



FREMANTLE WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Services & Resources for Women's Health & Wellbeing

Services & Developments

Winter 2013 Newsletter

Welcome to our Winter newsletter! As usual there are service developments and activities to tell you about and in this edition there are health information articles on anxiety and vitamin D.

WA Women's Hall of Fame

On the 6th March as part of the International Women's Day celebrations, Fremantle Women's Health Centre was one of the women's groups formally recognized for their work by the WA Women's Hall of Fame. This was a great honour and was recognition of the great service to women that FWHC has provided since its beginnings in 1985.



Client Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to everyone who filled out the survey form; we appreciate you taking the time to give us your comments and ratings which are valuable feedback for us. We had 128 responses which was great. The rating options were very good, good, satisfactory, poor, and very poor. For the overall rating of the quality of our services, 98.4% of respondents thought services were very good or good (79.7% and 18.7% respectively). And 100% said they would use our services again.

The ratings for particular staff groups were also high. Staff were described as excellent, fantastic, friendly, welcoming, caring, compassionate, helpful, attentive, respectful, easy to communicate with, understanding, efficient, knowledgeable, informative, professional, and thorough. There were appreciative comments about doctors spending time with women and not rushing appointments. The down side of that is that a number of respondents commented on appointments running late. There were also comments about the long waiting time to get appointments and the need for more staff and long-

er opening hours. Parking difficulties is a perennial problem that comes up in surveys.

Unfortunately the limited parking is something we can't do anything about while we continue to operate from these premises. However, we would very much like to reduce the waiting time for appointments and extend opening hours. Our ability to do so is restricted by our limited funding and the difficulty in recruiting doctors in order to increase clinic sessions.

Missed Appointments

The other issue that affects the waiting time for appointments is the large number of women who do not keep appointments and do not let us know they are unable to attend. Unless you ring to cancel we are unable to give the appointment to someone else. We send reminders about appointments by phone or SMS and would appreciate you phoning to cancel if you cannot attend. At least 24 hours notice gives us the best chance of filling the appointment slot, but even if you ring on the day that would be helpful. We understand that an emergency or illness can occur unexpectedly.

From the 1st June we will be charging a fee for a missed appointment if you have made no attempt to cancel. For medical appointments that will be \$20 (employed) / \$10 (concession). For counseling appointments that will be \$20 / \$35 / \$50 depending on income (the same fee you would be charged had you attended)

Staff Changes



Jenny, one of our receptionists, leaves on 19 June and we are in the process of recruiting a replacement. Her calm, welcoming presence will be greatly missed. We wish her all the best on her adventure across Australia with husband and friends.

Understanding anxiety



Anxiety is more than just feeling stressed or worried. Anxious feelings are a normal reaction to a situation where a person feels under pressure - for example, meeting work deadlines, sitting exams or speaking in front of a group of people. However, for some people these anxious feelings happen for no apparent reason or continue after the stressful event has passed. For a person experiencing anxiety, anxious feelings cannot be brought under control easily. Anxiety can be a serious condition that makes it hard for a person to cope with daily life.

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition in Australia. On average, one in three women will experience anxiety at some stage in their life. Anxiety is common, but the sooner people with anxiety get help, the more likely they are to recover.

How do you know if someone has anxiety?

The symptoms of anxiety can often develop gradually over time. Given that we all experience some anxiety, it can sometimes be hard to know how much is too much. To be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety must have a disabling impact on the person's life.

There are many types of anxiety. While the symptoms for each type are different, some general signs and symptoms include:

- Feeling very worried or anxious most of the time
- Finding it difficult to calm down
- Feeling overwhelmed or frightened by sudden feelings of intense panic / anxiety
- Experiencing recurring thoughts that cause anxiety, but may seem silly to others
- Avoiding situations or things which cause anxiety (eg. social events or crowded places)
- Experiencing ongoing difficulties (e.g. nightmares/flashbacks) after a traumatic event.

What causes anxiety?

It's often a combination of factors that can lead to a person developing anxiety.

- **Family history of mental health problem:** People who experience anxiety often have a history of mental health problems in their family. However, this doesn't mean that a person will automatically develop anxiety.
- **Stressful life events:** Stressful events can also trigger symptoms of anxiety. Common triggers include:
 - job stress or changing jobs
 - shifting house
 - pregnancy and giving birth
 - family / relationship problems
 - a major emotional shock following a stressful event
 - death or loss a loved one.
- **Physical health problems:** Continuing physical illness can also trigger anxiety. Common conditions that do this include:
 - hormonal problems
 - diabetes
 - asthma
 - heart disease

If there is a concern about any of these conditions, ask a doctor for medical tests to rule out a medical cause.

- **Substance use:** Heavy or long term use of substances such as alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines or sedatives can actually cause people to develop anxiety, particularly as the effects of the substance wear off. People with anxiety may find themselves using more of the substance to cope with withdrawal-related anxiety, which can lead to them feeling worse.
- **Personality factors:** Some research suggests that people with certain personality traits are more likely to have anxiety. For example, children who are perfectionists, easily flustered, lack self-esteem or want to control everything, sometimes develop anxiety during childhood or as adults.

How to help yourself if you have anxiety?

- **Postpone major life changes:** Making major changes in your life can be stressful at any time. If you're feeling stressed or anxious, it's probably a good idea to try to avoid moving house or changing jobs.
- **Resolve personal conflicts as they arise:** Ongoing stress in personal relationships can contribute to anxiety. Learn how to let people know about your feelings so that you can resolve personal conflicts as they come up. Talking to a counsellor or psychologist can help you find ways to address your problem.
- **Take part in enjoyable activities and learn to relax:** To do this, you need to allocate time to do the things you enjoy, such as exercising, meditating, reading, gardening or listening to music. Beyondblue's website also has information about reducing stress, including a guided progressive muscle relaxation exercise.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle:** Eating healthy, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep can help a person to manage the symptoms.
- **Exercise regularly:** Physical exercise such as walking, swimming, dancing, playing golf or going to the gym can help relieve the tension in your muscles, relax your mind and distract you from negative thoughts and worries. Try to do some physical exercise every day, even if it's just going for a walk. Keep it simple and enjoyable.
- **Reduce alcohol and other drugs:** They can cause long-term problems and make it much harder to recover. It's also a good idea to avoid stimulants - excessive amounts of caffeine, sugar and any kind of amphetamine (speed, ecstasy, ice), as these can worsen symptoms of anxiety.



Continued from page 2

- **See your doctor or mental health professional for regular check - ups:** For some people, it can take a while before they feel well again. It's important to stick with treatment plans and check in with treating health practitioners on a regular basis.

(Article adapted from Beyondblue www.beyondblue.org.au.)

PRESENTATION ON ANXIETY

For more information and an opportunity to have your questions answered by Lisbeth Sundqvist, one of our Senior Counsellors, FWHC is providing an information session on 25th June at 11.00am - 12 noon.

Vitamin D



It's long been known that vitamin D is essential for healthy bones, but now researchers are increasingly studying links between vitamin D and other conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and some cancers including colorectal, breast and pancreatic. Vitamin D helps to maintain your muscle and bone strength. It also helps your body absorb calcium from food. Adults who have vitamin D deficiency do not usually feel any different but in some cases they may have sore or weak muscles or have weakened bones.

The Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research, Deakin University in Melbourne, is looking

at vitamin D levels in the Australian adult population (aged over 25) and to date has found almost one-third of us are deficient.

How do we get vitamin D

Our major source of vitamin D is ultraviolet radiation from the sun, with only small amounts of vitamin D contained in our diet.

While there is vitamin D in some foods, there is not enough to give you what you need. Vitamin D is present in a small number of foods, for the average person, food will only supply about 10% of the amount they need. Vitamin D is present in eggs and oily fish such as mackerel, salmon and sardines. In Australia it is also added in small amounts to margarine and some brands of milk. Although liver and cod liver oil contain vitamin D, they are not recommended in pregnancy as they also contain too much vitamin A.

Testing Vitamin D levels

Vitamin D levels are checked with a blood test. 'Vitamin D deficiency' is diagnosed when extremely low levels of vitamin D are detected in the blood. A range of values for 'normal' vitamin D levels exists, and the current recommendations are to maintain vitamin D levels within this range. Ask for a test next time you see your Doctor.

Supplements

There are a number of vitamin D supplements available. If you think you are low or deficient in vitamin D, consult your general practitioner, trained naturopath or dietitian as to what supplement and what amount is best for you.

(Information provided by www.abc.net.au/health/thepulse)

VITAMIN D DISPLAY

There will a display at FWHC during August, containing more detailed information on Vitamin D. Please call in to FWHC or ask to speak to one of our Nurses.

New Groups

Postnatal Support

In partnership with Meerilinga Family Centre, FWHC is providing a new outreach postnatal support group which will commence 14 June at Meerilinga's facilities in Winterfold St Coolbellup. This is a 9 week group facilitated by Karoline Werner, one of our Senior Counsellors, for women experiencing anxiety and depression after the birth of a child. FWHC obtained an Early Years Activity Grant from the Department for Communities to cover room hire and crèche costs.

Yoga

A free yoga group commenced at FWHC on 18 May for an 8 week period on Saturday mornings. This was possible because Marianna, the yoga teacher, very generously offered her services free of charge. We filled the group within hours of advertising it and many women who rang about it missed out. Marianna has offered to run another free group so those women can be included. FWHC has partnered with The Meeting Place in South Fremantle so that the group can be run there in a larger space that can accommodate more women. This group will commence on 18 June and run for 5 consecutive Tuesdays evenings 6.00-7.15 pm.

Belly Dance

A belly dance group commenced on 2 May at FWHC. This will continue to be run over a 3 month period on Thursday evenings 6.30—7.30 pm. It is not too late to join. The cost is \$15 per class or \$40 for 4 classes. To register ring Amoura on 0434 432 824. To find out more about the teacher and her classes check her website www.amouradance.com



Chicken and Vegetable Laksa



Ingredients

- 250g packet dried vermicelli noodles
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 185g jar Malaysian laksa paste
- 2 cups salt-reduced chicken stock
- 2 x 270ml cans Ayam light coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 500g chicken breast fillets, thinly sliced
- 300g broccoli, cut into small florets
- 150g green beans, trimmed, cut into thirds
- 125g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup fresh mint leaves
- 2 cups bean sprouts, trimmed

1/2 cup fried shallots
Lime wedges, to serve

1. Place noodles in a large, heatproof bowl. Cover with boiling water. Stand for 5 minutes or until noodles soften. Drain.

2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a wok over medium-high heat. Add laksa paste. Cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes or until fragrant. Add stock, coconut milk and fish sauce. Bring to the boil.

Add chicken. Reduce heat to medium-low, simmer for 5 minutes. Add broccoli and beans. Simmer for 2 minutes. Add tomato. Simmer for 1 minute or until broccoli is bright green and tender.

3. Divide noodles between bowls. Ladle laksa over noodles. Top with mint, bean sprouts and shallots. Serve with lime.

Energy	2873kJ	Fat saturated	8.90g
Fat Total	22.90g	Carbohydrate sugars	-
Carbohydrate Total	71.50g	Dietary Fibre	12.20g
Protein	44.00g	Cholesterol	84.00mg
Sodium	2172mg		

What's On At The Centre

Mums & Bubs Fitness
Monday 9.15 - 10.15

Postnatal Support Group
Wednesday 10 - 12 noon

Over Eaters/Anonymous
Wednesday 7.30 pm
Sunday 9.30 am

Portuguese Women's Group
Thursday 2.00 - 4.00 pm

Wise Women Exercise
Thursdays 2.00 - 3.00 pm

Belly Dancing
Thursday 6.30 - 7.30 pm

Yoga
Saturday 9.00 - 10.15 am

Massage Courses & Workshops
Various days & times

General Counselling

Individual counselling is available for women experiencing difficulties across a wide range of issues, including: stress; bereavement and loss; depression; anxiety; trauma, relationships, work and/or family crises; parenting concerns; low self-esteem and much more ...

Perinatal Counselling

The centre provides individual counselling for women experiencing antenatal and postnatal depression, anxiety and / or stress.

Counsellors are available Monday - Friday by appointment.

Medical Services

Female doctors and nurses are available by appointment Monday -Thursday for a range of women's health issues. Health information is available at appointments, by dropping into the Centre to collect brochures, or from the nurses by phone.

Physiotherapy

A specialist continence and women's health physiotherapist is available on Thursdays for appointments.

To access services an annual **FWHC Support Fee** is required:

\$30 full fee
\$15 concession