

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH WOMEN'S HEALTH

August is Women's Month and in honour of the fairer sex we bring you the key health issues faced by women.



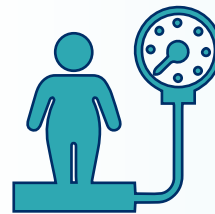
Breast Cancer

One of the greatest health fears for a woman is breast cancer. 1 in 33 women in South Africa is at risk. Look out for a lump or mass in the breast, discharge from or rash around the nipples and skin dimpling on the breast. Do monthly self-examinations and visit your doctor if you notice anything abnormal.



Cervical Cancer

More women develop and die of cervical cancer than any other type of cancer in South Africa. But cervical cancer is a preventable disease and can be cured if detected and treated in its early stages. The cause of cervical cancer is the human papilloma virus, which is a common sexually transmitted infection. It does not affect men, although they are carriers of the virus. Factors that increase a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer include early sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, and smoking. Gynecological check-ups and pap smears ensure detection of cervical cancer.



Obesity

Obese and overweight individuals have an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer, osteoarthritis, and kidney disease. Obesity in women also causes menstrual abnormalities, infertility and miscarriage. Obese pregnant women are at an increased risk of infections, hypertension, and gestational diabetes.



Cardiovascular disease

Contrary to common belief, women can also suffer from cardiovascular disease. Heart disease and stroke cause a third of all deaths in women worldwide. Some common symptoms in women are shortness of breath, pain, or discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach, breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, and light-headedness. If you have any health concerns, consult with your nearest Platinum Health Healthcare Provider for guidance.



Nutrients all women need

Iron - You need to be sure you are getting enough iron to prevent anemia. Chief iron sources are meat, poultry, beans, eggs, raisins, and green vegetables such as spinach.

Vitamin B6 - Vitamin B6 helps with red blood cell formation, so it is essential for those with anemia.

Omega-3 fatty acids - These acids act like natural anti-inflammatory substances in the body and are important in helping to keep your heart healthy. Fatty fish, like salmon and tuna, as well as avocados and nuts are great sources of omega 3.

Folic acid - Expectant mothers and women trying to fall pregnant need more folic acid. It can be found in orange juice, beans, and green vegetables.



Health checks for Women...

- Blood pressure screening - from age 18, every 2 years
- Cholesterol check - from age 20, every 5 years.
- Pap smears & pelvic exams - from age 21, every 2 years.
- Mammogram - from age 40, every 2 years
- Breast exams - from age 20, every 3 years
- Bone density screen - test at age 65
- Blood glucose test - from age 20 with every consultation
- Colon cancer screening - from age 50
- Body mass index - annually
- Dental check-up & cleanings: annually



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HEALTH**