN?

I would make sure that I encourage women to express themselves, and to speak out if they are facing sexual harassment. Most of the time, in the working place, women are harassed and they are usually afraid to speak out, maybe because they are afraid to lose their jobs. So, they end up tolerating it. That is very wrong, and sexual harassment can lead to depression. In many instances, women even quit their jobs when the harassment becomes unbearable.

So, I'd like to encourage women to stand up for themselves and report issues that affect their wellbeing.



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

My name is Kathryn Potgieter, I have been employed by the Department since July 1999.

I enjoy being outdoors, gardening and baking delicious treats.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE DEPARTMENT?

I am the Web Administrator for the Department, managing both the intranet and internet sites. I run the Head Office library in Natalia and provide support and assistance to the remaining 13 libraries in the Department.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S MONTH FOR YOU?

It is an opportunity for me to reflect on my unique qualities as a woman, and how I can assist and support those around me, in my work and personal life, both male and female.

GIVEN A CHANCE, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ENSURING THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE ONE FOR WOMEN?

We need to ensure the basics: respect for each other, both by men and women, and that honesty and integrity are entrenched in our society, with those in positions of leadership setting the example.

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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

I am Nomagugu Zitha a passionate, loving and kind, goal-oriented, strong mother of 2 princesses.

Above all, I love God with all my heart. I've been saved by grace and am a born-gain Christian. I am passionate about elevating other people.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE DEPARTMENT?

I work in the Human Resource Development (HRD) section as Assistant Director: Skills Development and training unit. My main task is to co-ordinate and implement the Compulsory Induction Programme for employees on salary levels 1 to 12, as well as induction for interns: (Breaking barriers to entry into the Public service and CADET Programme). So, basically, these workplace orientation programmes targets all employees within the Department.

Further to that, we process all requests for employees who need the authority to attend training or conferences or symposiums and seminars within and outside of the Republic of South Africa.

WHAT DOES WOMEN'S MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

This is an opportunity to recognise women for who they are, as they were created. Looking back from the march that was held on 9 August 1956 to the Union Buildings, against Apartheid Pass Laws, it becomes clear that women can achieve anything they put their mind to. So, Women's Month enables us to celebrate the success of all the women in the world.

We are also blessed with female Premier in our province, which once again proves that women can do anything that they put their mind to. Women must know that they are free to follow their dreams, and that they can achieve them, as long as they focus and strive for success.

GIVEN A CAHNCE, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ENSURING THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE ONE FOR WOMEN?

It starts with yourself. I believe the first thing is to be of sober mind, and lead a peaceful life with balanced emotions. So, the promotion of healthy eating and regular exercising could ensure that we have healthy women in the workplace, which enables proper service delivery. It is important to promote wellness in the workplace, so that all people will be able to participate in it. Respect for one another, regardless of salary level, is paramount, as it allows for a harmonious working environment.



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

My name is Philile Kunene; I was born and raised in Pietermaritzburg (Mafakatini).

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE DEPARTMENT?

I work as a Security Guard at Natalia Building. My job mostly requires me to know who comes in and out of the building, checking bags of visitors before and after escorting them to the offices that they are going to (if needed), and also ensuring that the visitors' book is filled in and signed at all times.

WHAT DOES WOMEN'S MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

Women's Month is a chance to celebrate the achievement of women everywhere, as well as an opportunity to look back at how far women have come in terms of gender equality, women empowerment and women's rights. It should be a reminder to all of us, of the sacrifices made by all those women who walked to the Union Building to fight for our rights, because they believed we were worth so much more. It's an opportunity to celebrate each and every woman out there taking their power and waking up every day to make a difference in their lives, and in the lives of others.

GIVEN A CAHNCE, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ENSURING THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE ONE FOR WOMEN?

My role is to protect people and state property, and to be vigilant for everyone's safety, but especially women's safety. It's also to show other women that it is possible to work as a security officer, which is something that has always been known to be male-dominated throughout the years. In a way, by doing my job, I'm also showing other women that it is possible, and that all it takes is boldness and confidence.

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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

My name is Nonkululeko Sibiyi I am 36 years old from Edendale, Sinathingi location. I am a mother of two beautiful girls. I live at home with my Mother, Granny, my Sister, her son and two nephews. I am working at KZN Department of Health, situated at Townhill Hospital.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE DEPARTMENT?

I am employed as a Secretary to Director: Quality Assurance Directorate. I also provide administrative support services to other Managers in the unit.

WHAT DOES WOMEN'S MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

A whole lot!!! We are superior species born to create, nurture and love endlessly. We are strong, forgiving and kind. You know one of the best qualities a woman has is to forgive. It's what comes naturally, and it's what makes us special because a forgiving heart can do anything set before it, with no limitations. That's why only the sky can be the limit, because we shine like the precious gems we are.

GIVEN A CHANCE, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ENSURING THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE ONE FOR WOMEN?

- Empower women through educational initiatives to promote positive growth, health and safe environment.
- Organize and promote awareness programs in support of different issues affecting women.
- Ensure that relevant programs are in place to address emotional wellbeing.



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

My name is Miss Lindokuhle Mahlaba, I am from Pietermaritzburg.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE DEPARTMENT?

I work as a Secretary to the Director for Corporate Governance and Intersectoral Collaboration Mrs P.J Lallupersad

WHAT DOES WOMEN'S MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

It is a reminder for us to celebrate the achievements, both big and small, of the women around us.

This includes:

- Our Mothers, who gave birth to us, and those that didn't but cared for us like we were their biological mothers.
- Our families and friends who, despite their own challenges, make sacrifices for us and still prosper in their own lanes.
- Ourselves (as women) for prospering through the difficulties and coming out victorious.

Women's Month is also a time for us to reflect and acknowledge how far we have come as women. Women are also multi-talented, and can multi-task, as well think on their feet. August is also a time of 'rebirth'... an opportunity for women to rethink and reconstruct what they envision for themselves and who they want to be.

GIVEN A CHANCE, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ENSURING THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE ONE FOR WOMEN?

I would encourage women to create ecosystems of support. These can be through:

- Creating safe spaces/ platforms for them to share challenges and brainstorm solutions within their communities or work environments;
- Offering woman-to-woman mentorship, which provides authentic engagement, also within the spaces highlighted above.

From a safety perspective, we need to encourage women not to suffer in silence, but to speak out about all the issues that bother them.

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WOMEN'S HYGIENE

The importance of personal hygiene can never be over-emphasised. Good personal hygiene is, in fact, one of the best ways to protect yourself from getting gastro-intestinal or infectious diseases.

Washing your hands is not the only way to keep yourself clean and healthy, your other body parts need your attention as well. Developing and maintaining good personal hygiene is key to having a healthy body and mind. It helps us to function properly, even in our social lives.

Practicing personal hygiene can improve the functioning of a person's immune system, increase blood flow, prevent diseases, develop confidence and improve one's self-esteem.

Personal hygiene is vital for women as they go through various cycles such as menstruation. Poor feminine hygiene can lead to many issues such as developing yeast infections, reproductive issues and urinary tract infections.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these diseases can be prevented through appropriate personal hygiene.

Yeast infection is said to be the most common disease that affects women, as it occurs during menstruation. Most people are misinformed about yeast infection.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

the fungus candida Albicans is responsible for most vaginal yeast infections. The cause of this is the overgrowth of yeast on an area of the body. The vagina naturally contains a balanced mix of yeast, including candida and bacteria. To avoid getting a yeast infection, it is advisable to take good care of yourself and stay hygienic at all times.

It is important to wear breathable underwear at all times, preferably cotton, so that it can keep the moisture away. Avoiding hot tubs and hot baths can also reduce the development of yeast infections. Always keep clean by washing your hands and body thoroughly with soap and water on a regular basis.

UNDERSTANDING YEAST INFECTION:

What are the symptoms of a vaginal yeast infection?

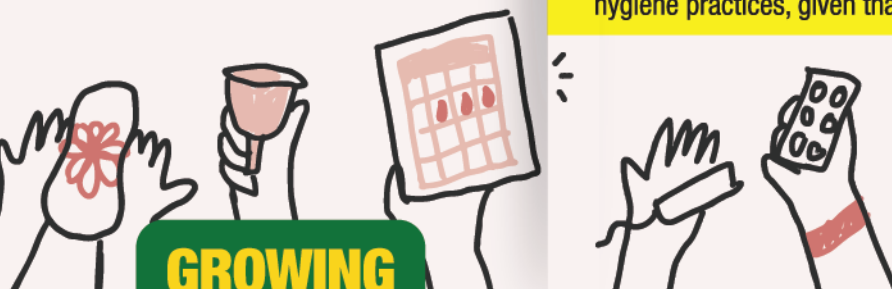
There are several signs of a vaginal yeast infection. These symptoms can include:

- An itchy sensation in the vagina and vulva.
- A thick, white vaginal discharge with the consistency of cottage cheese.
- Redness and swelling of the vagina and vulva.
- Small cuts or tiny cracks in the skin of the vulva because of friable skin in the area.
- A burning feeling when you urinate

Can it be treated?

Yes, it can be treated. There is a Short-course vaginal therapy and single dose medication. Short-course vaginal therapy includes taking an antifungal medication for three to seven days. This will usually clear a yeast infection. You may also use antifungal medications, which are available as creams, ointments and tablets.

Some of this medication is available over the counter, while other medication is by prescription only. While the intimate region of a female's body has a natural self-cleaning system, it is still imperative to take care of it through good hygiene practices, given that it's the most sensitive zone.



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HERE ARE SOME **HYGIENE TIPS** WOMEN CAN PRACTICE DAILY TO ENSURE A HEALTHY LIFE

- **Ensure proper cleaning** - it is essential to regularly and thoroughly clean the private parts using water, or mild cleansers. Moreover, refrain from over cleaning or using fragrant products with strong chemicals so as to avoid irritating the sensitive skin.
- **Wipe correctly** - once you are done using the washroom and taking a shower, follow the thumb rule of wiping front to back in order to avoid letting bacteria from your anal region move towards the vagina which can lead to urinary infections. Make sure that you also wash your hands every time before and after using the washroom, so that no germs are passed from hands to the vagina.
- **Wear comfortable clothing** - it is always recommended to avoid wearing tight clothes as sweating can potentially lead to vaginal infections. Stick to breathable innerwear that allows air flow and make sure to change your clothes after a physical activity.
- **Hygiene during menstruation** - every woman wants to feel clean, odorless and comfortable during "that time of the month." Therefore, it is of utmost importance to habitually change your sanitary pad or tampon by being stringent about not wearing it for more than five to six hours. Also, bath at least two times a day.

Feminine hygiene is important to maintain overall health, and should be part of every woman every day. The availability of different hygiene products has facilitated and helped to make the intimate areas clean. However, each woman is unique from the next.

Therefore, before using female hygiene products, it is important to consult with your doctor. Keep in mind the tips that were mentioned above, to ensure a healthy feminine routine and lifestyle.



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BE A HEALTH CHAMPION AND BE HEALTH CONSCIOUS



Every woman should make it a norm to have regular check-ups and prioritize their health before it is too late. As the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, we urge women to be health-conscious and get screened or tested for diseases. Early detection of diseases could help prevent further complications, so better be safe than sorry.

TO BEGIN WITH, WHAT IS THE FEMALE HEALTH SCREENING PROCESS?

Screening is a process of medical tests that doctors use to check women for different diseases and life-threatening health conditions before there are any signs or symptoms. In-essence, it helps reveal the problem before it shows itself. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health offers such services in all our facilities.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE REGULAR CHECK-UPS THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH URGES WOMEN TO PRIORITISE GETTING, WHICH ARE AVAILABLE FROM OUR FACILITIES:

- **Pap Smear:** a pap smear should be done by women from the age of 21 to 65 every three years according to the USPSTF U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) The Pap smear is done using a speculum to widen the vaginal canal, takes cells from the cervix with a small brush, and examines those cells for changes that could lead to cervical cancer.
- The Department also uses the Large Loop Excision of the Transformation Zone (LLETZ) machines. This is a small surgical procedure on the woman's cervix to remove that part of the cervix where the cells are becoming abnormal (dysplastic). This is an extremely effective process to nip cervical cancer in the bud, as it were.

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- **Blood Pressure Screening:** this screening should be done at least once every two years, starting from the age of 20 and for adults 39 going up. Furthermore, according to the American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, it is also recommended that routine screening start at the age of 3 years. This institute states that there is insufficient evidence for or against routine screening for high blood pressure in children and adolescents.
- **Cholesterol Check:** this check-up should be done at least once every five years according to the National Institutes of Health. Your ideal total of cholesterol levels should be less than at least 200 milligrams per decilitre (mg/dl). If it happens that you have a risk of stroke or heart disease, you are advised to make regular appointments with your doctor.
- **Mammogram:** A mammogram is a test for breast cancer which is done through the compression of breasts between plates so that X-ray images can be captured. Women are advised to take the test around the ages of 45-50 every, two years. Breast cancer can also be a genetical disease, which means you should let your doctor know earlier if anyone in your family has had a similar disease.
- **Body Mass Index:** everyone should normalize getting their weight checked every once in a while. From teenagers to adults starting from the age of 18, you should have your BMI calculated for your own good. Your BMI indicates whether or not you are obese, which is a condition of whether or not you have diabetes and heart disease.
- **Skin Examination:** this can be done at home without the assistance of a doctor. In the age of social media, you can easily look up and find different skin care routines for every skin type and use it on a daily basis. If your skin problem is severe, you can only then book an appointment to see your dermatologist, and have them examine the cause of your skin problem before it escalates to skin cancer.
- **Blood Glucose Tests:** this is one of the most vital check-ups because it could be a genetic disease that could've been passed down between family members. If you have a family history of diabetes, you are likely to be at risk, which is why you should make an early screening before it's too late. Women should get this check-up starting from the age of 45, and then every three years thereafter.
- **Dental Check-Up:** Generally, dental check-ups should be done by people of any ages, from little children to adults. Good dental health is a necessity and essential and should be done at least twice yearly, from cleaning them to examining them, where signs of decay and any other problems can be easily identified and dealt with.
- **Colon Cancer Screening:** Colon cancer is a type of cancer that begins in the large intestine (colon). The colon is the final part of the digestive tract. Colon cancer typically affects older adults, though it can happen at any age. It usually begins as small, noncancerous (benign) clumps of cells called polyps that form on the inside of the colon. Over time some of these polyps can become colon cancers.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COLON CANCER INCLUDE:

- A persistent change in your bowel habits, including diarrhoea or constipation or a change in the consistency of your stool
- Rectal bleeding or blood in your stool
- Persistent abdominal discomfort, such as cramps, gas or pain
- A feeling that your bowel doesn't empty completely
- Weakness or fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss

If you notice any persistent symptoms that worry you, make an appointment with your doctor. – mayoclinic.org
There are many other stages women face as they get older - menopause is one of them. Basically, menopause is a natural biological stage that marks the end of a woman's menstrual cycle. It is usually diagnosed after a woman has gone 12 months without having a menstrual period. Menopause can happen in a woman's 40s or early 50s.

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There are a number of physical symptoms that may signal the onset of menopause. These include hot flashes, disrupted sleep, lower energy levels, as well as mood changes that may take the form of extreme and sudden feelings of panic, anxiety, or anger.

FIRST SIGNS OF MENOPAUSE:

- Vasomotor symptoms (VMS)
- Hot flashes
- Sudden feeling of warmth that spread over the upper body
- Blushing and sweating
- Uneven periods
- Needing to pee more often
- Vaginal dryness
- Dry skin, eyes or mouth
- Hair loss
- Changes in libido (sex drive)

How are menopause tests done?

This test is called a hormone test. Your doctor may take a blood test to check your levels of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and oestrogen. During menopause the FSH levels increase and the oestrogen levels decrease.

How long does a woman stay in menopause?

Menopause can usually last about seven years but can be as long as 14 years. Its duration can also depend on lifestyle factors such as smoking and how often you exercise your body.

Is there treatment for menopause?

There are several ways to treat menopause, but the main medical treatment for menopause and perimenopause symptoms is hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which replaces the hormones that are at low levels.



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WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2022, BREASTFEEDING IS THE BEST



THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STRONGLY RECOMMENDS EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING FOR THE BABY'S FIRST SIX MONTHS, BECAUSE IT HAS A NUMBER OF INVALUABLE HEALTH BENEFITS, INCLUDING A STRONGER IMMUNE SYSTEM, AND A STRONGER BOND BETWEEN MOTHER AND BABY.

Breastfeeding also reduces the mother's risks of developing breast cancer.

The World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is commemorated every year globally from 1 to 7 August to engage and galvanize action by individuals, communities, society and organizations to promote, protect and support breastfeeding and improve health of babies around the world.

This commemorative period provides an opportunity to promote advantages of breastfeeding's advantages.

HERE ARE RESPONSES TO SOME OF THE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING:

Ten common breastfeeding questions mothers ask

My neighbour said that I should get some medicine to clean my baby's stomach. Is this important?
Colostrum, which is the first form of

breastmilk that is released by the mammary glands after giving birth, cleans the meconium from the stomach. You will not need any medicines for further cleaning as breastmilk is clean, and actually lines the stomach, protecting it from bacteria

In the first few days, if I do not have enough milk, can I give water or other milk as well?

The colostrum is all the baby needs. You just need to feed the baby often so that the milk will come in - you make lots of milk that way. Ask the midwife to give you your baby within the first half hour after birth, so you can put the baby to the breast. The baby will learn quickly how to suckle and this will help you to make more milk.

I am giving breastmilk, but the baby is not satisfied. Do I need to give formula as well?

No, you can make more milk by feeding the baby more often. Allow the baby time to drink until satisfied on one breast to make sure the baby gets hindmilk, before offering the

second breast, which the baby may or may not want. The more the baby suckles, the more milk is made

My baby wants to feed so often maybe I don't have enough milk?

Maybe the baby is growing quickly, and so needs more milk. By feeding often, you can make enough milk for his/her needs. The milk will not run out! Allow extra time for the baby to suckle - don't pull the baby off the breast. If a baby has more than 6 wet nappies every day, is being fed often (at least 8-12 times every day), and the baby is gaining at least 500g every month, then you are making enough milk.

If my baby cries often, what do I do?

Comfort your baby by putting him/her to the breast more often. Babies need to be close to their mothers. Mothers and babies sharing the same room will encourage this. If your baby is hungry, thirsty or upset, suckling at the breast will satisfy him/her. It is unlikely that you will overfeed your baby when giving breastmilk only.

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Is it good to give other drinks?

No! Adding other drinks means that the baby is more likely to get diseases like diarrhoea and pneumonia. Also, if the baby has other drinks, he/she won't suckle as often and you won't make enough milk.

Doesn't the baby need water when it is hot?

No, the first milk (foremilk) has lots of water and quenches the baby's thirst. Just make sure you feed your baby often in hot weather.

When should I add other foods?

After 6 months, continue breastfeeding as before, but add other foods as well. The baby is only ready to start learning about eating after 6 months.

What if I am HIV positive?

It is important to discuss feeding choices with your HIV counsellor. If you choose to breastfeed, be sure to breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months. Research has shown that the baby has very little chance of getting HIV from breastmilk if the mother exclusively breastfeeds. During the months that you are pregnant, and breastfeeding, be sure to use a condom during sexual intercourse to prevent any new infection. If you have any problems such as painful nipples or breasts, be sure to go to the clinic early for help.

What are the most important things for mother to remember?

- Babies under 6 months need breastmilk only, and mothers can make all the milk their baby needs. Good positioning is important for this.
- The more a baby suckles at the breast, the more milk is made
- The healthiest babies are exclusively breastfed babies



HUMAN MILK BANKS HELPING SAVE LIVES

WHAT IS A HUMAN MILK BANK?

A human milk bank is a service that screens, collects, processes and distributes human milk. The recipients of the donor milk are vulnerable premature and sick babies who do not have access to their mother's own milk. This milk gets donated by volunteer breastfeeding mothers who have excess breastmilk after feeding their own babies, and are not related to the recipient babies.

Mothers who are interested in donating their excess breast milk undergo a screening procedure. This includes a questionnaire and health screening. All donated breast milk is tested, pasteurised and frozen and ready to be supplied to vulnerable babies need.

WHO CAN DONATE?

All healthy breastfeeding women can donate breast milk that have enough breastmilk for their own baby.

Other criteria include being a:

- Non smoker
- Non drug and alcohol user, who lives a healthy lifestyle
- Person who is willing to undergo screening procedures that include HIV testing, Syphilis, TB and Hepatitis B.

WHY IS HUMAN MILK BANKING IMPORTANT?

- Human milk is easily digested by premature baby.
- It provides immune factors that protect baby against

infections, allergies and illnesses.

- Provides all nutrients babies require to grow in the first 6 month of the life.
- Human Milk Banks are a safe way of providing safe breastmilk to babies who do not have access to their mother's own milk.

THE HUMAN MILK BANK PROCESS:

- The milk is heated to a specific temperature to destroy all potential germs (called pasteurisation).
- Following heating of the milk and rapid cooling, procedures are implemented to protect the milk before it is given to the baby.
- Sterile techniques are maintained throughout the pasteurisation process.
- Donor breast milk samples are labelled with the donor number, date of collection and pasteurisation batch

number and date.

Pasteurised milk can be stored at -20 degrees Celsius for twelve (12) months. For pre-term babies, milk should be stored for only 6 months once the milk is thawed it can be stored for 24hours in a refrigerator before use.

WHAT TO EAT WHEN BREASTFEEDING?

Women who are breastfeeding should continue to eat a varied diet using the principles of the South African Food Based Dietary Guidelines.



WHEN BREASTFEEDING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO:

- Enjoy a variety of foods
- Make starchy foods part of most meals
- Chicken, fish, lean meat or eggs can be eaten everyday
- Eat dried beans, legumes, split peas, lentils and soya regularly
- Have milk, maas or yoghurt everyday
- Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit daily
- Eat at least one dark green / yellow vegetable a day
- Use fresh or frozen
- When fruit is too expensive, eat more vegetables.
- Add little / no sugar, salt or fat
- Use food and drinks containing sugar sparingly
- Eat fats sparingly. Use vegetable oils rather than hard fats
- Use salt sparingly
- Drink lots of clean, safe water
- Be active

This information is important for all.

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KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
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