BEING A HEALTHY WOMAN



An educational resource for women with intellectual disability, their families, health care providers, carers and support workers



NSW DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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© NSW Department of Health 2009 SHPN – PHCP 100045 ISBN 978 1 74187 505 8

For further copies of this document please contact:

Better Health Centre Publications Warehouse PO Box 672 North Ryde BC, NSW 2113 Tel (02) 9887 5450 Fax (02) 9887 5452

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NSW Health website: www.health.nsw.gov.au

Acknowledgements

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Centre for

Disability

Studies





The working party would like to acknowledge the many women with intellectual disability with whom we have come in contact over the years. It is their experiences that have led to the development of this educational resource to empower them to be active participants in their health care.

We also extend our thanks to the many women, families and carers who attended focus groups and provided valuable feedback during the development of this resource.

We would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of Ms Merri Collier, illustrations; Ms Dawn Leyland, colouring of the illustrations; Mr Greg Gaul for the condom and lube drawing on pages 40 and 42 and Ms Charlie Aarons, graphic design.

We thank the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability, for the generous use of illustrations that have previously appeared as part of the "Healthier Lives" fact sheets.

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This kit is to help women learn more about their health. It has easy words and lots of pictures. We think it might be good to ask for some help to read it like a support worker or family member.

It is also good for teaching groups. Any of the pages can be copied for teaching about health.

There are 16 topics. They talk about teenage girls, women and older women.

ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU



You have a right to learn about your health and your body.

Ask questions. If you don't understand tell the doctor.

You should talk to the doctor when something changes to your body. You may feel sick or have a pain.

A doctor can talk about your feelings, help you stay healthy and help you when you are sick.

You can take someone with you to the doctor. It may make it easier to talk to the doctor. The doctor should still talk to you.

ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU



You can write questions before you go to the doctor to help you remember what you want to ask.

It is important to get to know your doctor. You should choose a doctor you can talk to.

You never stop learning about your health and your body.

ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

Where can you find out more

NSW Council for Intellectual Disability

Easy English fact sheets.

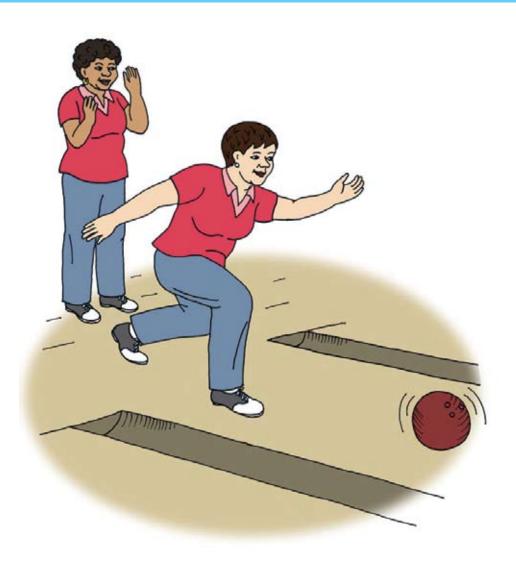


(02) 9211 1611 or1800 424 065(calls outside Sydney)



www.nswcid.org.au

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read BEING HEALTHY
HEALTHY EATING



There are lots of ways to stay healthy.

Eat healthy food and exercise. This will help you stay healthy by not putting on too much weight. Being overweight can make your body sick. It can be a sign that you are not happy. Try to stay a healthy weight.

Healthy food and exercise will keep your bones strong. As you get older your bones loose strength and can break. This is called osteoporosis.





Be active. For example, use the stairs not the lift.

Exercise every day. There are lots of different ways to exercise that are fun.

Do things that make you feel happy.

Having a job, doing volunteer work or spending time with friends or family doing fun things will help to keep you happy and healthy. You might need help to find these.





Brush your teeth every morning and night.

You may clean them better if you use an electric toothbrush. See your dentist at least once every year. If your teeth are not healthy your body can get sick.

See your doctor at least once every year for a full check-up. The doctor may need to do blood tests and take your blood pressure. The doctor will also talk to you about whether you want to have needles (called immunisations) which help you to stay healthy.



There is a special needle for young women for HPV which is a virus that causes cancer of the cervix.



Sometimes you need to take medicine to keep you healthy. Your doctor should tell you why you are taking the medicine. Ask questions if you do not understand. The doctor should check how your medicines are working for you.





Smoking is bad for your body. It will make your body sick.

Avoid smoking and drinking too much alcohol. More than 2 drinks of alcohol a day is too much. Drinking alcohol every day can make your body sick.



It can make you sick if you drink alcohol with some medicines. Talk to your doctor about your medicines and drinking alcohol.



Where can you find out more	
Health Direct You can speak to nurses who can give you health information. You can ask questions. Let them know you have an intellectual disability.	1800 022 222 www.healthdirect.org.au
Scope Healthy Mouths An Easy English Guide.	www.scopevic.org.au Go to resources and then to Health and Wellbeing

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU HEALTHY EATING FEELING SAD AND FEELING HAPPY

You can choose food to eat that can keep your body healthy.

Healthy food can taste good.

To lose weight you need to eat healthy food and exercise.

Every day you need to eat 3 meals.

You need to eat different types of food every day.

Every day you need to try to eat 2 pieces of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables.



You also need to eat protein foods like meat, chicken, fish, beans and eggs.



Also eat energy foods like whole grain bread and cereals or pasta.



Make sure you have some foods like low-fat milk, cheese or yoghurt.





Try to drink water or low-fat milk.



You can eat healthy snacks like popcorn without sugar or butter, rice crackers, fruit, low fat yoghurt.

You can eat foods like chocolate, biscuits, cakes and soft drinks sometimes. They should not be eaten every day. These are foods that have lots of fat and sugar which can make you sick if you have too much. They also make you put on weight.

Try to choose foods that don't have a lot of fat or sugar in them.

It is better not to have more than 2 or 3 cups of tea or coffee a day.

You can talk to you doctor about how much food you should eat to stay healthy.

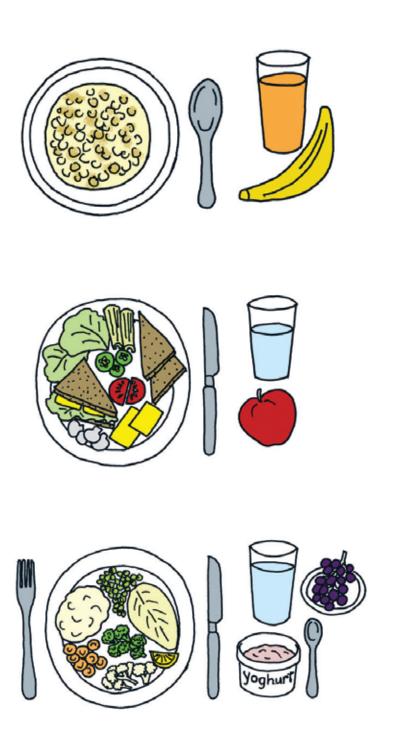
Some people with health problems such as diabetes may need to have a special food plan. There are people called dieticians who can help you to learn about choosing foods that are right for you.



If you are eating at a café or restaurant you can still choose foods that are healthy.

It is important to always eat breakfast. Try different foods like wholegrain toast, fruit, cereal, noodles or yoghurt to see what you like best.

It is a good idea to sit down to eat you meal. Sometimes, if you go to work or a day activity you might eat your lunch in a lunchbox. Some people might have meals like the pictures below.



Where can you find out more		
NSW Council for Intellectual Disability Easy English fact sheets.	a	(02) 9211 1611 or 1800 424 065 (calls outside Sydney)
		www.nswcid.org.au
Diabetes Education/ Healthy Eating University of Queensland site with easy read information about diabetes and looking after yourself.	-	www.som.uq.edu.au/ research/qcidd <i>Go to resources</i>

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY

Everyone gets sad or angry or worried sometimes. These are normal feelings.

People feel scared or angry if they are being hurt or being told to do things that they do not want to do.

If you feel sad or scared or angry all the time tell someone you trust so they can help you.



People might feel that nobody likes them. They may feel like giving up. If you feel like this tell someone you trust.

Drinking too much alcohol or taking drugs might make you feel bad.



There are changes on the inside of your body as you get older. These changes are caused by chemicals called hormones. This may cause some people to feel sad, angry or worried.

Some people have an illness called depression. Depression is more than just feeling sad. They may feel that they do not want to do the things they enjoy. They may not sleep well.



They may be irritable or moody. They may not eat. They may not want to see their friends. They may stop caring about themselves.

Depression is a common illness and there are people who can help. If your feelings stop you doing things like going out or people are worried about you then you need some help.

What you can do to feel better

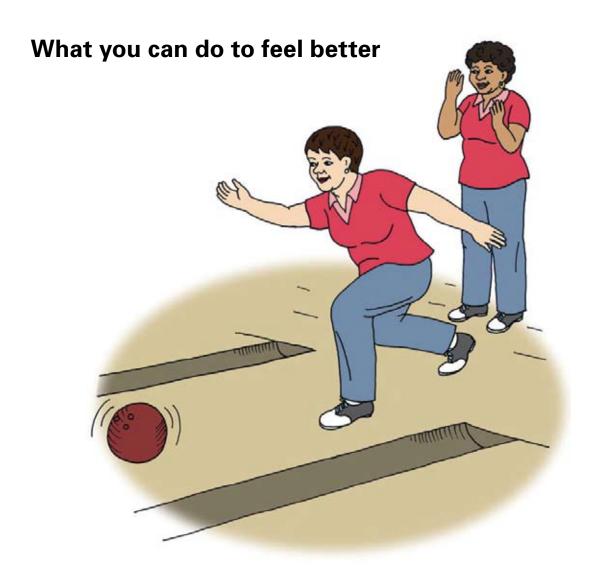
Talk to your friends, family, advocate or support worker. They can support you to make choices that feel good for you.

Build a strong group of friends who can look out for you.





You may feel better if you exercise or do more fun things so you aren't bored.



It can help to listen to relaxing music. You might want to paint or dance. You can visit friends or play with a pet.

A counsellor can talk to you about your feelings and ways to feel better.

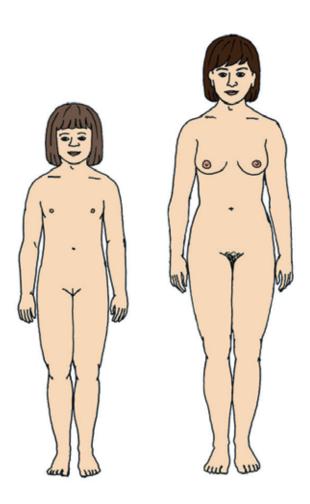
You may need to see a doctor and take medicine to help you to feel better. Sometimes you may need to try more than one medicine to find the one that is right for you.



Where can you find out more		
The Bridging Project This Victorian website is for people with an intellectual disability who also have a mental health problem.		www.bridgingproject.org.au
Beyond Blue		
The National Depression Initiative	•	1300 22 46 36
Remember to tell them you have an intellectual disability.		24 hours 7 days a week
You may need a support person to help you look at this website.		www.beyondblue.org.au

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read
ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY
GRIEF AND LOSS

PUBERTY



When your body changes from being a girl to looking more like a woman it is called puberty. It means you are growing up. In some families girls have a special party to celebrate.

All girls go through puberty. It is normal. Most of the time it starts happening when you are about 12 or 13 years old but you might be a little bit younger or older. Puberty lasts for about 3 years. If it doesn't happen you need to see a doctor.

Boys go through puberty as well. It means that are becoming more like a man.

PUBERTY

Lots of changes happen to your body and to your feelings.

You are in charge of your body. An important rule about your body is that you own it. No one may touch your body unless you want them to and you say that they can.

You also need to look after you body. It is up to you to keep it clean. You need to have a bath or a shower every day. You need to wash your hair at least once a week. It is good to use deodorant under you arms.

Talk with someone you trust about the changes that happen to you during puberty.



PUBERTY

Where can you find out more

Family Planning NSW Healthline

You can speak to a nurse about puberty and periods.

There are lots of fact sheets available on the web site.

There is a library where you can borrow books. They will post them to you.



1300 658 886



www.fpnsw.org.au



(02) 8752 4386

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read
ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
HAVING YOUR PERIODS
GROWING UP

How periods happen

When you go through puberty you will start having your periods. This is when blood comes from your vagina. It will last for about 5 days. This happens every month.

Having periods is also called menstruation.

Most women have periods.

When you start having your periods you may feel scared, embarrassed, or excited and happy.

The bleeding means your body is healthy.

Missing your period could mean you are sick.

If you have had sex with a man and miss your period, it could mean you are pregnant.

If you don't get your period one month you should see your doctor.

Having your periods is private. You can talk about it with someone you trust or your doctor.



What to do when you have your periods

You will need to learn how to look after yourself when you have your period.

You will learn how to use pads that go inside your underpants. These catch the blood so it doesn't get on your clothes. There are different types of pads. You will need to find the right pads for you. You will need to wear underpants that are big enough for the pad.



Some women use tampons that go inside the vagina to catch the blood.

You change your pads and tampons when they have blood on them.



You only change your pads or tampons in a private place.

A toilet is a private place.

You put pads or tampons in a bin.



Do not leave them lying around.

Do not put them in the toilet.



Wash your hands after changing your pad or tampon.



Before leaving the toilet check that your clothes are not tucked into your underpants.



You can still do most things when you have your periods.



Sometimes when you get your period you may have pain in your stomach. You aren't sick. The pains are called cramps. You should tell someone. Resting, warm packs and medicine might make you feel better. You may need to see a doctor.

Sometimes you might feel sad or angry just before or during your period. This is normal and you will feel better soon.

If you have epilepsy you might have a seizure when you have your period. If this happens see your doctor.

Some women have very bad pain or headaches when they have periods. There is medicine that stops periods. You need to talk to a doctor about this.

There are lots of books and movies that you can borrow to learn more about periods.

You should talk to someone you trust about periods.

Where can you find out more

Family Planning NSW Healthline

You can speak to a nurse about puberty and periods.

There are lots of fact sheets available on the web site.

There is a library where you can borrow books. They will post them to you.



1300 658 886



www.fpnsw.org.au



(02) 8752 4386

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read PUBERTY GROWING UP

GROWING UP

When you are getting ready to finish school, you start to make more choices about your life. You are becoming more independent.

Your friends and activities become more important to you.

You might start thinking about getting a job.

You might start thinking about moving out of home when you are older.

You might start visiting the doctor by yourself.



GROWING UP

It is good to try new things like going out with your friends to the movies or a new day program or job.



Some things like smoking, taking drugs and drinking too much alcohol are bad and can make you sick.

It is ok to say no if you don't want to try things you know are wrong.

You might make new friends that you have special feelings for. You may want to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend.



GROWING UP

Where can you find out more

NSW Council for Intellectual Disability

Easy English fact sheets.



(02) 9211 1611 or1800 424 065(calls outside Sydney)



www.nswcid.org.au

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read

ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

HAVING YOUR PERIODS

PUBERTY

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX

Close relationships make people feel happy. They share, they talk to each other and they do fun things together. They might go out on a date, they may hold hands, and they may kiss.

Sometimes a person might have 'sexy feelings' about someone and want them to be their boyfriend or girlfriend. Sometimes they might want to have sex or do other sexy things together.

Everyone has sexy feelings. It is normal. Sexy feelings include feeling dizzy, heart beats fast, blushing, tingling in vagina, vagina feels a bit wet.

Many people like to hug and kiss. This is not sex.



The law says people can have sex if they are over 16 years old and both people want to. You should only have sex in a private place. Your bedroom with the door closed is a private place.

Some women like to have sex with men. Some women like to have sex with women.

Some women don't want to have sex but when they have 'sexy feelings' they might want to masturbate in their private room. Some words for masturbation are 'playing with yourself' or 'touching your private parts'.

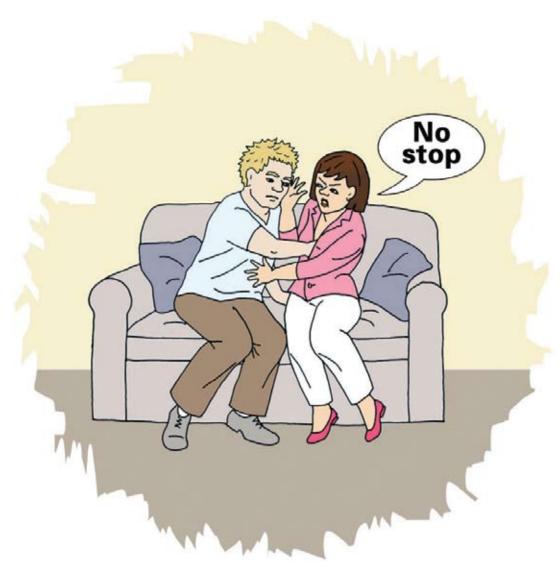


Good sex is in private.

Good sex is when both people want to have sex or sexy touching and say 'yes'.

Good sex is caring, it is fun and it is safe.

It's ok to feel nervous when you choose to have sex for the first time. Your boyfriend or girlfriend should listen to you. They should not push you to have sex. Good sex can mean taking things slowly.



Bad sex

Bad sex is when someone forces you to have sex, or to do sexy touching. Forcing means they make you do something you don't want to do.

No-one should force you to have sex. No-one should touch you on your private parts if you don't want them to.

Bad sex can make you feel very upset and confused.

Bad sex can also be when someone has sex with you but the law says they are not allowed. For example, your support worker or carer is not allowed to have sex with you or do sexy touching on your private parts.

It is against the law for anyone in your family to have sex with you or touch you on your private parts.

Bad sex is not fun. Bad sex is not safe. Bad sex is wrong. It is against the law.

Say 'no' to bad sex.

If bad sex is happening to you then you need to tell someone you trust so that they can help you.

Learn about sex

It's important to learn about sex. You can read special books, talk to people you trust or go to special classes.

Where can you find out more				
Family Planning NSW Healthline		1300 658 886		
You can speak to a nurse about close relationshisp and sex.		www.fpnsw.org.au		
There are lots of fact sheets available on the web site.				
There is a library where you can borrow books. They will post them to you.	•	(02) 8752 4386		
NSW Rape Crisis Centre		1800 424 017		
A 24 hour telephone and online service for anyone who needs to talk about bad sex or rape.		www.nswrapecrisis.com.au		

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read

SAFER SEX

HAVING A PAP TEST

DECIDING TO BECOME A PARENT

Keep safe from an unwanted pregnancy

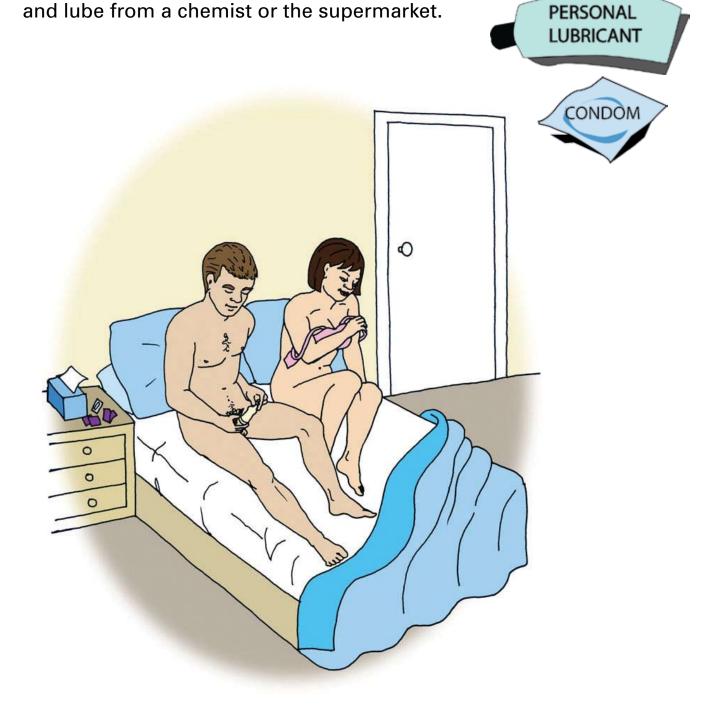
Once you get your periods, if you have sex with a man you might get pregnant. Being pregnant means you are going to have a baby.

If you want to have sex and you don't want to have a baby you need to take charge of your body. This means talking to your doctor and asking about some ways to stop getting pregnant.

You can ask about taking medicine (the pill) or having a needle (this might be called depo provera) or an implant in your arm (this is called Implanon). This is called contraception.



You husband or boyfriend should wear a condom and use lube. Lube is a gel that is put on the condom. It makes it easier to have sex. It may stop the condom breaking. You can buy condoms and lube from a chemist or the supermarket.



There are operations that a doctor can do to stop you having babies. You have to be very sure about this decision. These operations mean you can never have a baby.

Sometimes people try to make women with intellectual disability have this operation. When women cannot make their own decisions, the Guardianship Tribunal are the only people who can say yes to this operation for them.

To make a good decision about not having a baby you need to get information and talk to people you trust.



Keep safe from sex diseases

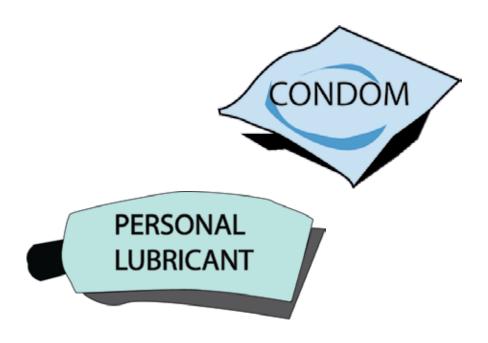
When you have sex you may get a sex disease.

These are called STIs or sexually transmissible infections.

You may not know that you have a STI. There may be no symptoms. Sometimes you might get redness, itchiness, pain or a smelly fluid from your vagina.

STIs can be treated with medicine. If you are worried then you need to speak to your doctor.

Wearing a condom and using lube every time you have sex helps to stop you getting a sex disease. It can also stop you passing on a sex disease.



Keep safe from being hurt



Both people have to agree to have sex. If you or the other person does not want to then you should not have sex.

Say no if you do not want to have sex.

If someone makes you have sex and you don't want to, you should tell someone you trust.

Where can you find out more				
Family Planning NSW Healthline	•	1300 658 886		
You can speak to a nurse.	_			
There are lots of fact sheets available on the web site.		www.fpnsw.org.au		
There is a library where you can borrow books. They will post them to you.	•	(02) 8752 4386		
Guardianship Tribunal		1800 463 928, or		
The Tribunal works to make sure that	•	(02) 9556 7600		
good decisions are made for people who cannot make their own decisions. This includes decisions about medical treatments.		www.gt.nsw.gov.au		
NSW Rape Crisis Centre		1800 424 017		
A 24 hour telephone and online service for anyone who needs to talk about bad sex or rape.		www.nswrapecrisis.com.au		

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX HAVING A PAP TEST DECIDING TO BECOME A PARENT



Choices

Deciding to become a parent is a big decision. Some women want to have a baby and some women don't. Some women want to have a baby but they can't get pregnant.

Having a baby and looking after children is an important job. It can be rewarding but it is a big responsibility. It is a lot of work and can be very hard.

Before you start trying to get pregnant think about how being a parent may affect your life. Talk to your partner because it will affect him too. Talk with family, friends and maybe your support worker about what you are thinking.

Babies grow up to become toddlers, bigger children and then teenagers. Everyone needs help to look after children. Parents with intellectual disability may need extra help to make sure that they and their baby stay healthy, safe and happy.

If you decide not to be a parent, you can still have babies and children in your life. For example you may have nieces and nephews, you may work or volunteer to work with children.



If you become pregnant but you do not want to be a parent you should speak with someone you trust and your doctor as soon as you can. They will talk with you about what choices you have.

Questions to think about before getting pregnant

- Do you like babies and older children?
- Have you ever looked after children before?
- Is your body healthy enough to have a baby?
- Where would you and your baby live?
- Do you have enough money to look after a baby? If you don't have enough what would you do?
- Would you have to stop work to look after your baby?
- Who would help you to look after the baby?
- Would you need help to do the shopping and cooking for your family?
- Who could help look after your baby if you need a rest or get sick?
- What sort of things would you and your baby do during the day?
- Who would you call if you were worried about your baby or if they were sick?
- What are the services where you live that help parents?

Staying healthy

Stop smoking before you get pregnant. Smoking will hurt the health of your baby. Your doctor can help you quit. Noone should smoke near your baby or near you when you are pregnant.



Do not drink alcohol when you are trying to get pregnant or when you are pregnant. Drinking alcohol can hurt your baby as it is growing.



Eating good food will keep your body healthy and in the best condition to be pregnant.





Before you get pregnant both you and your baby's father need to make sure you are healthy. You need to see your doctor who will take some blood tests and talk to you about taking special vitamins to help the baby.

The doctor will also talk to you and your boyfriend/ husband about what medicines you are taking. You may also need some needles (immunisations).



Some medicines and vitamins can hurt a baby as it is growing. Always talk to your doctor about all the medicines and vitamins you are taking. You might need time to change some of your medicines before you get pregnant.

You can talk to a doctor about the chance your baby might be born with a disability. You can have some tests. You can make your own choice about the tests.

Where can you find out more

Healthy Start For Me and My Baby

A book for pregnant women with learning difficulties.

You will need to purchase this book. The order form is on the website.



(02) 9351 9510



www.healthystart.net.au

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read
ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
BEING PREGNANT

BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY

HEALTHY EATING

Good things to do

You need to take extra care of yourself when you are pregnant.

You may have lots of mixed feelings. You might feel happy, excited, scared or worried. It's normal to have these feelings and it is good to talk about them.

You could join a group of other women who are pregnant or maybe talk to other women that you trust who have been pregnant. It is good to also talk to your family and friends about your feelings.



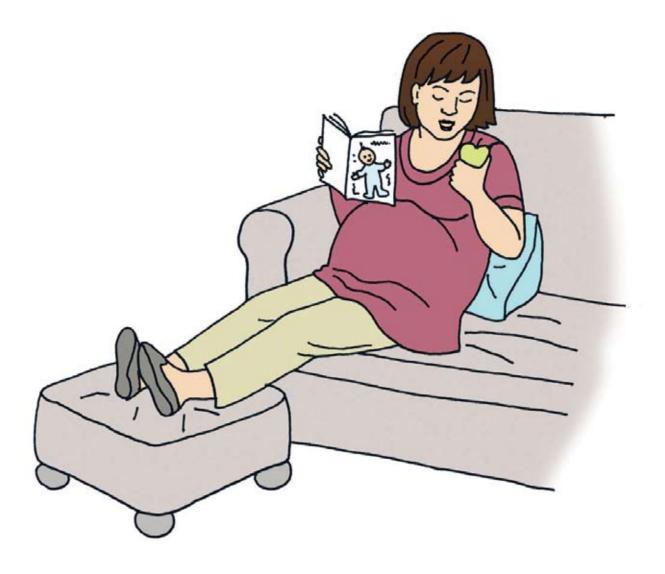
Stay active and exercise but talk to your doctor about what is safe. Some places have special exercise classes for pregnant women.



Eat healthy food. Some foods are not safe to eat when you are pregnant.

Talk to your doctor about what foods to stay away from.

Take a lot of rests. It is normal to feel more tired when you are pregnant.



Things not to do

Smoking and drinking alcohol will hurt your baby. Try to stay away from places where other people are smoking as even this smoke can hurt your baby. Your doctor can help you to quit smoking.





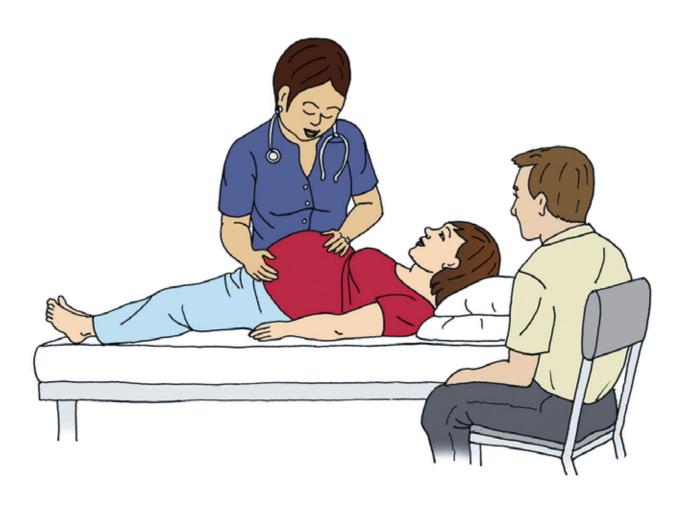
Some medicines are very dangerous to a baby when it is growing inside you. Talk to your doctor about your medicines. Don't take any medicine or vitamins unless your doctor has said it is ok.

You can call Mothersafe on (02) 9382 6539 if you are worried about a medicine or vitamin that you are taking.

Who can help you

When you are pregnant you will see your doctor or a midwife. A midwife is a nurse who looks after pregnant women. They will help to make sure that you and your baby stay healthy.

The doctor or midwife may suggest that you have tests to see how the baby is growing. They may be blood tests or a special x-ray called an ultrasound.



There is a lot to learn when you are pregnant and your doctor or midwife will help you. It can be hard sometimes as there are a lot of things to remember and learn. It is ok to ask as many questions as you want to.

A social worker can help you. They can talk about your feelings and help you plan for when the baby arrives. Your support worker or midwife at the hospital can help you find a social worker.



Where can you find out more

There are many books about pregnancy. *Healthy Start for Me and My Baby* is a book for women with learning difficulties and the midwives who look after you before your baby is born. It helps you to learn about being pregnant. You can write in it and you can take it to your appointments.

Where can you find out more		
Healthy Start For Me and My Baby	•	(02) 9351 9510
A book for pregnant women with learning difficulties.		www.healthystart.net.au
You will need to purchase this book. The order form is on the website.	-	,
Mothersafe		(02) 9382 6539
You can call Mothersafe if you are worried about a medicine or vitamin that you are taking.		

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY

HEALTHY EATING

DECIDING TO BECOME A PARENT

What is a Pap test

A Pap test is only for women. It helps to prevent cancer. It can save your life.

If you are over age 18 and you have had sex you should see your doctor to have a Pap test.

Even if you have had a needle for HPV you should still have a Pap test if you have had sex.

A Pap test is a check-up to make sure that your vagina and cervix are healthy. It checks to see if there are any changes inside the vagina or on the cervix.

Most women need a Pap test every 2 years. If there are any changes they are found early. This means that they can be treated. If the changes are not found and treated they could lead to cancer.

What happens when you have a Pap test



Tell the receptionist that you want a Pap test so she can book a long appointment.

You can ask to see a lady doctor.

You can take someone with you to the doctor.

Tell your doctor if you want to have a practice Pap test first. Your doctor can talk about what happens in the Pap test. You can see the things that are used to do a Pap test. You can lie on the bed like in a real Pap test. Your next visit to the doctor would be the real Pap test.

It is important to tell the doctor if you feel worried or scared. You can tell the doctor to stop doing the Pap test at any time.



Don't have a Pap test if you are having your period.

Before you go in to see the doctor make sure you go to the toilet to do a wee.

When you have the Pap test you will need to lie down on the bed in the clinic and take off your underpants.

To do a Pap test the doctor will put an instrument into the vagina to keep it open. The doctor will use a very small brush to touch the inside of your vagina and your cervix to make sure it is healthy. The doctor will also look inside your vagina. This is not sexual touching.



It only takes 15 minutes to have a Pap test.

A Pap test is uncomfortable but it could save your life.

You can decide whether you want to have a Pap test or not. It is your decision.

Where can you find out more	
Family Planning NSW Healthline You can speak to a nurse about Pap tests. There are lots of fact sheets available on the web site. There is a library where you can borrow books. They will post them to you.	1300 658 886 www.fpnsw.org.au
Pap test: the plain facts Booklet in plain English with pictures.	www.cddh.monash.org/

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read
ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY
HEALTHY EATING
BREAST HEALTH

You need to know what you breasts normally look and feel like. Look at and feel your breasts when you have a shower to see if there are any changes. Ask your doctor if you are doing it properly.

Ask your doctor to do a breast health check once every year.

See your doctor if you are worried or you notice a change or a lump in your breast. The sooner you see your doctor the better. Changes in your breast might be an early sign of something wrong like breast cancer. Breast cancer is common in older women. Breast cancer can be treated.



What is a mammogram

Once you turn 50 years old you can have an x-ray of your breasts to find any changes that might mean cancer. This x-ray is called a mammogram.

If other people in your family have had breast cancer you can have a mammogram before you turn 50.

You have this test at least every 2 years.

You can decide whether you want to have a mammogram or not. It is your decision.

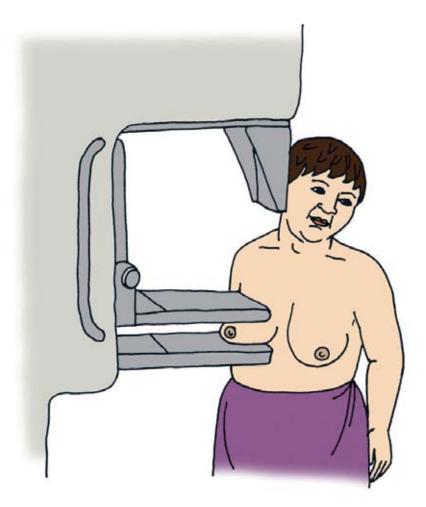
What happens when you have a mammogram

To have a mammogram you will have to take off your top and bra.

The person taking the x-ray will place your breast on the x-ray machine. This is not sexual touching.

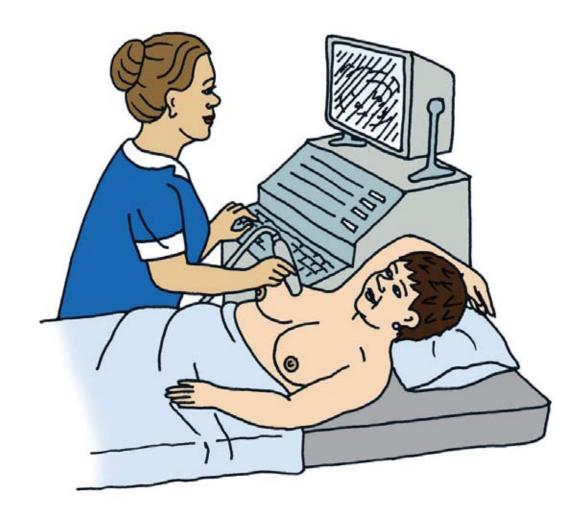
The machine will feel cold and will slowly squeeze your breast which might hurt a little bit.

The test will only last a few minutes. You need to stay still so they can get a good picture.



Sometimes an x-ray is not enough and you will be asked to have an ultrasound.

To have an ultrasound you will have to take off your top and bra and lay down on the examination bed. The person doing the ultrasound will put some cold jelly on your breasts.



They rub a metal wand on your breasts. This takes a special picture of inside your breast. It is gentle. This is not sexual touching.



If the doctor thinks there might be a problem you may have to have more tests. You can talk to your doctor about what they will feel like.

You can talk to other women who have had a mammogram to hear what it was like.

Where can you find out more

BreastScreen NSW

Information about getting a mammogram.



132 050 (toll free)



www.bsnsw.org.au

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read
ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
HAVING A PAP TEST
GETTING OLDER
MENOPAUSE

MENOPAUSE



Your body changes as you get older.

Your periods change. They may get heavier or lighter or not come every month. One day they will stop. For most women they stop around 50 years old. For some women it may be earlier. When they stop it is called menopause.

Menopause is normal and does not mean you are sick. You do not need to think about managing your periods any more.

When your periods stop you cannot have a baby.

Changes in women's bodies when they get older might be:

- They might feel hot and sweaty. This is sometimes called having a 'hot flush'.
- Their moods and feelings might change. They might cry a lot or feel cranky.
- They might get confused and find it hard to think straight.
- · Their skin and hair might become drier.
- They might get extra hair on their body or face.
- Their vagina might become drier. This might make having sex uncomfortable but there are some special creams that can help.
- Their breasts might get sore.

Not every woman has these changes.

The changes will stop. It may take a few months or a few years.

What you can do to feel better:

You may feel better if you stay active and exercise, get lots of sleep at night and eat healthy foods.



It may help to talk to other women about how they felt when they went through menopause.



Talk to your doctor if you need help with the changes in your body and your feelings.



Where can you find out more

Family Planning NSW Healthline

You can speak to a nurse about menopause.

There are fact sheets available on the web site.

There is a library where you can borrow books. They will post them to you.



1300 658 886



www.fpnsw.org.au



(02) 8752 4386

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read

ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

GETTING OLDER

BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY

FEELING SAD AND FEELING HAPPY



Having a health check-up

You still need to look after yourself when you are older.

See your doctor for a check-up of your:

Heart. The doctor might check your blood pressure and do some blood tests.

 Blood. The doctor will take blood to check if you have diabetes, to check your cholesterol (which is the fats in your blood) and to check that your kidneys and liver are working well. Some people might need to take medicine to help stay healthy.



• Eyes. Many people need glasses as they get older.



• **Hearing**. Some people find it harder to hear as they get older. You might need to wear a hearing aid to help you hear better.

Bones. As you get older your bones start getting weaker.
 If they get too weak they can break. This is called
 Osteoporosis. You may have a test called a bone density.
 This is like an x-ray of your bones to see how strong they are. You will have to lie down on a special table and stay very still.

The doctor will take some blood and talk to you about your diet and exercise.

The doctor might talk to you about taking Calcium or Vitamin D tablets to help your bones stay strong.



Sunshine helps to keep your bones and muscles strong. It is good to be in the sun but remember that you need to keep safe.



Keep safe in the sun. Always wear a hat, use sunscreen and wear a top with long sleeves. This will help stop skin cancer.

Your body makes vitamin D that helps keep your bones and muscles strong. You get this from being in the sun. Talk to your doctor about how much sunshine you need to get. Remember you need to keep safe in the sun.



Sometimes wee might leak into your underpants when you get older. This is called incontinence. This might happen more often when you laugh, sneeze or cough. It happens to some women as they get older or put on weight.

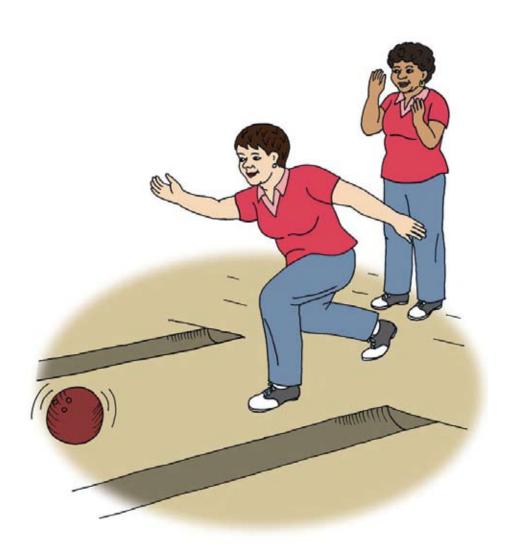
See the doctor if your wee is leaking into your pants. The doctor might do some tests. There might be medicine or exercises that will help. You might need to wear special pads in your underpants to catch the wee. These are different to period pads.

You can buy them at the chemist or the supermarket.

You can also call the Continence Foundation on



🌠 1800 33 00 66 for help.

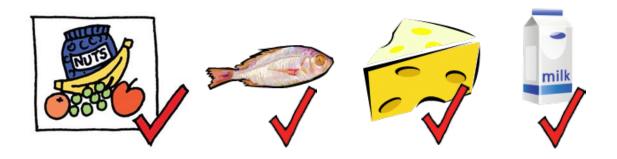


Take care of your body

Exercise for 30minutes a day until your heart beats faster and you feel puffed. Walking is a good activity.

If you have not exercised for a long time see your doctor first.

Eat a healthy diet. Eat extra calcium foods like low fat milk, yoghurt, cheese, almond nuts, fish with bones like tinned salmon.



Sleep 7 or 8 hours a night. Some older people find that they cannot stay asleep or sleep less. It might help you to go to sleep if you try something relaxing like listening to music or have a glass of warm milk. Try not to watch television in your bedroom.

Stay active. You may have more time to do fun activities. You can make more friends by joining groups like Senior Citizens. It may be hard to find the activities that are just right for you. Your family or support worker or advocate may be able to help you.

Getting used to changes

People slow down a bit as they get older. If you can't do as much as you used to you might feel sad. Staying active and seeing your family and friends can help you to stay happy. You are still an important part of the community.

You may need extra support to do things as you get older. Keep doing as much for yourself as you can as this will help you to feel independent and in charge of your life.



As you get older, you family and friends will get older too. People you love may get sick and die. These can be hard times when you feel sad and alone. Talk to your friends, advocate or doctor if you need to.

Everyone gets older and there are many services that help older people. Talk to your doctor if it is getting hard for you to do things like getting dressed, cooking or cleaning the house.

Sometimes it is hard to remember things when you get older. Forgetting things can make you feel scared, angry or sad. Your doctor may be able to help you.

Where can you find out more	
NSW Council for Intellectual Disability Fact Sheets Easy English fact sheets on a range of health topics.	(02) 9211 1611 or 1800 424 065 (calls outside Sydney)
	www.nswcid.org.au
The Continence Foundation Can help you if your wee is leaking into your pants.	1800 33 00 66

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read

ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

MENOPAUSE

BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY

HEALTHY EATING

GRIEF AND LOSS

What is grief

Grief is a feeling of deep sadness that can last for many months after the loss of someone or something you love.

Grief is part of life but it can be very difficult.

It can happen for lots of reasons. It may be when:

- · a person you love gets sick or dies
- · you get sick or injured
- · you move to a new place to live
- friends move away
- · carers leave
- you stop work
- your pet dies.



How grief feels



Grief affects people differently. It can make people feel:

- like crying a lot
- · angry, numb or shocked
- like they are not themselves
- like their world is tumbling down.

Sometimes people want to stay at home and not go out and do the things they normally do. They may not feel like eating. They may sleep more or sleep less.

Feeling better



It can help to talk about your feelings with people you trust.

It's ok to take some extra time off work or to rest for a little while after something very sad has happened. Still do the things you normally do but take a break when you need it.

You will feel better with time. It may take a few months or even a year or longer to feel better. You won't forget what made you feel sad but over time you will be able to remember it without it making you feel so bad.

To feel better you can do things that give you comfort. This might be visiting the cemetery, looking at photos or keeping something special that reminds you of the person.

Some people like to plant a special tree or do a drawing of the person.

If you keep feeling sad or angry you might need some extra help. It is ok to ask for help.



Where can you find out more		
Booklet - Supporting people with disabilities coping with grief and loss. Easy to read booklet with lots of pictures. Published by Scope.	(-	www.scopevic.org.au Go to "resources", then under "Health and Wellbeing", download the booklet.
Beyond Blue		
The National Depression Initiative		1300 22 46 36
Remember to tell them you have an intellectual disability.	0	24 hours 7 days a week
Fort Chart 00		www.beyondblue.org.au
Fact Sheet 28 Grief Loss and Depression		Go to "get information"
You may need a support person to help you look at this website.		Then downloadable information resources.
		It is Fact Sheet Number 28.

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read FEELING SAD AND FEELING HAPPY
BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY



Easy read



You can listen to the information on your computer



You can watch a video on your computer



For doctors and other health professionals

NAME		CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Ageing, Disability and Home Care		www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au	Information and support programs.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Department of Human Services		(02) 8270 2000	You might like to have a support person help you	
		TTY: (02) 8270 2167	with this site.	
Australian Family and Disability Studies Research		www.afdsrc.org	Information for parents with an intellectual disability.	DECIDING TO BECOME A PARENT
Collaboration			You might like to have a support person help you with this site.	BEING PREGNANT
Australian Government		www.healthyactive.gov.au	Information on healthy eating (serving portions)	BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY
Department of Health and Ageing			and exercise.	HEALTHY
Troutin and Agoing			You might like to have a support person help you with this site.	EATING
Better Health Victorian Government		www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au	Fact sheets on health and medicines.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
	•		You might like to have a support person help you with this site.	BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY
				HEALTHY EATING

NAME		CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Beyond Blue The national depression		www.beyondblue.org.au	Information about mental health and people who can help you.	FEELING SAD AND FEELING HAPPY
iniative	•	1300 224 636 24 hour phone service	Remember to tell them you have an intellectual disability.	GRIEF AND LOSS
			You might like to have a support person help you with this site.	
Breastscreen NSW		www.bsnsw.org.au	Information about having a breast screen.	BREAST HEALTH
	•	13 20 50	You might like to have a support person help you with this site.	
Centre for Developmental Disability		www.cddh.monash.org	Lots of resources for women with intellectual disability (easy read)	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
Health Monash University	0	(03) 9501 2400	carers and health professionals.	BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY
(CDDH Victoria)			Examples: Working with people with intellectual disabilities in	HEALTHY EATING
GW/			healthcare setting Menstrual Managemnent	HAVING YOUR PERIODS
			and Women with an Intellectual Disability - a Guide for General	CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX
			Practitioners Smoking Education Program	HAVING A PAP TEST
			Pap test: the plain facts information for women with an intellectual disability	

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Centre for Disability Studies (Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney)	www.cds.org.au (02) 8878 0500	Lots of resources for women with intellectual disability (easy read) carers and health professionals. Examples: Health care in People with Intellectual Disability Preventative Women's Health Care for Women with Disabilities Guidelines for	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY HAVING A PAP TEST
Clear Thoughts	www.clearthoughts.info Go to Mental Health Conditions, or Possible Treatments	Practitioners Lots of mental health information for women with intellectual disability (easy read), carers and health professionals. You can listen to the information. This information is from another country (United Kingdom). It is a good idea to show it to your doctor or support person.	FEELING SAD AND FEELING HAPPY GRIEF AND LOSS
Disability Discrimination Legal Centre	www.ddlcnsw.org.au (02) 9310 7722 Free call: 1800 800 708 (NSW only)	Can help if you have had a problem with a doctor, hospital or health service.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Easy Health	www.easyhealth.org.uk	Information on health and sexuality. There are videos, sound and factsheets. This information is from another country (United Kingdom). It is a good idea to show it to your doctor or support person.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX

NAME		CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Family Planning NSW		www.fpnsw.org.au FPNSW Healthline	Lots of easy read Factsheets and information to help families and workers.	PUBERTY HAVING YOUR PERIODS
	•	1300 658 886 FPNSW library (02) 8752 4386	Teaching packs on sexuality, menstruation and menopause.	CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX SAFER SEX
			You can speak with nurses about female health problems.	HAVING A PAP TEST BREAST HEALTH
			Disability Resource Collection which is available for free loan.	MENOPAUSE
Guardianship Tribunal NSW		www.gt.nsw.gov.au (02) 9556 7600	Information about consent. The law is different in	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
GP Synergy		Free call: 1800 463 928 www.GPsynergy.com.au (02) 9818 4433	parts of Australia. GP workshop: Being a Healthy Woman - Working with Women with Intellectual Disability. GP Education module with: • box of resources • DVD and Powerpoint	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Health Care Complaints Commission		www.hccc.nsw.gov.au	presentation paperwork to enhance discussion Helps you with problems with health services.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
		(02) 9219 7444 Free call: 1800 043 159		
Health Direct		www.healthdirect.org.au Free call 1800 022 222	You can speak to nurses who can give you health information. You can ask questions.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
			Let them know you have an intellectual disability and when you don't understand something.	

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Health of Women with Intellectual Disabilities Edited by Patricia Noonan Walsh and Tamar Heller		Book on reproductive and physical health of women with an intellectual disability.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Healthy start for me and my baby	www.healthystart.net.au (02) 9351 9510	Book to help women learn about being pregnant. Includes a guide for practitioners who are supporting women with intellectual disability who are pregnant.	DECIDING TO BECOME A PARENT BEING PREGNANT
IASSID – International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities	www.iassid.org	International health guidelines for people with an intellectual disability.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Intellectual Disabilities & III Health Edited by O'Hara J., McCarthy J., Bouras N. Cambridge Universal Press Cambridge 2010		Book on health of women with an intellectual disability.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Intellectual Disability Rights Service	www.idrs.org.au (02) 9318 0144 or Free call: 1800 666 611 (NSW)	Provides legal advice and information.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Menstrual and Contraceptive management in women with an intellectual disability	www.ranzcog.edu.au (03) 9417 1699	The Australian/New Zealand Consensus statement including treatment/management options and consent issues.	PUBERTY HAVING YOUR PERIODS
National Prescribing Service	www.nps.org.au 1300 888 763 You can ask a question about a medicine	Information on medicines There are also some videos. Information in other languages and a translator service. You might like to have a support person help you with this site.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY
Norah Fry Research Centre	www.bristol.ac.uk/norahfry	Video story about women with intellectual disability in same sex relationships. Information on sexual health topics.	CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX SAFER SEX
NSW Cervical Screening Program	www.csp.nsw.gov.au	Easy read information on having a Pap test.	HAVING A PAP TEST
NSW Council for Intellectual Disability	www.nswcid.org.au (02) 9211 1611 Free call 1800 424 065	Advocacy and Information Group Easy read fact sheets on health topics.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY GETTING OLDER FEELING SAD AND FEELING HAPPY

NAME		CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
NSW Government Lawlink- Department of Justice and Attorney "The Capacity Toolkit"		www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au Go to Community Info then People with Disabilities (02) 8688 8460 or (02) 8688 7507 TTY: (02) 8688 7733	"The Capacity Toolkit" Information about supporting a person to make their own decisions and assessing if they have the understanding to do this.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Ombudsman NSW		www.ombo.nsw.gov.au (02 9286 1000	Handles complaints about ADHC and disability services.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Personal Health Record Have a look at the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability website which has a link to different examples		www.nswcid.org.au Personal health record www.cddh.monash.org My health record booklet www.health.nsw.gov.au	Your own personal health record, you keep important information about your health in one place so you can bring it with you when you see the doctor.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
Poisons Information Centre	•	13 11 26 24hours a day 7 days a week	You can call and speak to someone if you have: - taken too much of a medicine - accidently swallowed something - been bitten by stung by an insect or animal.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Queensland Centre for Intellectual and Developmental Disability (QCIDD)		www.som.uq.edu.au/ research/qcidd/ Go to Resources	Lots of resources for women with intellectual disability (easy read), carers and health professionals. Examples: Desensitisation Programs -How to have a Blood test -CT Head scans -Abdominal X-Ray Diabetes - To The Point	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY HEALTHY EATING
			Managing Menstruation Kit	HAVING YOUR PERIODS

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Raising Children Network	www.raisingchildren.net.au	Easy read, video and audio parenting topics.	DECIDING TO BECOME A PARENT
Scope	www.scopevic.org.au Go to: Resources then Health and well being (03) 9843 3000	Lots of resources for women with intellectual disability (easy read), carers and health professionals. Examples: Supporting People with Disabilities Coping with GRIEF AND LOSS: An easy-to-read booklet Healthy Mouths - an easy English guide	BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Specialised Dental Services for Adults with an Intellectual Disability	Westmead Centre for Oral Health (02) 9845 7424 or (02 9845 7423 Emergency treatment (02 9845 7363 Sydney Dental Hospital Surry Hills (02) 9293 3200		BEING HEALTHY AND HAPPY OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Specialised Intellectual Disability Health Services for adolescents/ adults	Concord Hospital Rehabilitation Unit (02) 9767 7233	Services – Ageing and Behaviour Changes in Developmental Disability (ABCD) Clinic. Medical assessments by a rehabilitation physician, psychiatrist and geriatrician. Area covered – Sydney South West Area Health Service. Accepts patients from other parts of NSW for initial assessments. Runs some clinics away from Concord including Southern Highlands.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

NAME		CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Specialised Intellectual Disability Health Services for adolescents/ adults		Disability Specialist Unit, Burwood (02) 9701 6300	Services – Medical assessment by a rehabilitation specialist. Area covered – Inner western suburbs of Sydney.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
	•	Kogarah Developmental Assessment Service (02) 9587 2444	Services – Clinics for medical assessment and specialties including neurology, psychiatry, rehabilitation, nutrition and genetics. Area covered – South Eastern Sydney/Illawarra Area Health Service. Runs some clinics away from Kogarah, especially in the Illawarra.	
		NSW Developmental Disability Health Unit, Ryde (02) 9808 9287	Services – Medical assessments, psychology assessments, rehabilitation, ageing and dementia clinics, and clinics for people with Down syndrome, Cornelia de Lange syndrome and Fragile X syndrome. Area covered – Accepts patients from anywhere in NSW. Sometimes runs clinics away from Ryde.	

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Specialised Intellectual Disability Health Services for adolescents/ adults	Westmead Hospital (02) 9845 9710 (Wed-Fri) or 0438 549 466 (Mon-Fri)	Services – Clinics for general medical assessment, dysphagia and nutrition, complex epilepsy, and patients with Rett syndrome & Down syndrome. Area covered – Sydney West Area Health Service. Also, accepts referrals from anywhere in NSW. Runs some clinics away from Westmead, including Wollongong and Leura.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
	Developmental Disability Clinic, Goulburn (02) 4823 7800	Services – Medical assessments. Area covered – Goulburn and southern NSW.	
The Australian Hearing Service	www.hearing.com.au/home (02) 9412 6800 TTY: (02) 9412 6802	Free hearing assessments for people with a pensioner concession card.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
The bridging project	www.bridgingproject.org.au Go to Resources for Fact Sheets	Easy to understand information about mental health topics. Has Sound and Video.	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne	www.rch.org.au Go to RCH publications	Publications writen by staff for health professionals and parents including: Bone Health in Young People with Disabilities 2009 A/Prof M. Zacharin \$6.00 Puberty in Young People with Disabilities 2009 A/Prof M. Zacharin \$6.00	PUBERTY

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	DESCRIPTION	FACTSHEETS
Therapeutic Guidelines- Developmental Disability	www.tg.org.au	Handbook on Developmental Disability for Health Professionals. (need to subscribe)	OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
Transition Care Website	www.health.nsw.gov.au Go to: Health Professionals then Greater Metropolitan Clinical Taskforce then Clinical Network then Transition Care (02) 9887 5578	Information about transition from child to adult health services.	ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

This resource has been developed in conjunction with a General Practitioner workshop. If you would like further information on how to access this additional resource "Working with Women with Intellectual Disability" which includes a box of resources, a DVD, Powerpoint presentation and additional paperwork to enhance discussion, please contact:

GP Synergy Level 1/42-46 Chippen St Chippendale 2008 Tel (02) 9818 4433 www.GPsynergy.com.au

We would like to thank NSW Department of Health for providing the funding for this project.

For additional electronic copies please go to any of the following:

Family Planning NSW www.fpnsw.org.au

GP Synergy www.GPsynergy.com.au

NSW Council for Intellectual Disability www.nswcid.org.au

Centre for Education and Research on Ageing www.cera.usyd.edu.au

Centre for Disability Studies www.cdds.med.usyd.edu.au

Australian Family and Disability Studies www.afdsrc.org

Research Collaboration

NSW Department of Health

Ageing Disability and Home Care www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au

www.health.nsw.gov.au

Department of Human Services NSW

For additional booklets please contact:

Better Health Centre, Publications Warehouse PO Box 672

North Ryde BC, NSW 2113

Tel (02) 9887 5450 Fax (02) 9887 5452

BEING A HEALTHY WOMAN

This educational resource is to help women with intellectual disability learn more about their health. It has easy words and lots of pictures.

It is also good for teaching groups. Any of the pages can be copied for teaching about health.

There are 16 topics. They talk about teenage girls, women and older women.

