

Krone icle

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Curl up and dye

A woman's crowning glory
is a healthy head of hair,
Mine's beyond redemption
and drives me to despair.

From birth it was unruly
even with spittle on it,
So mother covered it from view
with a little knitted bonnet.

As a child it was straight and thick
needed quite a lot of taming,
But was brought under control
with pony and pig tailing.

Which twin has the Toni
was an early add for perms,
Mother had my hair rolled up
the smell just made me squirm.

Beehives, French roll and the Pageboy
followed in quick succession,
Lacquered down with gels and sprays
by girls in the profession.

Now some grey is showing through
and I look at it and sigh,
My hairdresser, sensing my distress,
said it's time to "Curl up and dye"

Lorraine Fleming

HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

HRT or not HRT -
that is the question
for many women
at the time of menopause.

While studies can give us information pertaining to thousands of women from around the world, they cannot tell us the answer for each individual.

Furthermore, some study results seem to be at odds with each other, while others show definite and consistent trends.

So what do we know?

HRT is extremely effective in controlling the unpleasant symptoms some women experience at menopause. It is the oestrogen component that is most effective.

While progestagen can help to calm symptoms, in most women it is given as part of the HRT regime, only to balance a potentially harmful effect of oestrogen on the uterus.

Progestagen is extremely effective in providing this balance. Progesterone cream, while providing some help with symptoms, cannot effectively balance oestrogen and must not be used with oestrogen, unless a woman has had a hysterectomy.

HRT can also prevent the loss of bone density and even restore bone strength, thus helping in the treatment and prevention of osteoporosis. It is effective in reducing fractures in women as they age. Again, it is the oestrogen component that is most useful in this regard.

What about unwanted effects?

Several major studies have suggested a small increased risk for breast cancer in women who use HRT for more than 5 years after the age of 50.

The recently published WHI* study supported that finding. It should be noted, however, that women who develop breast cancer while taking HRT seem to achieve a better outcome regarding the cancer. The WHI study does NOT support this finding, and it has been suggested that women taking HRT should have a yearly mammogram.

Studies have also shown that women are at greater risk of developing a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism, mostly in the first few months of starting HRT.

It is considered unwise to prescribe HRT to women who have previously experienced DVT or who have a very

strong family history, at least without taking other precautions. I would advise women NOT to start taking HRT if they are considering an

HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY *continued*

overseas air trip within those first few months - as this also increases the risk of developing DVT.

The current understanding of HRT and cardiovascular disease is slightly confused. Early studies showed a protective effect of HRT, and it may still be the case that if we prescribe HRT to people with very healthy arteries, the oestrogen in the HRT helps to keep the system healthy.

The recent WHI study demonstrated an increased risk of heart attack and stroke in women ~ taking combined HRT - oestrogen and progestagen. Whether this was because of the progestagen component, or whether due to the age of the participants in the trial - many of whom were quite overweight and therefore presumably had unhealthy arteries already, remains unclear. However, it seems we need to show extreme caution in prescribing combined HRT to older women, particularly if they are starting anew after many years in a low hormone state, and particularly if there is evidence that their cardiovascular system may already be unhealthy. Oestrogen alone **may** still be safe at any age.

The dementia picture is also unclear. While previous studies had tended to show a protective effect of HRT, the

WHI study showed a greater incidence of dementia in the women taking oestrogen and progestagen. As some dementias are cardiovascular in origin, it may be due to a similar effect to that previously described for generalised cardiovascular disease.

On the positive side, the WHI study clearly demonstrated for the first time a significantly reduced fracture rate, and a slightly reduced rate of bowel cancer in women taking HRT.

So what does this mean for each individual woman?

It means that, like almost any other activity or life choice we may have to make, we need to weigh up the pros and cons, the risks versus the benefits.

Let's use the analogy of a car trip. We may wish to go on a holiday to a far away place, but we know that should we decide to drive, there are risks involved. The risks are greater if we are under 25, although not every young driver will incur that risk. We know that some roads are more dangerous than others, and we know that there are some safeguards such as ensuring that the car is roadworthy, not drinking alcohol or taking certain drugs, and stopping frequently, that will further minimise the risks.

So if the reasons for taking the trip are good enough, we will go regardless of the risks. In the same vein, some people will choose to climb Mt Everest - an extremely hazardous undertaking by anyone's reckoning!

HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY, *continued*

In the case of HRT, there are some people who probably should avoid taking it, and there are many women who will never need it. An oestrogen alone preparation is probably safer than a combined regime, but can only be taken safely by women who have had a hysterectomy. By keeping to the lowest possible dose and choosing the type of estrogen and progestagen carefully, we can minimise the risks.

The WHI study set out to discover whether a group of healthy older women (with no particular reason to take HRT) were going to be better off taking it. The study strongly suggests no, with regard to combined HRT.

However, whether or not the women were healthy to begin with remains controversial. The findings with regard to oestrogen alone, have not yet been published.

However, if someone has a clear benefit to gain from the HRT, ie reduction of menopause symptoms, or improvement of osteoporosis, then the risks can be viewed in a different light. The study tells us nothing about younger women taking HRT, nor older women who have started taking it from menopause and simply continued on. Each woman is an individual. Each woman has a unique story. It may be that different preparations and lower doses may be much safer than those used in the WHI trial.

At Women's Health Matters we encourage the woman to look at her own circumstances and make decisions based on reliable, up to date and balanced information.

Dr Christine Ahern

Introduction to the Feldenkrais Method

Come along to experience this unique approach to improving how you move in life, reducing discomfort and pain, breathing better, doing more with less effort.

Feldenkrais can be a wonderful support for everything we do regardless of age or fitness level and it's fun.

From 9:30am to 1.00pm August 7, 2003
Lismore Neighbourhood Centre

From 9:30am to 1.00pm August 8, 2003
Ballina RSL Club

A small donation, \$10, just to cover costs. Please bring a thick blanket, towel or mat and wear loose trousers or shorts. No bookings required. These sessions will be followed by two half day workshops

Walk, walk, walk - Thursday,
August 14, 15, \$30

Good gardening - Thursday,
August 21, 22, \$30

Or both for \$50

August 14th. 9.30 am - 1.00 pm

You will learn about how all parts of you work together to make your walking more efficient and pleasurable. Did you know that as you walk one side of you flexes, while the other extends, and you are twisting at the same time?

August 21st. 9.30 am - 1.00 pm

Do you know how important it is to have your pelvis aligned when gardening, especially lifting, but also digging, raking and pulling big weeds? We will also work on awareness of the back so it needn't be on continual stretch, which contributes so much to strain and pain.

Your presenters are certified Feldenkrais practitioners

Greta Seed on 6688 6372
Lyn Walker on 6687 6815

Phone us to book in.

WHY GOD CREATED CHILDREN

uphole

To those of us who have children in our lives, whether they are our own, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or students ... here is something to make you chuckle.

Whenever your children are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to His own children. After creating Heaven and Earth, God created Adam and Eve.

And the first thing He said was "Don't!"

"Don't what?" Adam replied.

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit." God said.

"Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey Eve...we have forbidden fruit!"

"No way!"

"Yes way!"

"Do NOT eat the fruit!" said God.

"Why?"

"Because I am your Father and I said so!" God replied, wondering why He hadn't stopped creation after making the elephants.

A few minutes later, God saw His children having an apple break and He was ticked!

"Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit?" God asked.

"Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?" said the Father.

"I don't know" said Eve.

"She started it!" Adam said

"Didn't!"

"Did too!"

"Did not!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set and it has never changed.

If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give children wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself.

If God had trouble raising children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

Feldenkrais lessons are movement patterns done on the floor,
sitting and standing.
They are not exercises to be repeated endlessly but are intended
to improve the quality and comfort of your movement
through experimentation and observation.
Your nervous system takes care of the rest.

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A Widow By Any Other Name

When my mother died,
the flowers came in thick,
with the scent of grief,
along with the sympathy, for our great loss.
It was well received.
If only people knew how we suffered under her reign.
The newspaper read,
The service was well attended, she left a wealthy estate.

When my friends' husband died
the flowers came in reeking of disbelief
along with the sympathy
for the tragedy of this early parting.
The gravestone said,
Dearly beloved husband and father.


When the neighbour's child died of cot death
the flowers came in blooming
with the scent of injustice
along with the sympathy and sorrow.
The parish notice read.
Donations to the SIDS Foundation.

When the teenage boy hung himself
the flowers came in drooping
as if in sympathy with his wretched soul.
The guilt ridden parents
soaked up the pity at the waste.
The note said,
*I will never be good enough to earn your love,
No one wants a poofster for a son.*

When my partner left for fields more fecund than ours
there were no flowers or donations,
no will or testament to long suffering
just a smattering of pity
and sermons of *You 're better off really.*

There is no gravestone
or epitaph
to mark the departure
of my beloved
... no wake
for this widow by any other name.

by Shé Hawke 2002



HAVING A BALL

According to Lisa Westlake, physiotherapist and author of *Strong to the Core*, a recently released guide to training on the ball, using the ball is a great way to strengthen the deep abdominal and back muscles which support the whole body.

Strengthening these muscles increases what is known as core stability, which can help guard against back injury, improve posture and increase mobility and flexibility.

"Even sitting passively on the ball, you have to concentrate on using, and therefore strengthening, these deep muscles that support the spine to keep upright", says Lisa.

"Core muscles are so deep inside that they're hard to feel and impossible to see, which may mean it's hard to isolate and use them effectively. With time and practice, using the ball helps you to recognise and activate the core muscles. The beauty of the ball is that it can be used for such a diverse range of exercises, from simply sitting to gentle stretches, right through to very challenging strength-building exercises."

Make sure it's the right Ball!

Balls are available from sports and fitness stores and vary in colour, size, cost and, unfortunately, quality.

Choose a ball that is anti-burst or burst-resistant, as they're tougher and more likely to maintain correct size and shape.

A ball with a textured surface is preferable, as shiny balls can slip in some positions.

Size is also important - when you sit on the ball, your knees and hips should be at 90 degrees. It is best to ask the store attendant which is suitable for you. The store will also inflate the ball for you.

Avoid using the ball on slippery surfaces; keep your distance from sharp objects, heaters and steps; and always stop any exercise that causes discomfort.

Before you go to the Ball

As with any new fitness regime, check with your GP or physiotherapist if you have any special needs or injuries. It's also important to start gradually and build up, as you become more proficient.

Preparing for the Ball!

Set your abdominals!

1. Sit on the ball.
2. Place one hand on the small of your back, paying attention to the natural curve of your lower spine.

**Do you (or someone you know)
have trouble hearing the TV?**

**Why not find out how captions
can assist you and your friends
to enjoy TV again?**

Captions are the reproduction of a television, video, DVD or cinema soundtrack in text format. The soundtrack appears as text, usually at the bottom of the screen, which allows a viewer to follow the soundtrack by reading it. Captions are similar to foreign language subtitles. Captions differ from subtitles in that they are coloured and positioned on the screen to distinguish each speaker and include music, sound effects and other audio cues.

Captions are available on:

- Television
- Videos
- DVDs
- Cinema screenings

There are 1.9 million Australians with a recognised hearing impairment. Many of these are seniors who have developed a gradual hearing loss through natural sensory deterioration that comes with ageing. Australian Hearing Services tells us that 50% of over-65-year-olds will develop some degree of hearing loss.

The Australian Caption Centre is a national, not-for-profit organisation that provides information on captioning to the general public. Information is provided through mail outs, a Free Call phone/TTY number, the Centre's website and by presentations to the community.

To find out more about captions in the community, staff members from the Australian Caption Centre are available to visit clubs or groups to give a fun and informative presentation about captions.

To book a presentation, Special Projects Manager on Free Call 1800 777 801.

NATIONAL CAPTIONING HELPLINE
1800 777 801 (VOICE/TLY)

ADDRESS
Level 4, 187 Thomas Street, Haymarket
NSW 2000

FAX 02 9281

EMAIL infoserv@auscap.com.au

WEBSITE www@auscap.com.au

HAVING A BALL, continued

3. Place your other hand on your lower abdomen, below your navel.
4. Lengthen your spine (think tall, not rigidly straight) but relax your shoulders and breathing.
5. Gently draw your front hand towards your back hand, as though you are slightly drawing your abdomen towards your spine. This action is 'setting your abdominals'.
6. Don't hold your breath or suck in your waist - it defeats the purpose. Relax.

**NOW
YOU ARE READY
TO GO
TO THE BALL!**

Acting chirpy makes you happy, say researchers

You can make yourself happy simply by behaving in bold or extroverted ways, according to an unusual series of studies being carried out by American psychologists.

Regardless of whether you are shy or outgoing, almost any extroverted behaviour has a positive impact on your mood, researchers report in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

"I don't think it's the only way to find happiness, but I do think it's a neglected way," said Associate Professor Will Fleeson, a psychologist at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, USA, who led the study. "People too often look outside themselves for things to make them happy."

The report details three related studies, in each of which about 50 randomly selected university students carried palmtop computers for up to 10 weeks at a time. They used the devices to regularly record their answers to set questions about their mood and their activities.

Subjects invariably felt happier when they were involved in outgoing activities, ranging from simply singing aloud with a song on the radio to walking over and talking to someone attractive.

"Every single participant in the study was happier when he or she acted extroverted than when he or she acted introverted," Fleeson said. "Even introverts can act extroverted and become happier by changing their behaviour."

The studies found that people can make themselves happy either in the company of others or alone, Fleeson told ABC Science Online. "The research demonstrates that extroversion can actually cause happiness."



In social settings, being more talkative or more assertive, voicing an opinion during a discussion or asking a question in class all have positive effects, he said.

"But you can do things by yourself that work just as well, especially bold activities. I'm thinking of things like going hiking, climbing a mountain, whitewater rafting or anything adventurous like that," he said.

In further but as yet unpublished laboratory studies, conducted with graduate student Murray McNeil, Fleeson believes his team has now experimentally confirmed these findings. "I think it's definitely been proved now that being extroverted makes you happy," he said.

Subjects who were asked, for example, to be assertive and energetic during a group discussion were then judged - both by themselves and by observers - to be significantly happier afterwards than those who were instructed to be passive and reserved.

Fleeson's special interest is the study of self-regulation: what people do, try to do, and are able to do to improve the quality of their lives. Some types of self-regulation add to successful, satisfying lives, while others lead to dead ends, frustrated hopes and wasted resources, he notes.

*Acting chirpy
makes you happy,
say researchers,
continued*

"As a society, we tend to think of happiness as something that comes from outside us. It's kind of a radical idea that we have some control of happiness, that personality is a factor in happiness and that, to some extent, we have control over our personalities," Fleeson said.

He now believes that if people want to be happier and choose to act more outgoing, adventurous or assertive, then they have the power to directly improve their own well-being.

Bob Beale - ABC Science Online

News in Science Health News
Abc.net.au/science/news
24/02/2003

More Info

Emotion in the body mapped by the mind,
News in Science 22 Sep.2000

Emotional Intelligence, 'Catalyst' - ABC TV,
13th June 2002

Technology won't bring lasting happiness,
News in Science 29 May 2000

RESULTS FROM CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Every year WHM sends out a Client Satisfaction Survey to 200 clients who have used our clinical services during the previous year. This represents nearly 20% of our clients. They are chosen randomly (but we make sure they have not been surveyed before) and their answers are completely confidential.

153 (76.5%) questionnaires were returned. This is an amazingly high number and we are being complemented within the Area Health Service for this.

The compliments really belong to all those survey participants who took the time and effort to give us feedback. Thank you!

As for the feedback on the questionnaires we are overwhelmed with the compliments. They gave the whole team a boost. But as with all surveys we are sending it out so that we can find out how we can improve and as a result of this one we have (among others) introduced these new activities:

A take home check list of recommended actions resulting from discussion during the consultation.

We are handing out a 'package' consisting of a Service Brochure, a pamphlet on Rights & Responsibilities and a current Health Promotion Program to all clients in reception.

When women are placed on a waiting list for Health Promotion activities we are now asking for addresses (as well as phone numbers) in case we cannot get through on the phone when the course becomes available.

We will start to send out our Health Promotion activities and WHM Service Brochure to G.P.s in the area.

There were requests for Health Promotion activities in varied locations and times.

First the good news:

52% of our activities are held outside of Lismore (from Grafton to Tweed and West as far as Tabulam) and 25% are held in the evenings.

Unfortunately we have limited resources and we are very stretched to do what we do. But we are trying to be creative in how to best service your needs and we have waiting lists for courses we run.

There were many more suggestions and results from 'tick questions that made us explore how we could make this already very good service (as the feedback showed we were) an even better service to you our clients. Here I have only the space to comment on a few. If you would like a more thorough report please contact me and I will send you one.

Chalta

HEALTH NEWS FOR WOMEN

INCREASE YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY!

If you are like most of my patients, you find it hard to become more physically active. You may be busy with work and family, have a sedentary job, or live in an area where you have to drive to most of your destinations. Even so, there are ways to build physical activity into your daily life. And if you do so, you may reduce your risk of developing colon cancer by as much as 50 percent. Even moderate physical activity, such as taking a brisk one-hour-long walk, can be as protective as more strenuous activity.

So what can you do?

Here are a few tips that have worked for some:

- Find an activity that you enjoy. It is much easier to continue a pattern of exercise if you enjoy what you are doing.
- Take a walk at lunch time with a friend. Walk as fast as you can while continuing normal conversation.
- Exercise with your children. Bicycling, soccer, and skating are only some of the options. You will also help your children develop healthy habits; after all, you are an important role model.
- Take a class in tai chi, yoga, or dance, which involve a lot of stretching (and mild sweating). These may be available in community centres.
- Plant a garden and maintain it. Mow your lawn instead of hiring someone else to do it.
- If you find it hard to be active for half an hour at a time, aim for ten minute chunks of time, which can be just as effective.
- Park the car at the farthest end of the parking lot and walk to the mall.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator at work.
- Do housework in ten or fifteen minute segments every day.

Trish O'Brien -
Women's Health Matters
and NRAHS Spokeswoman

WOMEN'S INFORMATION DAY - COFFS HARBOUR

On Thursday 4th September a workshop will be held in Coffs Harbour open to all women in the NSW Public Sector.

The cost of the day is \$88 per person, and the theme, venue and further details will be available closer to September.

This day is run by the Spokeswomen's Programme, NSW Premier's Department. So, make a note of this! For further details, phone Jen Ireland on 6620 2566.

Are YOU a Carer?

Many women who have a major responsibility caring for others do not identify themselves as a "carer", or use the services in the community which may be available to them. This may be because caring for others seems like a normal part of their lives or the situation may have gradually evolved as a partner or other relative or friend becomes more dependent.

To use government funded services for carers, you need to be a person who "looks after relatives or friends who have a disability, a chronic illness or are frail aged." The person you care for may live in the same house or you may care for them in other accommodation.

If you come into this category, you may be interested in the CARER RETREATS which we run in partnership with the Far North Coast Carer Respite Centre.

Why Go on a Retreat?

Comments from the many women who have come on retreats over the past five years include the following:

"I feel that I can go on now and cope much better with my situation."

"I enjoyed sitting watching the early morning on the ocean."

"It was an unexpected treat - I could take a lot of it."

"I have learnt that I must think more of myself and look after my own health."

"What I enjoyed most was the company of people who understood where I was coming from."

"This retreat has been refreshing, fun, informative, relaxing - a special treat."

"The resort was beautiful."

Activities you can choose from include walks along the beach, going out to dinner, a massage, shopping expeditions, swimming in the heated pool, as well as sessions on stress management, women's health and information about carer services.

Numbers are limited to between four to eight women at each retreat.

Respite care can be arranged where necessary and transport can also be provided.

As a women's health service we encourage all carers to take time out for themselves, to pay attention to their own health and wellness needs, so that the demands of caring for someone can be met without sacrificing your own health and well being.

Finally, carers who give so much to others and to the community, also deserve some pampering, some fun, and a bit of Rest & Relaxation occasionally themselves.

Ring Helga or Pam on 6620 2999 to find out more and to book your place.

PS If you have been on a retreat in the past and could go again at short notice, ring Pam to be put on a cancellation waiting list.

Women's Health Matters

Out of the Blues - Pottsville

6 weekly sessions, providing an opportunity to learn skills to manage moods creatively. If you've ever felt you've got the Blues and don't know how to get out of them, if you're a woman in mid-life or older, this is for you.

WHEN: Monday 11th August, 2003
TIME: 10.30 am - 1.00 pm
VENUE: Pottsville Neighbourhood Centre, 14 Elizabeth St Pottsville.
COST: **Free**, with commitment to Attendance at all sessions. **Morning tea provided.**
BOOKINGS: 6620 2999 or 07 5524 8711 (Family Centre, South Tweed).

Pelvic Floor Course, Grafton

3 sessions. In a small friendly group women will find out about different types of bladder problems, how they develop, and how they can be treated or prevented.

WHEN: Monday 1st September, 2003
TIME: 10.00 am - 12.30 pm
VENUE: To be announced.
COST: **Free**
BOOKINGS: 6640 2402

Better Bones Seminar - Casino

This seminar on Osteoporosis will Provide the latest information on causes, risk factors, screening methods and treatment options.

WHEN: Wednesday 10th September, 2003
TIME: 1.30 - 4.00pm
VENUE: Casino RSM Club 162 Canterbury St Casino
COST: **Free**
SPEAKER: Dr. Nicola Foster
BOOKINGS: 6620 2999

Menopause - Pottsville

The physical and emotional effects And the different options available. HRT - is it for you?

WHEN: Tuesday 26th August, 2003
TIME: 6.00 - 8.30 pm
VENUE: Pottsville Neighbourhood Centre, 14 Elizabeth St Pottsville.
COST: **Free**
SPEAKER: Dr. Christine Ahern
BOOKINGS: 6676 4555 or 6620 2999

Care for the Carers

2 day residential - relaxation, massage and time out for mid life and older women who care for a family member. Respite care can be arranged to suit your circumstances through the Far North Coast Respite Centre. Transport can be arranged.

WHEN: 2nd - 4th September 11th 13th November
TIME: 1.30pm Tuesday to 1.30pm Thursday
VENUE: Grande Florida Resort
COST: **\$30**
BOOKINGS: 6620 2999

Winter program 2003

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Postage
Paid
Lismore

Gloria Constine
P.O. Box 209
NIMBIN 2480

If undelivered please return to Women's
Health Matters, PO Box 419, Lismore 2480

Input to Kroneicle

We encourage all readers to contribute stories, poems,
articles etc., either that you have written yourself or
that you have enjoyed and
would like to share with others.

Anyone who would like to be involved with the
editing and production of the
Krone-icle please contact Pam
on **6620 2999**
