



WOMENS HEALTH EDITION

Welcome to our March edition of prioryNEWS, this month we are dedicating the newsletter to all things women's health.

Women's Health Hub

- Priory Medical Group is pleased to announce it has become a first wave Women's Health Hub in York.
- This is a national initiative to try to reduce inequalities in [healthcare for women](#).
- The Women's Health Team at PMG, offer a wide range of services including:
 - Cervical Smear tests
 - Full range of Contraceptive Advice- eg. the Pill, the Injection, the Implant, the Coil (copper and hormonal) and Sterilisation.
 - Menopause services- new patient consultations and dedicated HRT monitoring clinics.
 - Procedure clinics- including pessary fittings for prolapse, bladder care advice, referrals to the women's health physio team, polyp removals, contraceptive implant fitting and coil fittings. ([hyperlinks to our you-tube clips on coils and implants?](#)).
 - All our Clinicians support women with a wide range of clinical areas, including early pregnancy problems, unplanned pregnancy advice, period problems, bladder problems and fertility issues to mention a few common conditions.
- Being a women's health hub allows the team greater support from local gynaecologists and the local sexual health service, to keep care closer to home and receive support for more complex patients, such as menopause care for breast cancer survivors or contraceptive care with complex medical conditions.



Cervical Screening

- Did you know cervical cancer is one of the most treatable cancers, when detected early through the cervical screening (smear) programme.
 - IN spite of this, rates of women attending for their routine cervical screening (smear test) continue to fall.
 - First smear uptake rates have dropped from 80% to 66%.
 - The impact of reduced uptake is that women are presenting later with established cancer rather than pre-cancerous cells.

Lizzie's Story: Cervical Screening Saved My Life

My name is Lizzie, I am 42 years old and I live in York. I am a mum to two daughters aged 10 and 8. In July 2021 I was diagnosed with cervical cancer. This came as a complete shock because I had no symptoms and I had never missed a smear test. My previous smear test results had all come back as clear.

My treatment included a radical hysterectomy, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Thankfully I am now "all clear", however I have been left with side effects including early menopause and lymphedema.



I am urging everyone with a cervix to go for their cervical screening test as mine literally saved my life.

- Booking a smear test couldn't be easier:
 - When the national screening letter arrives (or if it arrived some time back and is in a "to-do pile"), book a smear online/ via the phone or in surgery using the NHS app or using the [prioryCARE form](#) (choose "nurse appointment" tile).
 - Smear tests are available throughout the working week at all our Sites.
 - Plus our Nurses also offer appointments on an evening at Heworth and Acomb Surgeries and on a Saturday morning in Acomb.



Jenny our Women's Health Specialist Pharmacist talks about menopause care and some top tips:

We are really privileged and excited to become a Women's Health Hub in York. This has meant we can expand the service we offer to our patients for menopause care, as well as being able to access specialist advice from the gynaecology team.

When you first contact us to discuss menopause symptoms, we are able to offer specialist consultations. Ongoing care and reviews are then provided in dedicated HRT clinics. If you have any queries regarding your HRT or menopause symptoms, please do request a review in the HRT clinic and we will aim to get back to you as soon as possible.

We offer a holistic approach to menopause care based on the most up to date evidence available, with reference to NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) and the BMS (British Menopause Society). Whilst HRT is a hugely important part of this care, one recommendation that is mentioned in the updated NICE guidelines is for cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). It has been shown to be effective for various menopause symptoms used either alone or in combination with HRT and it is an option we are successfully exploring with a number of patients.

Did you know that 2.5 hours of moderate exercise a week can reduce your breast cancer risk? A combination of weight-bearing exercise (such as walking, dancing, aerobics) and strength training (such as lifting weights, yoga, pilates, gardening with equipment) during the menopause is also good for maintaining bone strength & muscle mass. Exercise is also a great way to support a healthy heart, maintain a healthy weight and boost your mood, combating some of the menopause symptoms you may be experiencing. Please only exercise within your limitations, but give it a go, you never know, it may help you feel a bit better!



Pre-menstrual Disorders- PMS and PMDD

- These are two conditions that women often suffer in silence with, or are misdiagnosed with Mental Health conditions or perimenopause symptoms.
- Pre-menstrual syndrome: is a condition where a woman's mood changes in the second half of her cycle (when progesterone hormone levels increase). It is a biochemical change in the brain and there are a wide range of treatments that can help!
- Pre-menstrual Dysphoric Disorder is a less common, but more severe type of hormonal sensitivity, where anxiety levels can be completely overwhelming and prevent a woman living a normal life. Again, there is lots that can be done to help.
- There is a fantastic website with great patient information: [NAPS – National Association for Premenstrual Syndromes | NAPS](#)
 - It has a link to keeping a menstrual diary to bring to a GP appointment, to help with making a diagnosis and a wealth of information on the two conditions and some of the support options available.

Sexual Health

- Did you know chlamydia is still the most common STI- with upto 1 in 10 under 25s carrying the STI (often without symptoms).
- All women under 25 or with a change in partner in the past 12m are encouraged to consider screening.
- Picked up early, chlamydia is easily treated with a short antibiotic course.
- Left undetected, it can cause damage to a woman's womb and tubes, causing long-term pain and infertility problems.
- It couldn't be easier to get tested:
 - > You can order a self-test kit or appointment via the [Yorsexual Health Website](#)
 - > Or book in for swabs with a Nurse at the Practice.