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Embrace life fully as a empowered woman

Women, TOUGH is your Middle Name
From growing teen to golden lady, learn how to manage every stage of your life gracefully
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SO-IUI

Superovulation & Intrauterine Insemination

SO-IUI IMPROVES YOUR CHANCES OF CONCEPTION:

✓ AFFORDABLE COST
✓ NO PAIN
✓ NO SURGERY
✓ NO ANAESTHESIA

Superovulation is giving fertility drugs to encourage immature eggs to grow and reach maturation.

Intrauterine insemination aims to select and put in a higher number of good quality sperm directly into the uterus.
LIVEWELL

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All human beings will go through the different stages of life. The only difference is how we manage it, especially for women. Learn about the different stages of life females go through and how they can embrace it gracefully.

12 Whose Problem Is It?
We tackle the problem of Singapore’s low fertility rate by looking at the issue from a medical perspective. Is male or female infertility to blame here? Find out!

16 8 Cancer Symptoms Women Ignore
Cancer is certainly a word no one wishes to hear. Find out about eight cancer symptoms that ladies commonly ignore which could prove disastrous for health and what you can do about them.

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Hungry for some food? How about a healthy and basically low everything yummy muffin? Find out how you can make some here!

23 6 Super Foods for Women
Ladies, are you striving/endeavouring to look and feel your best? On top of the usual exercise and skincare regime, here are some essential foods you must take to maintain your beauty and feel great.

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In this story, we seek to understand the all important female hormones. Read on to understand the types of hormones that affect your skin and for tips to protect this important natural covering of yours.

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Having some trouble with the usual arms, thighs and buns area? Here are three easy exercises you can do to keep those problem areas tight and toned.

30 Oh No, Not Again!
Women love their hair and their crowning glory can be a source of great pride, happiness, worry and even sadness. Find out more about hair loss here and what can cause it.
In this issue of HealthNews, we will explore the topic of women’s health. As women (and men) increasingly juggle multiple roles, our health is often a secondary consideration. Women are active in every sphere of life from top executive positions to stay at home mothers and wives. We are expected to be successful at work, good mothers and daughters, look after the home, care for the family and on top of all this, look gorgeous. How can we balance these competing demands?

No matter how much or little time you have, our features in this issue will give you helpful tips on how to look and feel amazing, improve your general health, eat right and tone up.

Thinking of starting or extending your family? Learn how to prepare your body for a healthy pregnancy and what the options are if you’re not ready to get pregnant just yet (page 12).

Gentlemen, do you ever look forward to her “time of the month” with dread? Look inside to explore the factual basis behind Premenstrual Syndrome. Yes, it exists and there’s a name for it! For the ladies, there’s a detailed discussion on what we GPs call “period problems” (page 8).

Many of us wonder whether we’re at risk of cancer, or sadly have had an affected relative. Learn more about the top cancers affecting women and what check-ups she should be having to screen for these (page 16).

We hope that this issue of HealthNews can especially embrace, inspire and motivate the most desirable lifestyle for active women and even to empower mums, moulding their looks and their lives.

Finally, a mother is one who loves unconditionally, leads by example, protects and puts the needs of her family above her own. We wish all power mums a Happy Mother’s Day (12th May) in advance. You may consider giving her a special gift this year – a health screening package! It is never too late to remind your mum that she should maintain her health in tip top condition.

Dr Sarah Jane Packer
Guest Editor
Consultant
Raffles Executive Medical Centre
Dr Abel Soh
Specialist in Endocrinology & Consultant
Raffles Internal Medicine Centre

Dr Soh graduated from the National University of Singapore in 2000 and obtained his MRCP (UK) in 2006. He pursued advanced specialist training in endocrinology and obtained his specialist accreditation in 2010. He was awarded the SingHealth HMDP Fellowship in Diabetes in Pregnancy at Joslin Diabetes Center, USA, in 2010. Prior to joining Raffles Hospital, Dr Soh was a consultant in the Department of Endocrinology at the Singapore General Hospital. Dr Soh was actively involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. He was Adjunct Assistant Professor in Medicine at Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School and Clinical Senior Lecturer at Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS. He also served in the Core Faculty of the SingHealth Internal Medicine Residency program. Dr Soh was involved in research in diabetes in pregnancy and continuous glucose monitoring and was a co-investigator in several drug trials. He initiated the pre-Ramadan counselling program for Muslim patients with diabetes in SGH in 2011. His clinical interests include diabetes mellitus, diabetes in pregnancy, thyroid disorders, and adrenal and pituitary disorders.

Dr Mark Tan Ming Loong
Specialist in Diagnostic Radiology & Consultant
Raffles Diagnostic Radiology

Dr Tan has been practising radiology since 2005. He graduated from the National University of Singapore in 2000. He obtained his postgraduate degree in Diagnostic Radiology from the Royal College of Radiologists in UK in 2008, as well as from the National University of Singapore in the same year. Dr Tan completed his two-year Advanced Specialist Training in Radiology in 2010, and worked at Changi General Hospital as a diagnostic and interventional radiologist. He has completed subspecialty training in interventional radiology, having spent time in the University of Frankfurt Hospital in Germany to learn interventional oncology, as well as in Addenbrooke’s Hospital in UK to learn general interventional radiology. He has also spent time in Chung Gung Memorial Hospital in Taiwan to learn vascular intervention. His subspecialty interests include interventional radiology and oncologic imaging.

Raffles Aesthetics and Raffles Skin Centre have merged to form the new Raffles Skin & Aesthetics

On 1 April 2013, Raffles Aesthetics and Raffles Skin Centre were merged to form the new Raffles Skin and Aesthetics. The new one-stop centre will enhance our ability to offer our patients seamless services in medical dermatology, plastic surgery and aesthetics.

For further enquiries or to book an appointment, you may call 6311 2340.
Dr Elizabeth Chia  
Specialist in Diagnostic Radiology & Consultant  
Raffles Radiology

Dr Chia has been practicing diagnostic radiology since 2010. She completed her undergraduate training at National University of Ireland, University College Cork in 2002. She completed her three-year Basic Specialist Training in Diagnostic Radiology in 2008 in Singapore. Dr Chia obtained her Master of Medicine (Diagnostic Radiology) and Fellowship from the Royal College of Radiologists in the United Kingdom in 2008. She then completed her two-year Advanced Specialist Training in Diagnostic Radiology in 2010. Prior to joining Raffles Hospital, Dr Chia was working in Changi General Hospital. Her subspecialty interests include breast radiology.

Dr Bernard Lin Kuo Hung  
Specialist in Orthopaedic Surgery & Consultant  
Raffles Orthopaedic Centre

Dr Lin graduated from NUS in 2000 and obtained M Med in orthopaedic surgery from NUS. He subsequently obtained his MRCS and FRCS in orthopaedic surgery from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. He was awarded the HMDP fellowship and was trained at the Concordia Hospital for Special Surgery, Italy, as a clinical fellow in orthopaedic sports medicine and surgery. Dr Lin was Visiting Fellow in Jan 2011 under Professor Eiji Itoi at the Shoulder Service, Orthopaedic Department, Japan Tohoku University. He was also awarded the Belgium Hip Arthroscopy Traveling Fellowship Award in Dec 2011.

Prior to joining Raffles Hospital, Dr Lin was Consultant at the Orthopaedic Surgery Department and Division of Sports Medicine and Surgery at TTSH. He is an International Member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America and member of The International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine. Dr Lin’s subspecialty clinical interests are arthroscopic and open surgery for disorders of the shoulder and knee. Specialised operations performed include shoulder rotator cuff tear repair, shoulder instability repair, arthroscopic knee ligament injury reconstruction, treatment of meniscus and cartilage injuries and joint replacement of the shoulder and knee. He is fellowship trained in hip arthroscopy. He also specialises in general sports injury, as well as sporting injuries to the elbow, hip and ankle joints.

Raffles Hospital and Lianhe Zaobao  
LOHAS Forum on Avoiding Chronic Diseases as You Age

Despite the rain, the event received an overwhelming response with close to 600 participants for our public mandarin forum, 《別让慢性疾病找上你》 on 6 April 2013 at Joyden Hall, Bugis+. The speakers Dr Lim Kok Bin, Dr Abel Soh and Dr Chong Yong Yeow educated the public on how to avoid chronic diseases in their golden years with western approaches, while Physician Zhao Xu Hong on the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) approach towards chronic diseases. Participants gleaned insights on common issues such as middle-aged prostate and sexual troubles, being overweight, experiencing pain and inflammation in their joints as well as the management of overall health with TCM.

Ms Ethel Xin was glad she attended the seminar with her mother as they benefited from the sessions. Mr Richard Yeo added: “The seminar should be longer so they can learn more from the doctors”. With our lovely host from UFM100.3FM DJ Anna Lim, coupled with the enriching topics by the doctors, and exciting booth activities, the participants enjoyed the forum.

Look out for our next Channel News Asia Seminar, ‘Love Your Heart, Save Your Brain’ on 18 May 2013. You may also go to the website www.channelnewsasia.com/seminar for more details.

For more information and updates on our upcoming seminars, stay tuned to our Facebook (RafflesMedGrp) and Twitter Pages (@RafflesMedGrp).
Women, TOUGH Is Your Middle Name
The Growing Teen

Age Group
13 to 19 years old

Biggest Worry
The start of womanhood

What starts with “P” and causes a big hoo-haa? PUBERTY, as you may have guessed.

During this stage of life, puberty brings a whole lot of issues for us females. These include physical changes, hormonal changes and of course the number one ‘confidante’ which will stay with us throughout our lives, menstruation.

Menstruation can be scary and confusing for many, especially for those who do not have the slightest idea of what is going on in their body, or do not have an older female in their life to teach and guide them about this major change. According to Dr Watt Wing Fong, Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology & Consultant, Raffles Women’s Centre, menstruation usually begins about two to two and a half years after a girl’s breasts begin to develop. And as we all know, periods can also cause cramps, which can be really frustrating and painful. All that bloated feeling and constant pain can be such a nuisance. Remember our mums telling us to drink hot beverages whenever we have our periods so as to relieve the pain? True enough, research has shown that drinking hot water is usually better for cramps, reason being that hot liquids increase blood flow to the skin and thus, may relax cramped muscles. We have also found a few remedies that might just do the trick against those nasty cramps.

1 Over-the-Counter Medication
Treat menstrual cramps by taking aspirin or other products containing acetaminophen. Over-the-counter selections like good old paracetamol will also provide relief from the uncomfortable cramps.

2 Omega-3 Fatty Acids
“Some women may benefit from omega 3 fatty acids or fish oil supplements. There is evidence to suggest that the anti-inflammatory properties of omega 3 fatty acids may help alleviate menstrual symptoms,” said Ms Sarah Sinaram, Senior Dietician, Raffles Internal Medicine Centre.

3 Yoga
Yoga stretching not only treats abdominal cramps, it also serves as a form of relaxation that could help ease other symptoms associated with your menstrual cycle.

Another tricky problem that comes along during this stage of life is battling the ‘acne’ war. According to Dr Chris Foo, Managing Partner and Specialist in Dermatology & Consultant, Raffles Skin & Aesthetics, acne is a skin problem that affects many teenagers. The skin’s sebaceous glands which make an oily substance called sebum, are stimulated by hormones to produce excess sebum. The excess sebum will clog pores and when mixed with bacteria, which cause inflammation, will cause pimples to develop,” said Dr Foo. So, how can we combat this? There are many medications available such as over-the-counter cleansers that may help to prevent the onslaught of acne. We will leave you with our number one tip to combat acne – Never attempt to squeeze or pop pimples as they may leave you with scars and blemishes on your face!

All human beings will have to go through different stages in life. The only difference is how we manage it. Time does not stand still for us. Having a positive mindset and keeping abreast of the health conditions and medical issues will not only leave you to age gracefully, but also enable you to embrace life fully as a TOUGH and empowered woman!
The Career Woman

**Age Group**
21 to 39 years old

**Biggest Worry**
Maintaining a good state of well-being

We can no longer claim to be young or spunky teenagers after we hit the big 21. As we grow older, we realise that we may not necessarily be as fit as when we were in our teens. Thus, taking care of your health is of utmost importance. This is where health screening comes in. Yes, some of you might have this notion that it is best if you do not undergo any screening lest you receive news that you are afflicted with some serious conditions. However, we believe that prevention is always better than cure.

“Health screening allows us to be more proactive in matters of our physical well-being. It searches for the ailments that commonly afflict those of a given age and, is usually, coupled with a review time with a physician who can give personally tailored advice that can empower us to make important lifestyle changes,” said Dr Emily Pwee, Resident Physician, Raffles HealthScreeners.

The Middle Ager

**Age Group**
40 to 59 years old

**Biggest Worry**
Menopause

During a girl’s teenage years, menstruation is often anticipated with trepidation. However, when she steps into this age group, where she has become a mum, a career woman or a home maker, she begins to have the fear of no longer being able to produce estrogen or have periods begins to encroach. According to Dr Shamini Nair, Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology & Consultant, Raffles Women’s Centre, menopause is the point of time when a woman’s menstrual period has stopped for 12 consecutive months. When a woman has gone through this phase, she can no longer fall pregnant.

“Menopause affects each woman differently. The average age when one starts menopause is 51, although there are some who may start as early as 40 or as late as 55,” said Dr Shamini.

The common changes that one may experience are as follows:

1. **Irregular periods**
Your periods may come more often or less as compared to before. However, do not assume that missing a couple of periods is due to menopause. It might be due to other causes such as fatigue or even pregnancy.

2. **Vaginal and Urinary Problems**
Depending on each woman, these problems may start or increase during this time period. The walls of your vagina may get drier and thinner due to the low levels of estrogen. According to Dr Siow Woei Yun, Specialist in Urology & Consultant, Raffles UroRenal Centre, as estrogen helps in protecting the health of your bladder and urethra, low levels of estrogen may induce frequent urination. This includes the constant urge to use the restroom. Severe cases include involuntary urine leakage, otherwise known as urinary incontinence.

3. **Mood Changes**
We all know about Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS). However, this gets more intense when we have menopause. You could experience mood swings, extreme fatigue, crying...
spasms and other symptoms you never had before going through the menopause.

Although the symptoms that come with menopause seem challenging, there are ways we can tackle them and still lead an enjoyable life. The key pointers are getting enough sleep and staying physically active. This will help you feel your best. Avoid taking on too many commitments. Should that be the case, look for positive ways to ease your stress; it could be as simple as taking a walk in a nearby park!

The Golden Lady

Age Group
60 years old and above

Biggest Worry
Ageing diseases

Changes in the body in the years around menopause increase one’s chances of having certain medical conditions. Research has shown that lower levels of estrogen and other changes related to ageing like weight gain, increase women’s risk of heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis

According to Dr Andrew Dutton, Specialist in Orthopaedic Surgery & Consultant, Raffles Orthopaedic Centre, this silent disease is more common in women than men. This is because they have less bone mass to begin with, coupled with a drastic drop in estrogen which helps to maintain healthy bone once they reach menopause.

An individual with osteoporosis is often unaware that she has this disease until she has had a broken bone, experiences low back pain or develops a hunched back. Risk factors include a family history of osteoporosis, ageing, being overweight and low bone mass,” said Dr Dutton.

Those who have developed osteoporosis (literally meaning “porous bones” which are prone to breaking because of their low density) must learn to manage the disease with three important key principles: nutrition, exercise and proper medication.

Heart Disease

According to the Singapore Heart Foundation, heart disease and stroke remain the NUMBER ONE killer of women in Singapore, yet few women are unaware of this fact. “Women need to know that they are as vulnerable as men, where cardiovascular disease is concerned. Cardiovascular disease is caused by the build-up of cholesterol on the inner walls of the arteries which then restricts blood flow to the heart. Risk factors for heart disease and stroke are common in women, thus early detection is possible and can be life-saving,” said Dr Teo Swee Guan, Specialist in Cardiology & Consultant, Raffles Heart Centre.

Without adequate blood flow, the heart is starved of oxygen and the vital nutrients needed for it to function properly. Woman may experience different symptoms of heart disease than man. Manifestations of heart problems may include:

- Pain or discomfort in the chest area
- Unusually rapid heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or fatigue

Thus, at this stage of life, seeking early diagnostic treatment is vital. By screening and seeking appropriate treatment early, should any of the symptoms occur, the most serious consequences of cardiovascular problems can be prevented or at least delayed. With that in mind, ageing gracefully will definitely be a breeze.

An Enjoyable and Stress-free Ageing Journey

Being a woman is certainly no easy feat. Menstruation, childbirth, menopause and ageing gracefully are but some of the challenges we have to face as we grow older. Nonetheless, the age old saying of ‘Keep Fit and Eat Well’ should most definitely be implanted into our mind. However, with a healthy lifestyle, resilience and proper health management, women can easily overcome all obstacles. Afterall, TOUGH is our middle name! HN
More people are staying single or getting married later, and more married couples are having their first child later and having fewer children in Singapore. According to Singapore’s Total Fertility Rate in 2012, Singapore is at its record low of 1.2. Whose problem is it, the ladies or the men? Let HealthNews investigate.

**WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT?**

- I am still young.
- Men’s biological clock never stops.
- It is so expensive to have a kid.
- I need to bring the bacon home.
- My wife doesn’t want to have kids at such a young age.

- I am healthy and my family has no fertility issues.
- Science and technology these days are so advanced, even if I need help, I can engage these methods to conceive.
- I am still carving my career.
  - I am not ready to be a stay-home mum to look after my children.
  - Not enough maternity leave.
Like many other industrialised countries, women had been delaying having babies in Singapore. The median age of women giving birth to their first child was 28.7 years in 1991 and it has increased to 29.8 years in 2002. Age does play a role in reproductive health. According to Dr Sheila Loh Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Clinical Director of Raffles Fertility Centre, the ideal age for conception for women is between 22 and 26 years old. “There is only a short ‘fertile window’ within each menstrual cycle available for conception and the chances of this occurring decreases with age. For young, fertile couples in their 20s not using any contraceptive methods, the rate will be around 25% per month,” shared Dr Loh. The increase in age also comes with a higher incidence of miscarriages and chromosomal abnormalities in the foetus due to poorer egg quality. In general, for the best chance of having a healthy baby, the woman should be below 30 years old.

On the flip side of the coin, unlike women, men do not have a clear and definite biological clock. However, it is well established that men’s fertility and sexual performance also decline with age, especially those over 40 years old. They will experience lower levels of male hormones, thus resulting in decreased libido and sex drive, poorer sperm quality and increased genetic defects. Therefore, for couples planning for a family with two children or more, it would be sensible to have the first pregnancy not long after the mother reaches the age of 30 or even earlier.

Getting your body baby ready

Couples should go for a pre-pregnancy health screening before they try to conceive. As advised by Dr Seng Shay Way, Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology & Consultant, Raffles Fertility Centre:

“...This screening helps to ensure the preconception health of the couple is optimal and if there are any medical issues (which might affect pregnancy), they can be addressed early. This screening should be done three to six months before trying to conceive. Rest assured there are no risks involved in the screening.”

The components of screenings are a medical consultation, examination, ultrasound scan, cervical Pap smear and blood tests. The consultation help to identify if one has any personal or family history of illnesses, in order to exclude any hereditary or genetic conditions, since birth defects can be inherited and may passed on to the baby even if the carrier shows no signs of a particular disorder (i.e. cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia). An examination, ultrasound scan and cervical Pap smear are performed after the medical consultation to check for any structural womb abnormalities, medical or gynaecological conditions that affect fertility such as ovarian cysts or fibroids.

CAUTION! Common Female Gynaecological Infertility Causes

a) Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

PCOS is the commonest cause of infertility in women that is related to the absence of ovulation. Many women do not discover it until they are trying to get pregnant. Common problems associated with PCOS are chronic absence of ovulation or menstrual abnormality, high androgen levels and multiple cysts of the ovaries.

b) Endometriosis

In endometriosis, the tissue that normally lines the inside of your uterus (the endometrium) grows outside your uterus. Sites commonly include ovaries, fallopian tubes or the tissue lining of the pelvis. This abnormal growth will eventually form scar tissue, which can result in great discomfort and difficulty in becoming pregnant. The most common signs and symptoms of endometriosis include painful heavy periods, pain during or after sexual intercourse, painful bowel movements or urination, normally during periods and bleeding between periods.
Tips to Maximise Your Fertility

According to Dr Seng, the easiest and best way to enhance fertility is to stay healthy. Most women are very much in tune with their body’s health and menstrual cycle but if you have pre-existing medical problems like diabetes, thyroid disorders or are on chronic medication, it would be best to see a doctor early to control these medical conditions before starting a family. If your menses are heavy, irregular or painful, it would also be wise to see your gynaecologist to exclude any potential gynaecological problems. Dr Seng added: “A balanced diet and doing adequate exercises would go a long way in improving your fertility rate as women who change specific aspects of their lifestyle will experience more than 80% less relative risk of infertility due to ovulatory disorders compared to women who engaged in none.”

Eat Properly

There is no fixed “diet” for fertility. Men should take regular supplements containing essential vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants. Vitamin C seems to protect sperms against toxins like lead whereas a low level of vitamin C may result in fewer or abnormally shaped sperms. Decreased sperm motility was also seen in moderate coffee drinkers (≥ four cups daily).

For women, folate intake of at least 400 micrograms daily, four to six weeks before conception reduces neural (or nerve cells) tube defects in the unborn babies. Foods rich in folate include beans, liver, sunflower seeds, cantaloupe, orange juice, broccoli and other leafy green vegetables. Coffee drinking (≥ four cups daily) was also associated with a longer time to conceive and a lower likelihood of conception.

Recreation and Exercise

About 12% of infertility cases result from women who weigh too much or too little. Obesity is also associated with other medical issues such as diabetes, hypertension and joint problems. Exercise helps reduce body fat, which can make a difference in some women’s ability to conceive. Moderate or regular exercise can boost fertility, heart health and energy levels. Before trying to conceive, women should ensure that their body mass index is at least below 35kg/m², and preferably below 30kg/m².

For men, they should maintain a healthy weight as being over or underweight can affect their testosterone levels. Tight underwear or staying too long in the sauna overheating of the scrotum. They should also avoid excessive pressure on the scrotum (e.g. long distance cycling). If they are on body building anabolic steroids, they should stop as this can cause testicular shrinkage.

Getting the Timing Right

It is known that chances of pregnancy are higher just before or after the ovulation stage of the menstrual cycle. However, it is not easy to determine the exact moment as it varies from woman to woman and from month to month. A rigid schedule for intercourse is unrealistic and can cause increased stress as well as remove the spontaneity of intimacy.

Despite the above, many still ask about the “fertile window”. A woman is most fertile around the time of ovulation. If a woman has a regular 28 days menstruation cycle, the “fertile window” is usually from day 10 to day 18 of her menstrual cycle, with day one being the first day of the bleed. She can calculate this by taking the average length of her last six menstrual cycles (calculated from first day of the preceding menstrual cycle to the first day of the next cycle), minus 14 days to give her the average day of ovulation. Around the ovulation period, a woman’s cervical mucus also begins to change - it becomes more in quantity, clear and “stretchy” in consistency, and like that of “raw egg-white”. Once ovulation has occurred, it again thickens and reduces in amount. Coitus around this time is strongly advised to achieve a pregnancy.
Different Routes to Parenthood

According to the World Health Organization, about 15% of couples of childbearing age seek medical help for fertility issues. The good news is that scientific advancements in fertility treatments can bring you a step closer to your dreams of having a child. Dr Seng shared: “Easy and non-invasive charting for fertility and ovulation has always been the main aim for both fertility doctors and patients but currently there is no ideal method to do it. Most methods require women to be systematic, obsessive and clinical which for some may take the romance out of having a baby.”

1. Surgery

There are a variety of structural causes of female factor infertility that have surgical solutions, e.g. reproductive surgery and diagnostic procedures can correct tubal obstruction, endometriosis, uterine fibroids and scarring from pelvic inflammatory disease.

2. Medications

Medications such as Clomiphene and Metformin may be prescribed to boost ovulation. Gonadotrophins, follicle-stimulating hormones and luteinising hormone medications are also used by women with PCOS who do not respond well to other medications. Women who are considering any of these methods should discuss the risks and benefits with their gynaecologists.

3. Artificial insemination or Intra Uterine Insemination (IUI)

The purpose of the IUI programme is to place some good quality sperm into the uterus at the time the woman releases her eggs. Hence, to ensure optimum chances at IUI, the woman must have a normal uterus and patent fallopian tubes. The husband’s sperm must also be of sufficient quality and quantity. Chances are also higher if the wife is below 37 years old and the treatment is performed together with ovarian stimulation. The average success rate is about 12% to 15% for each attempt.

4. Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)

Males with little or no sperm are usually recommended to have a biopsy followed by ICSI, which is an in-vitro fertilisation procedure whereby a single sperm is extracted and injected directly into the egg, which is then implanted into the woman’s uterus.

ICSI is one of the most effective treatments for male infertility as it works especially well even for those who have very little or abnormally shaped sperm. Only one sperm is needed and the success rate is about 30% of men who are deemed infertile.

5. In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)

IVF is the general term covering all the various programmes that involve the help of a scientist to fertilise the eggs in the laboratory. A couple needs this treatment if the woman has blocked or damaged fallopian tubes, or severe endometriosis, or if the doctor suspects a fertilisation problem e.g. older women, women with fewer eggs or failed IUI treatment.

This treatment is also suitable if the husband has poor sperm quality. IVF outcome is most dependent on the egg quality. Although IVF has a much higher success rate of about 30% to 40% for each attempt, this must be weighed against its risks, i.e. more injections, more stress and higher complication rate (e.g. multiple pregnancy and ovarian hyper stimulation syndrome). IVF is used for severe infertility factors if simpler treatments fail.

6. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Acupuncture & Fertility

Ms Jin Jin Hua shared: “The use of acupuncture has been shown to decrease uterine contractility and improve pregnancy rate in IVF patient post replacement of embryos.” TCM believes that endometriosis is the result of the body’s blood system encountering blockages. This led to the growth of scarring damage around the reproductive organs. As a result, the fallopian tubes are closed, preventing the eggs from moving to get fertilised. A mixture of herbal remedies and acupuncture for fertility are often used to help these women rebalance their blood system to fix their endometriosis issue so that they may once again conceive. The increased blood flow helps boost fertility by stimulating the ovaries to produce healthy eggs as well as enriching the endometrial lining in the uterus.

“Treatment typically takes six to nine months. The first three months of treatment is to rebalance the body energy system and prepare the body for conception. The following three months is focused on helping the woman to conceive. However, some women conceive during the first three months of treatment. Hence, treatment is dependent on the individual’s body condition and the seriousness of her endometriosis” Ms Jin shared.
“If you know both yourself and your enemy, you can win numerous battles without jeopardy.”

This well-known Chinese idiom from Sun Tzu’s Art of War rings true when it comes to your health. If you know the symptoms well, it would empower you to stop diseases, such as cancer, on its tracks.

According to experts and studies, women are in general more health conscious than their male counterparts. They are also more watchful of their health and willing to seek medical help when they encounter worrisome symptoms.

Younger women, however, sometimes ignore symptoms as they feel they are too young to contract cancer. “While that’s true most of the times, cancers are affecting more young people than before,” Dr Donald Poon, Specialist in Medical Oncology & Consultant, Raffles Cancer Centre pointed out.
Here are eight cancer symptoms that no woman should ignore.

1 **Weight Loss without Trying**
Most women would be pleased to lose 5kg without having to exercise or diet. However, unexplained weight loss could be a sign for something more sinister - cancer. Dr Poon said: “If you lose 10% of your weight in less than six months, you should consult a doctor to rule out cancer and other health problems, such as thyroid, diabetes, depression, liver disease, or malabsorption disorders.”

2 **Bloated Like a Balloon**
Bloating is such a common, albeit irritating, occurrence that few people would get nervous over it. But did you know that it may be a sign of ovarian cancer?

According to Dr Lynette Ngo, Specialist in Medical Oncology & Consultant, Raffles Cancer Centre: “If you experience, on top of frequent and persistent bloating, abdominal or pelvic pain, feel full quickly without eating much, or encounter urinary problems, you should consult your doctor to rule out ovarian cancer.”

3 **Staying Abreast**
Most women are familiar with their breasts and alert to lumps they may feel. “Lumps are the most common breast cancer symptom but there are other breast changes that you should also look out for,” shared Dr Ngo. “These include nipple discharges (for those who aren’t breastfeeding), nipple changes, skin rash, or redness and thickening of the skin on the breast.”

4 **Out of the Norm Bleeding**
Women who experience bleeding when their menstruation between periods cycle is usually regular should get that checked by their doctor. Dr Ngo noted that such unusual bleeding could be a symptom of endometrial cancer or cervical cancer. The bleeding could also be from the gastrointestinal tract, a symptom of colorectal cancer, and mistaken to be one’s period.

5 **Indigestion**
Indigestion is a common problem most of us have encountered from time to time. It can, in turn, lead to heartburn, bloating and nausea.

If you are experiencing indigestion for no apparent reason, you should not brush it aside. Dr Poon pointed out that indigestion is an early symptom for cancers of the oesophagus, stomach and throat. “Usually, indigestion is not a cause of concern, but if you get indigestion a lot, or if it comes on suddenly or is particularly painful, you may wish to speak to your doctor to rule out cancer.”

6 **Hot and Tired**
Fever and fatigue are vague yet common symptoms. Unexplained fever, not due to flu and other infections, should be monitored. “They can be caused by early blood cancers such as leukemia or lymphoma or in late stage cancers when the cancer has spread to other organs, metastasised,” said Dr Tan.

7 **Changes to the Skin**
If you have noticed skin changes lasting a few weeks, it may be advisable to get it checked out. Dr Toh Chee Keong, Specialist in Medical Oncology & Consultant, Raffles Cancer Centre said: “Changes in moles and pigmentation, bleeding or scaling of the skin are symptoms of the skin that you should look out for as they may be due to skin cancer.”

8 **The Cough That Won’t Go Off**
A few coughs won’t get you down. Coughs are not unexpected when you come down with flu, allergies or infection of the upper respiratory tract. However, a prolonged cough lasting for more than three or four weeks should not be ignored, said Dr Toh. This is especially so for smokers as they are at higher risk of lung cancer.

To be able to flag up worrisome symptoms before cancer strikes, it is important for us to be in touch with our body. Don’t let these symptoms get you. HN
Healthy Low-everything Muffin

12 servings per recipe

Looking for a healthy yet indulgent snack? How can that be possible? HealthNews shows you how with this muffin recipe that combines healthy ingredients with the delightful happy food - CHOCOLATE!

Ingredients

- 90g rolled oats (non-instant)
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 tbs white rice vinegar
- 120g whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup applesauce
- 2 egg whites
- A pinch of salt
- 60g cup dried cranberries
- 60g cup dark chocolate chips
- 30g walnuts

Recipe adapted from http://www.ridiculouslyhealthy.com/recipes/customizable-oat-muffin-recipe/

Preparation

1. Mix skim milk with white vinegar to create low-fat buttermilk.
2. Place oats into a small bowl, and pour buttermilk into it. Let it sit for two hours at room temperature.
3. Preheat oven to 190 degrees celsius. Grease 12 muffin cups or line with paper muffin liners.
4. In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients (wheat flour, baking powder, baking soda and brown sugar).
5. Stir in oat buttermilk mixture, applesauce and egg white. Mix well.
6. Pour batter into muffin cups.
7. Bake in preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the centre of the muffin comes out clean.

“These muffins contain wholegrain in the form of oat and wheat. Wholegrains provide you with the all-important fibre and are also rich in vitamins and minerals. By using skim milk over regular whole milk, you reduce your saturated fat and calorie intake. Applesauce is a great low-free substitute for oil in muffins giving you a softer and sweeter texture, and taste. Finally, using two egg whites to replace a whole egg reduces the overall cholesterol levels of this treat.

This is a snack that is not overly rich. The dried cranberries, walnuts and oats provide you with a burst of flavours with every bite, making it a yummy snack to have any time of the day. Warm the muffin up before you devour it for a melt-in-your mouth experience.”

– Ms Sarah Sinaram, Senior Dietitian, Raffles Internal Medicine Centre

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Dear readers,

It is time for us to hear what YOU have to say about our health magazine. As part of our effort to improve HealthNews, we are conducting a survey to collect insights about the magazine and our readers.

We appreciate your thoughts and opinions! Thank you for helping to make HealthNews a better publication. ☺

Part A: Reading Habits

1. Do you read HealthNews?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No (Why? ____________________________ )

2. Why do you read HealthNews?
   (Please select all that apply)
   - [ ] To find out more about current medical advancements
   - [ ] To find out more about the preventions and treatments available for different health conditions
   - [ ] I am a health conscious individual and would like to learn more health tips
   - [ ] To share health and wellness information with my family and friends

3. How did you find out about HealthNews?
   (Please select all that apply)
   - [ ] Word of mouth (e.g. recommendation through friends, our staff, etc)
   - [ ] Seen/read the physical copy during my visit to the hospital or any of Raffles Medical clinics
   - [ ] Through our social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
   - [ ] Through our website

4. How many issues of HealthNews have you read in the past 12 months?
   - [ ] 1 out of 4 issues
   - [ ] 2 out of 4 issues
   - [ ] 3 out of 4 issues
   - [ ] All 4 issues

5. How many issues of HealthNews have you read in TOTAL thus far?
   - [ ] None
   - [ ] 1 to 2 issues
   - [ ] 3 to 4 issues
   - [ ] 5 to 10 issues
   - [ ] More than 10 issues

6. How much time do you usually spend on reading an issue?
   - [ ] Less than 5 minutes
   - [ ] 5 to 10 minutes
   - [ ] 10 to 30 minutes
   - [ ] 30 minutes to 1 hour
   - [ ] More than 1 hour

7. How long do you keep each copy of HealthNews?
   - [ ] I don’t keep any of them
   - [ ] One month or less
   - [ ] Until the next issue arrives
   - [ ] Indefinitely, I keep it as a reference for personal use

8. How would you rate your reading interest towards HealthNews?
   - [ ] I look forward to reading it every quarter.
   - [ ] When I have the time, I flip through the pages and read the articles that catch my attention.
   - [ ] I receive it and take a few days to read. I will then pass it on to my friends or family to read it.
   - [ ] I receive it and pass it on to others. I don’t usually look at it.
   - [ ] It is just like any other in-house health publication. Nothing interests me much.
   - [ ] Others (please specify) ____________________________

Part B: Distribution

9. What do you think of HealthNews?
   - [ ] Exactly what I need and want
   - [ ] A satisfactory resource that I appreciate
   - [ ] Partially satisfactory to me sometimes
   - [ ] Not satisfactory at all
   - [ ] Others (please specify) ____________________________
10. Which version of HealthNews do you read? (Please select all that apply)

- Email subscription
- Email forwarded by others
- Printed copy from Raffles Hospital
- Printed copy from Raffles Medical/Dental Clinics
- Printed copy passed on from others
- Online at Raffles’ Website

11. It is convenient for me to pick up a print copy of HealthNews from: (Please select all that apply)

- Raffles Hospital/ Specialist Centres
- Raffles Medical Clinics
- I would prefer it delivered to my home
- I don’t need a printed copy
- Others (please specify)

12. I prefer to read HealthNews:

- Online PDF (website)
- Online Direct Mailer (email/ email attachment)
- Printed copy delivered to me
- Printed copy obtained from hospital/ clinics
- Both print and electronically
- No preference
- Others (please specify)

13. Are you willing to pay for a subscribed print copy delivered to you at a small fee?

- Yes, S$___________ per copy
- No

14. My copy of HealthNews is typically read by ____ other people

- 0
- 1 to 3
- 3 to 6
- More than 6

15. Are you on our HealthNews mailing list?

- Yes, printed copy
- Yes, online copy
- Yes, both printed and online copies
- No

Part C: Content Analysis

16. Do you prefer to have each issue to focus on just ONE topic or a few different topics?

- One topic
- Few different topics

17. Please circle the number that best represents how you feel about the different aspects of Health News:

(Based on the current issue of HealthNews – All about the Ladies, May 2013)

**Written Content**

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**18. Which regular section(s) do you want more or less? (You may select not more than 3 options)**

- [ ] Newsroom
- [ ] LIVEWELL
- [ ] EATSMART
- [ ] Lunch Dates with Raffles
- [ ] UpClose
- [ ] GETGORGEOUS
- [ ] SHAPEUP
- [ ] Made Me Smile
- [ ] Supplements
- [ ] Ask The Experts
- [ ] Social Media
- [ ] Market Place

**19. Which of the following health topics are you interested in finding out more about HealthNews? (Please select all that apply)**

- [ ] Cancer
- [ ] Counselling and Psychiatry
- [ ] Dental
- [ ] Eye, Ear, Nose, Throat
- [ ] Genetics
- [ ] Health Screening
- [ ] Heart
- [ ] Infectious Diseases
- [ ] Internal Medicine (e.g. Hypertension, Diabetes, Rheumatology etc.)
- [ ] Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- [ ] Skin and Aesthetics
- [ ] Others (please specify)

**20. Would you participate in contests that HealthNews runs?**

- [ ] Yes, what type? (please specify)
- [ ] No

**22. The thing(s) that I like most about HealthNews is/are:**

- [ ] ________________________________
- [ ] ________________________________
- [ ] ________________________________

**21. Would you like to see HealthNews in another language?**

- a. If yes, which language?
  - [ ] Mandarin
  - [ ] Malay
  - [ ] Tamil
  - [ ] Others (please specify)
  
  ________________________________

- b. No

**23. The thing(s) that I dislike most about HealthNews is/are:**

- [ ] ________________________________
- [ ] ________________________________
- [ ] ________________________________
**PART D: Demographics**

24. Which of the following services by Raffles Medical Group do you use? (Please select all that apply)

- Raffles Hospital
- Raffles Medical Clinics
- Raffles Health (i.e. Health Supplements)
- Raffles Health Insurance
- None
- Others (please specify)

25. Are you a Corporate Client?

a. Yes (if yes, please state your organisation)

b. No

26. Your Gender

- Female
- Male

27. Your Age

- 10 to 20
- 20 to 30
- 30 to 40
- 40 to 50
- 50 and above

28. Your Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced/ Separated

29. Your Nationality

- Singaporean
- Singapore PR
- Foreigner: ______________________________________

30. Your Ethnic Origin

- Chinese
- Indian
- Malay
- Others (please specify)

31. Your Highest Level of Education

- Primary and/or Secondary
- ITE
- Diploma
- University Degree
- Masters
- PhD and above

32. Your Working Status

- Employed
- Self-employed
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Student
- Unemployed

33. Your Occupation

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Wholesale & Retail
- Hotel & Restaurants
- Healthcare
- Transport & Storage
- Info & Communications
- Financial Services
- Business Services
- Community, Social and Personal Services
- Others

34. Your Industry

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Wholesale & Retail
- Hotel & Restaurants
- Healthcare
- Transport & Storage
- Info & Communications
- Financial Services
- Business Services
- Community, Social and Personal Services
- Others

35. Your Gross Annual Household Income (Before Tax)

- S$30,000 or less
- S$30,001 to S$60,000
- S$90,001 to S$120,000
- S$120,001 and above

36. Would you like us to include you into our HealthNews mailing list in future?

If so, kindly provide us with your email address:

**Terms & Conditions:**

1. All survey entries are to be submitted by 30 June 2013.
2. With each completed survey, you will receive a complimentary gift.
3. Kindly submit your completed survey form together with a photocopy of your NRIC/ID Card to redeem your gift at Raffles Health, Level 1 (Raffles Hospital) or at any Raffes Medical clinics.
Food for Thought

Super Foods for Super Woman

You are what you eat. HealthNews speaks to our Senior Dietitian, Ms Sarah Sinaram to understand the top foods every woman should take to look and feel their best.

One’s diet is an essential part of life. Food itself gives life and helps build our bodies in various ways. It is also an enjoyment that most of us could relate to. (Hands up for those who are already thinking of your next meal!) However, there are good foods and there are junk foods. And by this, we are not comparing its cost or its rarity but its nutritional values and the benefits it brings to our bodies. Women have different needs from our male counterparts. So it is important for us to know the differences so that we can eat and live well. Here’s a list of essential foods which no woman should go without.

Oily Fish

According to Ms Sarah Sinaram, Senior Dietitian, Raffles Internal Medicine Centre, oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, halibut, sardines, tuna, and herring are good sources of Omega-3 fats (EPA & DHA).

“Studies have shown that there is a low incidence of cardiovascular heart disease when oily fish consumption is high. The American Heart Association recommends having two to three servings (150g per serve) of oily fish a week,” added Ms Sinaram.

For vegetarians, ALA is found in flaxseeds, flaxseed oil, canola oil, soybeans, soybean oil, pumpkin seeds, pumpkin seed oil, walnuts, and walnut oil. However, ALA from flax and other vegetarian sources needs to be converted in the body to EPA and DHA.

Iron rich foods

Are you feeling tired, have poor concentration or often down with infection? You may be suffering from low iron levels. Health Promotion Board recommends that women aged 18 to 60 years old get 19mg of iron daily. Iron can come from animal (haem iron) or plant (non-haem iron) sources. Haem
iron is absorbed more effectively than non-haem iron so meats are the best source of iron.

Here’s a tip from Ms Sinaram on iron content: “The redder the meat, the higher its iron content. This means that beef and lamb are higher in iron than pork, chicken and fish.”

Non-haem iron is found in wholegrain and iron fortified cereals, legumes and dark green vegetables. This means that kidney beans, chickpeas, spinach and broccoli are all great options.

Tip: Vitamin C helps increase the body’s absorption of non-haem iron so include a serving of fruits during meals to make the best out of it.

Antioxidants
Heard about free radicals? Antioxidants are substances that may protect cells from the damage caused by free radicals, which are basically unstable molecules that may lead to cancer. Studies have shown that a high antioxidant intake is associated with a reduction in cardiovascular disease, stroke and may even prevent cancer.

Examples of antioxidants include beta-carotene, lutein, lycopene, vitamins C, E and A. Antioxidants are abundant in fruits and vegetables, as well as in other foods including nuts, grains, and some meats, poultry and fish.

Tip: To obtain a variety of these beneficial antioxidants, take two servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

Folate rich foods
Many may remember consuming folic acid supplements, the synthetic form of folate during their pregnancy.

“Folate is a water-soluble B vitamin found naturally in a wide variety of foods, including vegetables (especially dark green leafy vegetables), fruits and fruit juices, nuts, beans, peas, dairy products, poultry and meat, eggs, seafood and grains,” shared Ms Sinaram.

Certain groups, especially women of childbearing age are at risk of insufficient folate intake. Folic acid supplements are suggested for use in women of childbearing age in order to prevent neural tube defects. It is also of interest with respect to cognitive enhancement, cancer, psychiatric illnesses and cardiovascular conditions.

Calcium rich foods
Not a surprise, calcium is another important nutrient for women. According to Ms Sinaram, inadequate calcium intake over the long term causes osteopenia which if untreated can lead to osteoporosis. This increases the risk of bone fractures, especially in older individuals. Calcium deficiency can also cause rickets, though it is more commonly associated with vitamin D deficiency.

The recommended daily allowance for women aged 19 to 50 years is 800mg. Milk, yogurt and cheese are rich natural sources of calcium. Non-dairy sources include vegetables, such as Chinese cabbage, kale and broccoli. Foods fortified with calcium include many fruit juices and drinks, tofu and cereals.

Probiotics
Probiotics are live micro-organisms (in most cases, bacteria) that are similar to beneficial micro-organisms found in the human gut. They are also called “friendly bacteria” or “good bacteria” and help maintain the natural balance of organisms (microflora) in the intestines.

“Probiotics are used in the treatment of diarrhoea, prevention of infections in the digestive tract and can be beneficial in cases of inflammatory bowel disease,” shared Ms Sinaram.

Food sources of probiotics include low-fat yoghurt, fermented milk drinks and Kefir.

Tip: Probiotics are generally considered safe however people with impaired immune function should seek their doctor’s opinion prior to consumption.

Beyond these foods, women should consider taking wholegrains, such as brown rice, bran flakes, whole-grain breads and barley. Studies have shown that a daily intake of wholegrains can reduce the risk of getting chronic diseases and cancers.

The foods you eat can determine your well-being. So for your next meal, make it a point to choose food items that are going to be good for your body! HN
HealthNews continues to discover the indulgence of our doctors. In this issue, we had lunch with Physician Ou Cuiliu, a physician and consultant at Raffles Chinese Medicine, who ensures that her meals are accompanied with soups. During our fish soup lunch date, she shares with us about how she keeps her family healthy through their stomach.

**BIO DATA**

Name: Ou Cuiliu  
Age: 35  
Height: 1.55m  
Weight: 50kg  

Ms Ou is a TCM physician and consultant at Raffles Chinese Medicine. She is happily married and is blessed with a daughter and son.

"The soup was not oily and the fish is fresh. The only thing is that there could be more vegetables. Adding more slices of tomatoes will increase its flavour and colour, making it more wholesome. So next time when you order fish soup, ask for more vegetables and tomatoes."

- Physician Ou

**Nutrition Information**

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**What is your diet like?**

As both my grandmother and mother are doctors, they emphasise on eating a well-balanced diet with food that is either casserole stewed or steamed and seldom deep fried. Thus, my eating habits have been deeply influenced and shaped by this upbringing.

I prefer to eat a well-balanced diet with food that is light and nutritious. My diet will include meat and vegetables and I will usually choose to eat fish soup, steamed rice, noodles with soup, etc.

I love drinking soup especially those boiled with herbs, as this type of soup is nutritious, supplements the body’s stamina and conditions the body.

When eating at home, I would customise the ingredients of the soup based on my family and my own health needs. I would usually boil soups that help to build the immune system, invigorates the spleen and moisten the lungs. If I am eating out, I would choose a place where food is prepared well and the environment is clean. These matters more than a grand setting.

"An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

What is your apple?

For me, it would be two to three servings of different types of fruits every day, as I believe that they are abundant in vitamins to meet our daily needs.

**Tips from Raffles’ Dietitian:**

1) Order non-fried fish head or fish slices to control your fat intake.  
2) Request not to add milk to the fish soup.  
3) Request for the dish to be prepared without added salt or monosodium glutamate (MSG), when possible, to limit sodium consumption.  
4) Ask for more vegetables such as tomato or other green leafy vegetables.
Remember your visit to the dentist? How was it like? In this issue, let’s have General Dental Surgeon, Dr Lee Leing, 34 years old, to share with us tips on how to avoid expensive treatments by having better dental hygiene.
How did you get into your current field?
While waiting to start university, I took up various temporary jobs to see what I might like or dislike. I realised that I was not meant for a desk-bound job. Dentistry is a field which ticked my boxes - it’s a job with regular and flexible hours. I get to work with my hands and there is a lot of interaction with people from all walks of life. Most importantly, I get to help people every day. I have been practising dentistry for 12 years now.

Tell us more about what exactly you do as a dentist and what is a typical day for you.
Dentistry is a lot more than just filling and drilling. It’s about assessing what are the patients’ needs and providing the best care for them while meeting their needs. Also, it's about establishing a good rapport and trust between myself (the dentist) and the patient. Sometimes, all the patient needs is a little reassurance and some basic treatment instead of complex treatments involving multiple crowns or veneers. In a nutshell, I see patients every day for preventive treatments, restorative and cosmetic work which include whitening, fillings, crowns, dentures and implants, treatment of dental infections like root canal therapy and extractions or surgery.

Could you share with us some of the most memorable cases or moments about your job?
I had a patient who was severely traumatised by her previous dental experiences so much so that she was too scared to open her mouth for anyone to examine. It took her five to 10 minutes of pacing about in my room before she decided to sit on the dental chair. It also took a lot of gentle coaxing to get me to open her mouth to do an examination of her oral cavity. She gagged whenever any instruments touched her tongue and cheek. I spent an hour talking her through the check-up visit and managed to only clean the teeth at the front of her mouth. I thought that was a good progress for her! Her subsequent visits were spent gradually helping her to overcome her fear of dental treatments. We started off with baby steps like cleaning of a few teeth, to trying one filling (of her front tooth). She's much better now and can sit through two to three fillings (of her molars) during each visit.

What’s the most stressful part of being a dentist?
Meeting the demands of a patient with high aesthetic needs can be rather challenging. Firstly, aesthetics is rather subjective. Everyone has different views on what is beautiful. Secondly, sometimes the demands may be unrealistic for the procedure that the patient has in mind. Thus communication between the dentist and patient is crucial and the patients' expectations need to be managed well.

What inspires you most at work?
The trust that patients place in me is what I found most inspiring. It’s because they trust my judgment and recommendations that I always feel the need to do my utmost for all my patients. I feel a great sense of accomplishment whenever I manage to earn the trust of patients who started off apprehensive and skeptical. It breaks my heart when I see patients in pain. It really tugs at my heart strings and I feel compelled to do something to alleviate their pain.

Do you enforce strict discipline on dental hygiene on your children?
Yes, I do. As they are still pretty young (6 and 8 years old), I will supervise them as they brush their teeth. I want to ensure that they are brushing right; I will send them back to the bathroom to have their teeth brushed again if they do not do a good job of it.

You wish your patients knew more about...
The benefits of flossing. Many patients do not floss for various reasons: difficulty in manipulating the floss, troublesome, fear of creating gaps between their teeth, fear of damaging their gums. It is important to floss as the toothbrush bristles are not able to clean between our teeth by flossing, it removes the food that are caught in between the teeth, and hence reducing the risk of cavity. Flossing does not create gaps between our teeth; we have natural gaps (interdental spaces) present between our teeth and flossing serves to clean these gaps. When done correctly, flossing does not damage but protect the gums.

What are some essential dental habits everyone should have and that every parent/mother should educate their children?
1. Brush your teeth twice daily. Children need to be taught how to brush thoroughly i.e. the bristles need to clean up to the gum area of the tooth gently and not haphazard brushing of teeth surfaces. Parents should supervise their children during tooth brushing till they are about seven to eight years old. Brush the tongue as well to minimise bad breath.
2. Floss your teeth at least once a day.
3. Discourage your children from sucking their thumbs as it traps germs and will prevent the teeth from growing straight.
4. When introducing children to dental treatment for the first time, the choice of words used is important. Be encouraging and reassure them that they will be fine. First visits are usually uneventful, with an introduction of the equipment and tools, as well as a round of prophylaxis if the child is comfortable with it. When there is a need for fillings or extractions, instead of using words like “pain”, use words like “discomfort”.

HN
Oh! Sweet Hormones

When you experience an acne outbreak or your girlfriend suddenly lashes out at you for no apparent reason, what do you blame? Well, most certainly hormones. There are approximately 150 hormones in the body that act as messengers to send out signals to the cells in different parts of the body, regulating your mood, growth, reproduction, metabolism and many other aspects of bodily function.

Read on to understand the types of hormones that affect your skin and for tips to protect this important natural covering of yours.

The Wonderful Relationship Between Hormones and Skin

When it comes to taking care of your body’s largest organ, there are essentially five types of hormones that you should know.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Androgens</td>
<td>They are basically male hormones. Testosterone is the primary and most well-known androgen. Women produce their own androgens in the adrenal gland. If there is an excessive secretion of androgens, this causes an excessive secretion of sebum of the sebaceous glands that may cause acne or hair loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estrogens</td>
<td>These are female hormones produced by the ovaries. They reduce the secretion of sebum and help to cure acne, and promote growth of hair on the scalp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyroid Hormones</td>
<td>They are secreted by the thyroid gland. If there is a shortage of thyroid hormones in the system the skin tends to become dry and wrinkled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steroid</td>
<td>They are produced by the adrenal glands. Excessive production causes skin infections, acne and pigmentation on the skin. Steroids encompass hormones such as androgens and oestrogens too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulin</td>
<td>This is central to regulating glucose intake and metabolism in the body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Does Hormonal Changes Affect the Skin?
As a woman ages, she experiences different levels of hormonal changes at different stages of her life that affect her skin, hair and nails. During adolescence she may experience acne outbreaks, which is typically linked to an over-stimulation of androgens that causes acne to flare up.

Protecting Your Skin
Having beautiful skin involves taking care of your body both internally and externally. Being the largest organ of the body and serving as a covering, it is important to protect it against free-radicals that may cause harm to it. Read on for tips and advice from Dr Raymond Kwah, Specialist in Dermatology & Consultant, Raffles Skin & Aesthetics, as he shares with you on how to care for your skin.

Eat wisely
• Having a well-balanced diet is key. Consuming nutritious food is important not only for general health but also for the health status of the skin.
• Nutritional deficiencies e.g. vitamin C deficiency can cause dry skin and poor hair quality; vitamin B deficiency can cause excessive skin pigmentation. If you are interested in taking supplements, discuss it with your family doctor or nutritionist if you require extra supplementation, as eating in excess may be harmful to the body e.g. excess vitamin A can cause dryness to the skin as well as liver and cholesterol abnormalities.
• Vitamin and mineral supplements are not substitutes for a healthy, balanced diet. However, they can help fill the gaps when you don’t eat well or don’t eat enough to satisfy your nutrient needs.
• Avoid a high glycemic index diet that contains food like white bread, corn, thick pasta, potatoes, corn chips, etc.

Ensure good hydration
• This means drinking lots of water every day. Substituting with coffee or sodas does not count!
• Depending on your skin type, use a suitable moisturiser after the cleansing your face to prevent skin from drying.

Apply sun screen
Ultra-Violet (UV) is an important cause of skin ageing. Thus, applying sun screen is an essential part of our daily skin care regime.
• Sunscreen and sun protection are still key aspects of ensuring healthy skin. Slip on a shirt. Slop on the sunscreen. Slap on the hat.
• These nutrients also serve as antioxidants, mopping up circulating free radicals that can damage the skin. These nutrients are easily available in our diet, e.g. fruits such as apples and vegetables like tomatoes.
• Certain nutrients added in sun screen products have shown to possess “UV protection” properties. These include beta-carotene, lycopene, vitamins C and E, and Omega-3 which have been shown to increase “minimal erythema dose” (i.e less sensitivity to light) and thus may help to mitigate damage attributed to UV radiation.

However, this does not mean we can spend hours in the sun without worrying about the damage of UV to the skin!
Oh No, Not Again!

Women and their Crowning Issues

A woman’s hair is her crowning glory. Thus, we can fully understand the pain and agony whenever we experience any form of hair loss. Is this normal? Read on to explore this hair raising issue.
Most forms of hair loss are actually normal. It is important to know that shedding of hair is a natural process with anything from 100 to 300 strands shed each day. Here, we give you a few tips to minimise such unfortunate hair loss.

1. Heating Agents
   We commonly use hair straighteners to keep our hair in shape. However, it is best not to subject hair to frequent heating and drying procedures. Constant heating and drying to your hair can lead to brittleness and fragility that causes premature hair loss. Minimise the usage of these heating agents and your crown will thank you for it! Remember, natural drying is best for your hair to avoid damaging any hair follicles.

2. Dye Jobs
   Yes, experimenting with hair dyes can be fun and exciting. However, Dr Chris Foo, Specialist in Dermatology & Consultant, Managing Partner, Raffles Skin & Aesthetics shared that it is best to exercise caution when using hair dyes due to the risk of allergic reactions. Many hair dye products contain Paraphenylenediamine (PPD) which could trigger sensitivity reactions for some. Symptoms of such allergic reactions include rashes, flaky scalp and even facial swelling. Choose hair dyes that do not contain PPD if you are afraid of allergy.

3. Get Your Stress Under Control
   As we all know, too much stress damages our body, and our hair is no exception. Dr Joshua Kua, Specialist in Psychiatry & Consultant, Raffles Counselling Centre, commented that loss of hair can be one of the ways our body is telling us that we are overdoing things or overly stressed, and that it is time for us to take a step back and relax. So, be sure to get adequate beauty sleep if you want to have luscious hair!

4. Styling the Right Way
   Sure, the idea of having those braids seems harmless, but if it requires tight pulling and elastics, then you are on your way to speeding up the rate of your hair loss. Tight ponytails, corn-rows and plaits can lead to significant hair loss if done daily. Thus, a simple loose ponytail will minimise such occurrences.

5. A Big No to Brushing Wet Hair
   Avoid brushing wet hair. This snaps off a lot of hair that could still be growing! If you must, be sure to use a wide-toothed comb. Use your fingers to undo tangles, not a comb or brush. You may treat this as your very own hair-mantra and you are well on your way to have lustrous and healthy locks. Say goodbye to dull frizzy hair! HN

D.I.Y Hair Remedy

There are so many hair remedies that can easily be found on the internet. However, some might burn a hole in our pockets. Here, we show you a simple concoction that you can do it at home that will leave your hair feeling oh-so-fabulous!

1. Prepare a bowl of tap water and a fresh lemon.
2. Cut the lemon into halves and squeeze the juice into a bowl of water.
3. Apply the lemon juice to your scalp and gently massage in circular motion, on the top, side and front. Rinse it off.
The arms, thighs and buns. These may be the best assets on your body, but more often than not, these three areas cause the most problems when it comes to achieving the figure that we desire. Let HealthNews show you some simple exercises you may practise at home (or even outside) to help target these areas.

These exercises will help to tone the arms, tummy and glutes. The best part? These use minimal exercise equipment so you will not be breaking the bank to practise them. Let’s us jump right into it.

Tricep Extension

The tricep extension is a great exercise to help tone the back of one’s shoulders and triceps (say bye bye to those Butter arms). If you do not have any light weights at home, you may replace it with a bottle of water.

**Step 1:** Starting with your left arm. Got into a lunge position, with your left back heel on the ground. Lean over your right front bent knee as you lift the left arm up to your side with the elbows bent at a 90-degrees angle, while holding the weight.

**Step 2:** Lift up and straighten the weight bearing arm straight up by your side, parallel to the ground. Relax the shoulder, lift and lower the weight for about 15 times. Repeat both steps with the other side.
The single-leg deadlift exercise helps to tone your glutes while activating your entire core to maintain stability. 
Optional: You may perform this exercise with a pair of light weights.

**Step 1:** While standing on your right foot, lift your left foot and bend your knee, so that the left lower leg is parallel to the ground.

**Step 2:** Keeping the balance on your right foot, bend forward at your hips while slowly lowering your body and arms as far as you can. At the same time, straighten out the left leg as much as you can while maintaining stability. Pause, then push the body back to starting position, using your glutes to push forward instead of the back. Ensure your back is straight and keep the tummy pulled in the entire time to prevent over arching.

**Conclusion**
We hope these exercises help you achieve that desired toned body. However, do not forget that on top of a regular exercise regime, you need to commit to a proper diet plan coupled with sufficient rest. We should not only aim to be fit, but also to be healthy.
Ms Helen Espina Cruz  
Lactation Consultant  
Senior Staff Nurse, Raffles Hospital  
She believes that a smile can make a big difference to the same service rendered.

My daily routine is...  
A typical day for me begins by wheeling babies to their respective mummies and greeting the patients, asking if they had a good rest and breakfast. This is my way to brighten their day. It also shows them that nurses are cheerful as most of the mummies are most probably not sleeping well after delivering the day before.

In the late morning, I conduct parent craft lessons by sharing some happy thoughts with the patients to make the lesson light-hearted. The main part of the session is imparting practical skills to them on how to take care of their babies after they are discharged.

What I love most about my job is...  
Being able to help my patients give me a sense of fulfilment in the job that I’m in. It also helps when my passion in nursing keeps things fresh for me at work all the time.

I keep my smile by...  
As I usually work in the morning shift, in order to ensure that I have enough energy to keep my smile throughout the day, I go to bed by 9.30pm to ensure ample rest. I maintain a regular exercise regime after work and stay healthy.

A smile makes a difference because...  
The difference between good and bad service lies in the attitude. Every patient is different and has different needs. Thus, I feel that it is important to think in their shoes and be more understanding to them. A positive attitude expressed with a smile makes a tremendous difference to the same type of service rendered.

#MadeMeSmile is a Twitter tag that is used to sharing on what made you beam. It could be your experience with us and/or someone who made you smile during your visit. Share with us something that ‘made you smile today’. Simply follow and tag us @RafflesMedGrp and share with us what #MadeMeSmile.
One of the most common infections among women is an infection of the urinary tract. Research has shown that about 40% of women develop a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) at some point in their life. The big question we ask ourselves: is there any way we can prevent UTI?

Common symptoms of urinary problems include a burning sensation when urinating, the frequent urge to urinate, passing blood stained or cloudy urine and lower abdominal pain. It is best to consult your doctor should any of these symptoms occur.

Mild cases of UTI are usually treated through antibiotics. The treatment given will depend on the severity of the UTI.

So is there any way we can prevent it from happening? The following should be observed in order to reduce your risk of getting a urinary tract infection.

Proper Fluids
It is best to drink plenty of water daily to flush away the toxins in your body and bladder system. Cranberry juice or vitamin supplements should be consumed in order to acidify urine. Studies have shown that cranberry consumption can aid in raising urinary levels of hippuric acid, a compound that can slow bacterial growth.

Hygiene
The best way to prevent any bacterial growth is of course to practice good hygiene. As the source of the bacteria comes from one’s own bowel, it is important to wipe yourself from front to back in order to avoid faecal contamination of the urethra after using the toilet.

Form good habits
Urinate immediately when there is an urge; do not resist urge for long periods. Resistance will only allow bacteria to access your urinary tract much more easily.

Probiotics
According to the World Health Organization, probiotics are “living organisms which, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host”. Research has shown that probiotics can be used to prevent the development of disease-causing bacterial strains, thus defending the body from urinary tract infection. Sources of probiotics include yoghurt, milk and cheese.

In conclusion, urinary tract infections are very common, and they are easiest to treat if caught early before they become severe or spread beyond the bladder. Remember the golden rule, prevention is always better than cure!
To date, we do not know for certain how minoxidil works in promoting hair growth. When given orally for hypertension, it acts by dilating blood vessels, but studies have not shown as yet that vessels on the scalp dilate when it is used topically. Present evidence suggests that minoxidil acts mainly on the hair cycle, by promoting anagen (the growth phase of hair), and by premature termination of telogen (the resting phase of the hair cycle).

Also, at present, there is no evidence to suggest that topical minoxidil use in women can cause enlargement of fibroids.

Many slimming and anti-cellulite creams contain caffeine, which is believed to reduce fluid around the fat, hence "tightening" and making it look smoother. Unfortunately, creams applied over the body can be absorbed into the body through the blood vessels in the skin, and this may be passed on to the breast milk, albeit in small quantities. The problem with such creams is that we may not know exactly how much caffeine will eventually be absorbed. Furthermore, caffeine may also be found in beverages such as tea, coffee, colas and the cumulative amount of caffeine may well exceed the level that is considered to be acceptable (i.e. about 300 to 400 mg caffeine per day).

Apart from caffeine, other common ingredients found in slimming/cellulite creams include aminophylline (medicine used in asthma), and vitamin A derivatives. These may also be excreted in the breast milk, and the safety profile of these chemicals in the infant is not well established.

Finally, there is no scientific evidence that the topical application of slimming/cellulite creams work. In view of the lack of evidence of definite benefit, and the possible problems it may bring about, it may not be advisable to use such creams if you are nursing your baby.

I am 45 year old Chinese female. I have been using Minoxidil 5% solution for slightly more than a year. It was prescribed by my dermatologist for my hair loss problem. I have a few fibroids in my uterus. The largest is 2.4 x 1.9 x 1.7 cm in size. I go for regular pelvic ultrasound scans. At my last consultation last September, my doctor told me I could leave the fibroids alone for now.

I would like to know if:
(a) minoxidil will cause the fibroids to grow bigger;
(b) minoxidil affects hormones in the body and;
(c) if minoxidil does not affect or disrupt a person's hormonal balance in the body, how does minoxidil prevent hair loss and encourage hair growth?

I am 32 years old and have just delivered one month ago. I would like to find out whether it is safe to use those slimming or cellulite creams on my tummy and thighs, as I am currently breast-feeding my baby. Those kinds of cream often contain caffeine, will it affect my baby's sleep if I apply the cream and nurse him?
Connect with us for the latest health tips. Here's what you have missed…

**<EAT SMART>**
Ever wondered how many calories are in your favourite Chinese New Year goodies? While we know you can’t resist those yummy pineapple tarts and BBQ pork slices, start by eating in moderation for a healthy start to the Lunar calendar!

**<SHAPE UP>**
Do you experience frequent lower back aches and pain? Do these exercises to strengthen your back muscles.

Dr David Wong, Specialist in Orthopaedic Surgery & Consultant, Raffles Orthopaedic Centre advises: “A strong, well-conditioned back can tolerate more stress, and protect the spine better as compared to a back that has not been conditioned through exercise. Conditioning through flexibility and strengthening back exercises not only helps the back avoid injury, or minimises the severity of injury if the spine is traumatised, it also can help relieve the pain of many back conditions.”

**<EAT SMART>**
Having a bowl of fish soup at lunch? Here are some tips from our Raffles’ Diettian:

1) Order healthier non-fried fish head slices to control your fat intake.
2) Request not to add milk to fish soup.
3) Request dish to be prepared without added salt or monosodium glutamate (MSG) when possible to limit sodium consumption.
4) Get more vegetables such as tomato or other green leafy vegetables.

Read on to find out the benefits of fish soup and some tips on choosing a tasty and healthy broth.

An initiative by Raffles to bring our social media fans closer to us, #AskRmg is a monthly online chat session between our Facebook and Twitter fans and our Specialist of the month. Every last Wednesday of the month, fans can log on to Facebook and Twitter to post medical questions they have regarding the specialist’s clinical interest for a LIVE “1-to-all” chat. Ask the best question to win a shopping voucher.

**Congratulations to our winners for January, February and March!**

**January #AskRmg**
Winner: Jacqueline Tan

Did you know that sleeping in different positions can reduce the severity of snoring? And should we ‘dig’ our ears to clean out the ear wax? Why do I have difficulty breathing when I am sitting down? In January, we invited an ENT specialist, Dr David Lau to address common issues such as nasal allergy, sinus disorders and swallowing problems, as well as snoring. For more information, please visit the notes tab on our Facebook.

**February #AskRmg**
Winner: Suharman Djaja

In the month of February, we invited our cardiologist, Dr Teo Swee Guan to debunk some myths about eating and drinking to having a healthy heart. Also, are more people having heart conditions at a younger age or is it just family history? Find out what Dr Teo has to say by checking out our notes tab.

**March #AskRmg**
Winner: Stella Chia

This month we are raising awareness for colorectal cancer. We invited Dr Ng Chin to address some common concerns like change of bowel movements, irritable bowel disease and unusual abdominal pain. Visit our notes tab on our Facebook page to find out more.
Acupuncture has shown to be especially beneficial as a complementary form of therapy for couples undergoing fertility treatments.

It helps by regulating the body’s system that aids in blood flow to the reproductive organs and stabilising hormone levels. This in turn increases ovarian function in women and sperm production in men.

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$416.20  
Recommended for couples who are planning to start a family  
• 5 Acupuncture Sessions

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* Package excludes medications, radiological investigations and additional blood tests recommended by a specialist.
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Source: HR Trends Survey by Lighthouse Research