

A Picture of Health

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.

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 Your Ladyparts book, and make sure mums, grans, sisters, wives and daughters get clued up on what to look out for.



2 **1 in 3 women who get breast cancer are over 70, so nobody should assume they're past it.** By the age of 70 most women will know exactly what their boobs should feel like, so any unusual changes shouldn't be ignored. 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. It's not just about mums though. 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 by clicking more info.



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 increased from 125ml to 175ml to 250ml in recent years. If you plump for a large wine you're not just drinking double the alcohol than you would a few years ago. You're also consuming double the calories. Think about calling time on big wine, and go for the small but perfectly formed 125ml to keep the alcohol and empty calories at bay. To find out how many calories are in your favourite drink click below.



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 affected, 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 PND might be a factor. See what other mums said about their experience here, and remember that GPs and Health Visitors are there to help.

You are not alone



6 **For some women, the arrival of a new baby can mark a period of loneliness in their lives.** Being home alone with a baby and less adult conversation can make new mums feel isolated, especially if Dad isn't on the scene or if family and friends aren't nearby to support them. Loneliness at any age can have a detrimental effect on health, but for young mums there are lots of opportunities to connect with other people in the same situation. Tameside Children's Centres run sessions for mums and young children to join in and make new friends, but if making that first step into a strange room seems a bit daunting, check out this video to for a preview of one of their sessions.



7 **Doing some regular physical activity is just one of several ways that women can reduce their risk of developing heart disease and stroke.** If donning lycra and pounding the treadmill for hours on end is your idea of hell, your luck is in. Women and girls in Tameside have an absolute plethora of activities they can do that make fitness fun. We've got aerial assault, aerobics and archery, we've got biking, boxercise, Bokwa and burlesque, we've Clubbercise, cheerleading, climbing walls and caving. In fact we've got the full A to Zumba of activities to appeal to all ages, abilities and budgets. That's why 60% of women in Tameside are already getting active. What are you waiting for? Check out This Girl Can for inspiration.



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 abusers too though. 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 **Relationships are tricky to navigate when you're young. It takes time to figure out where boundaries are and where they should be.** Sadly there are people who try to exploit young girls (and boys), taking advantage of their trust and inexperience to coerce them into sexual activity. The question of what makes a good relationship is as old as time itself, and almost impossible to define. Thankfully defining what is not a good relationship is much clearer. Teaching our young girls to recognise the signs of child sexual exploitation starts with knowing more about it ourselves. Check out advice for parents and carers at It's Not Okay.



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 classed as child abuse. It's estimated that up to 24,000 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, meaning 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 years women have felt the pressure of media images of what their bodies should look like.** Thankfully the tide is turning, and role models with realistic and achievable figures are fighting for women everywhere to feel good about the skin they're in. Being a healthy weight isn't about fad diets or ditching dinner for dubious shakes and juices. It's about making changes that you can live with long term. The bad news is you can't outrun a bad diet, so if you're planning on achieving your personal best in chocolate eating over the Easter weekend, hitting the gym for a several hours won't cancel it out. The only way to achieve the healthy weight and healthy body you want is to eat a good balance of different foods in portion sizes that are right.

