In focus this month:

Women’s Health

1. Mother’s Day, International Women’s Day, March is all about the ladies. Now the high tea, pamper days and daffodils are out of the way, it’s time to think about a gift that could really make a difference. There’s no escaping biology. There are conditions and illnesses that affect only women, and knowing how to spot the signs early could mean you get to enjoy their company for years to come. Order a copy of Macmillan’s Love our Brains book, and make sure mums, grans, sisters, wives and daughters get clued up on what to look out for.

2. All women whatever their age need to know what their breasts feel like. It is important to attend breast screening and women although over 70 will stop receiving automatic invitations, are still eligible for screening. If you arrange an appointment by contacting your local screening unit. Finding cancer early means treatment is more successful, so a trip to the doctor could save your life. Not sure what to watch out for? Click below for more information.

3. Around 3000 babies are born in Tameside each year. One in five are born to a mum who smoked during pregnancy. That’s a whopping 600 babies affected by tobacco before they’ve arrived. People smoke for many reasons, and becoming pregnant doesn’t magic those reasons away, so whilst most mums know that quitting is the right thing to do, they might need some support. Let’s remember, it’s not just about mums. Dads, did you know that you shouldn’t hold your baby for an hour after having a cigarette too? Find out more about the risks smoking poses to babies.

4. Is it wine o’clock yet? Here’s a riddle for you. A bottle of wine drunk in 1996 held 6 glasses, but a bottle of wine in 2016 holds only 3, yet the bottle size hasn’t changed. How can that be? Answer: measures have increase from 125ml to 250ml in recent years. If you go for a large wine you’re not just drinking double the alcohol, you’re also consuming double the calories too. This can be a real no no when it comes to big wine measure, and go for the small bottle but exactly formed 125ml to keep the alcohol and calories at bay. Why not download the Drinks Tracker App. Because there is only One You.

5. Postnatal depression affects just under 400 new mums in Tameside each year. As with any mental health matter, it’s easy to think that you’re the only one. But if you didn’t feel that instant bond with your baby, you are not alone. All women are affected by postnatal depression, and we know that up to 24,000 girls under the age of 15 in Tameside are already living with the long term effects of sexual assault, and can be sharing facts and figures about health in Tameside with you every month, to put you in the picture. We’ll also be giving knowledge into action when the situation arises. Sexual consent is simple – no means no but it can get complicated. It’s like asking someone if they want a cup of tea. Watch the video to find out more.

6. Doing some regular physical activity is just one of several ways that women can reduce their risk of developing heart disease and stroke. If running lyra and pounding the treadmill for hours on end is your idea of hell, your luck is in. Women’s girls in Tameside have an absolute plethora of activities they can do that make fitness fun. We’ve got aero assault, aerobics and archery, we’ve got boxing, canoeing, Bodyattack, burlesque, bouldering, climbing walls and caving. In fact we’ve got all the Zumba to activities to appeal to all ages,abilities and budgets. So that’s why 65% of women in Tameside are already getting active. What are you waiting for? Check out This Girl Can for inspiration.

7. The menopause is a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally. This usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 as a woman’s oestrogen levels decline, but did you know that menopausal symptoms can differ from woman to woman. Hot flushes, low mood and night sweats are just some of symptoms and can have a significant impact on everyday activities. Simple and practical tips to the NHS Choices could make a big difference for some women.

8. Over 4000 incidents of domestic violence were reported in Tameside last year, the majority of which were against women and girls. One in four of all women report experiencing domestic abuse at some point in their life, and for transgender women that figure is much higher. Usually abuse is at the hands of a partner or ex-partner, and in the majority of cases is a man. It’s important to remember that women can be abusees too. In a recent survey a quarter of lesbian and bisexual women reported experiencing abuse, with 64% saying the perpetrator was a woman. If you are living in a situation with domestic abuse, call bridges on 0161 331 2552 for confidential help and support. It’s not just about physical or sexual violence. Abuse comes in many forms. Click for more information.

9. For young people whether you are a girl or boy, starting out in the world of sex and relationships there are a number of things to think about first, not just how to ‘get it right’. What they might already know how to protect themselves against infections or an unwanted pregnancy, but if you didn’t feel that instant bond with your baby, you are not alone. With all eyes on a new baby it can be difficult to admit that you’re not feeling as joyous as people expect, whilst hormone levels are naturally up and down at this time, it’s important to know when Post Natal Depression might be a factor. See what other mums said about their experience here, and remember that GPs and Health Visitors are there to help.

10. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the practice of the partial or total removal of a girl’s external genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is common in many African countries, parts of the Middle East, and in some parts of Asia. It is often explained away as custom, tradition or religion, but in the UK, it is simply classified as child abuse. It’s estimated that up to 34,000 girls under the age of 15 in the UK are at risk of FGM, and many thousands of women are already living with the long term health problems caused by it. Tameside is a culturally diverse borough, making some girls may be at risk of FGM. There are huge health risks associated with the procedure, both short and long term, including pain, excessive bleeding, infection and even death. Learn more about the risks here.

11. For many women have felt the pressure of media images of what their bodies should look like. The pressure to look and feel like a model with realistic and achievable figures can be shared. It’s important to remember that your body is unique to you, and your health is not about the skin you’re in. Being a healthy weight isn’t about fad diets or ditching dinner for dubious shakes. It’s about making changes that you can carry on living with for life. The only way to achieve the healthy weight and the healthy body you want to is to eat a good balance of different foods in portion sizes that are right.

12. Women can often associate their hair with their femininity and hair loss can be particularly difficult for women. There are different types of hair loss, as it can take the form of thinning” or can be gradual or sudden loss of strands. Hair loss can also be genetic, as or a result of extreme stress, a medical condition or treatment. And can affect the young as well as the old too! Ways to cope with hair loss will not only help you to feel more confident but will help with your emotional wellbeing. Read some real life stories using the button below.

For more information email publichealth.enquiries@tameside.gov.uk
Find us on Facebook: Healthy Tameside

In Public Health we look at the way people in Tameside live as a whole population. This helps us understand what the main health and wellbeing challenges are for people living here, so we can look for ways to improve levels of health. We’ll be sharing facts and figures about health in Tameside with you every month, to put you in the picture. We’ll also be giving you information on how you can help yourself and the people around you to live well.

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